

What's Up?



The Leinster Gliding Centre Newsletter

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A Welcome from our Chairman

And there you have it. Another year down [almost]. But what a year. The effort put in by all has been amazing and my thanks to everyone. We had summer courses, squeezed into the best days in a damp season. Cross-country flights were thin on the ground this year, but they were attempted. The Kerry Safari took place giving a number of days flying over the magnificent Dingle Peninsula. To our newer members, this is one of our annual events that I strongly recommend you work towards - just speak to one of the Kerry team well in advance as flying there is not the same as flying out of Gowran Grange. And yes, it is very much influenced by the weather, but when Kerry turns it on - Wow!



Kerry turns it on—unfortunately this photo was taken in 2013 but one lives in hope...

Behind the scenes, a lot of planning continues

- I hope to have more on this in the New Year. Some of this is already starting to come together, especially the

A Welcome from our Chairman (contd)

social side of the club. We've had a good year of social activities, and we'll keep this going in 2024 (winter BBQ anyone?). The upcoming Christmas social in An Poitin Stil is lining up to be a great evening with a lot of people attending - Christmas jumpers are optional however.

Most recently, we were pipped at the post by Galway Flying Club at the Irish Aviation Awards. Much as we would have loved to be taking home the silverware, it was still a moment of joy to see our name and new identity proudly displayed in front of the great and the good of Irish



You may recognize our
President & CFI
Cecily & Trevor at the
Aviation Awards

Aviation. It is my intention to keep our name in front of such gatherings to ensure that the sport of gliding is recognised in Irish aviation circles, We have a lot to contribute and, with such a rich history, we owe it to those who have gone before to ensure that our branch of aviation is well known in the broader community. Now, for next year's entry...!

As the dark nights gather there is still much to do. For some of us, this means working towards the LGC year-end. For others, it will mean cleaning and polishing gliders. Still others will be doing maintenance around the compound and hangar. Please reach out to Ron (Site Manager) or Damien (Technical Officer) if you feel there is anywhere you can help - rest assured—no act of volunteering will be refused!



So, on a parting note for now, can I wish you all a



There were some good days...

very Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2024. My letter to Santa has included a request for less rain and more shine in 2024 and may the spring weather arrive early (February did deliver a Silver distance once upon a time, so who knows....). Please Santa, we've been very good this year.....

LGC Member's Story:

Stevie Moreau - Ryanair 1st Officer



Stevie had his first flight in a glider at the DGC aged 12. He was hooked immediately and spent the next 4 years waiting for the magic day—his 16th birthday, when he went solo. He gained entry to the Atlantic Flight Training Academy in 2021 to begin training as a Ryanair pilot. Here, he recounts that story. Outside of flying, Stevie is an avid runner and plays badminton.

I can't remember a time when I wasn't fascinated by flight. As a young boy I would go up to my Dad's Dublin warehouse, about 2 kms west of Dublin Airport Runway 10 threshold and watch the airplanes soar into the sky, thinking 'could anything be cooler??'. My interest in aviation only grew throughout my childhood. Weekly trips to Dublin airport to watch the planes and the annual summer holiday flight cemented the idea that one way or another, I wanted to work in the world of aviation.

It reached its culmination when in June of 2014, at the tender age of 12, I took my first flight in a glider with Kieran Commins. It was only a short hop, but I knew then that I had to find a route into the cockpit. I went through the process of training with the DGC and look back on that



My first solo—May 2018

time very fondly. It was extremely enjoyable, and everyone was very giving with both their time and knowledge. Being only

twelve, I had another four years before being allowed to go solo. I

truly believe those four years I spent on soaring flights or in the circuit with an instructor in the back was a massive help to my flying skills and my understanding of flight. my hours It gave me much-needed confidence in my flying ability before my first solo on May 12th 2018, under the guidance of Denis O'Hogan. (If I may add, I gained my CPL on the 12/05/2023, exactly five years after my first solo. Almost as if it were planned!) From there I spent the next 3 years trying to hone my stick and rudder skills, as I believe this is the most important asset you can have as a pilot.

My next step towards the cockpit came in

November 2021 when I joined the Atlantic Flight Training Academy. The school, which is based in Cork



Cessna C172s with Garmin G1000 glass cockpit

Airport, is a fantastic place to learn to fly. Similar to Gowran Grange (though a little larger!), you are constantly battling the elements, as the airport is on top of a hill. This, in my opinion, makes a pilot who is conscious of the aircraft's operating limits yet is comfortable flying in less than ideal, Irish conditions.

Ryanair First Officer—(contd)



Our training began with a week's worth of PPL ground school classes followed by 9 in-house PPL written exams. The flight training begins with the Cessna 172S, which for their size, are amazingly capable and intuitive machines, largely thanks to their Garmin G1000 glass cockpit. After 20 hours of training, we were shipped to Waterford Airport to complete our first solo, as the DAA



Waterford Approach

does not allow these to be completed at Cork Airport. The next month was spent completing our solo time at

Waterford and included our 300 nautical mile solo triangle. Starting in Waterford we flew to Cork where we completed a touch and go before moving onto Shannon for yet another touch and go before we made our way back to Waterford, flying along the Galtee mountains. My time flying in Waterford was one of the most enjoyable as it is a very picturesque and beautiful place to fly. The airport is based right on the coast so the arrival onto Runway 03 and departure from 21 takes you over the coast along Tramore.

Although my PPL flight training was very enjoyable, we always had something hanging over our heads - the ATPL exams. These consist of 14 exams which take a minimum of six months to complete, with subjects ranging from meteorology, mass and balance to instrumentation. We did no flying during this time, so for six months my peers and I took on each examination all the while

increasingly determined to get back into the air. The exams were certainly painful at times, but I was extremely lucky as the class of which I was a member, had gelled together very well. After 28 exams, including mock examinations, we were finally free to start our flying training once again. I completed my PPL skills test before starting the Single Engine Instrument Rating (SEIR) on the C172 and the AUPRT (upset prevention and recovery training) course. A highlight of the course for me was flying the Slingsby T67M with Gerry Humphreys (whom if I may add, has had the pleasure of ejecting from a Harrier Jump Jet) for my spin and unusual attitudes training, with a few aerobatics thrown in for good measure!

Once my SEIR was complete and I received my PPL license from the IAA, I spent 2 months trying to complete 40 hours of PIC time. This should have taken 2 weeks, but the Irish weather had other ideas. It was a relaxed part of the course as it was a chance to fly around the whole of Ireland, stopping off in airports such as Sligo and Abbeysrule for a spot of lunch.



Diamond DA42

Ryanair First Officer—(contd)



First DA42 Solo

After

building my single engine hours, it was time to wave goodbye to the Cessna and say hello to the Diamond DA42. This is a wonderful aircraft which flies as well as it looks. Without doubt it is one of the easiest aircraft

to fly, comparable to the K13 in its ease of handling. The so-called multi engine rating is a bit of a misnomer - despite having two engines we spent most of our time flying on just one!

After 12 flights on the DA42 it was time for my Commercial Pilots skill test, which is essentially a PPL skills test as it is all VFR but flown with more precision.

It was now time for the last stage of my flying training, the Multi Engine Instrument Rating (MEIR). Once you have become used to it used to it, I found flying IFR easier than flying VFR. The ease of the DA42 meant we could shoot a single engine ILS without breaking sweat. It's amazing to think that it's easier to fly without looking out the window! 20 hours in the DA42 sim, 16 hours and a MEIR skills test later and my flying training was complete.

Now the most enjoyable bit of the course, the APS MCC (Airline Pilot Standards Multi Crew

Cooperation). 40 hours in a 737NG/MAX sim. For the entirety of the course we flew PIC and single pilot operations but now we had to work effectively as a crew. (Harder than you think!) We flew full return flights in the sim, the longest being DUB-STN-DUB,



Success—The end of the course!

which is a very hot, sweaty 4 hours in the sim. This being my first encounter with jets, I was surprised at how agile

and responsive the 737 is. Even though most of the tech on board the 737 has not changed since the 1960's it's a very easy plane to fly.... bar landing.

I cannot stress just how much gliding has helped me throughout this entire process. The stick and rudder skills you gain from flying gliders out of an airfield like Gowran is unrivaled. From flying skills to decision making skills, I wholeheartedly believe no matter what stage one is at in their flying career, gliding holds something for everyone. I would like to thank everyone in the Dublin Gliding Club for all your help throughout the years and I hope to be flying gliders again sometime soon.

Ed Note: *I couldn't leave Stevie's comment about the difficulty of landing the 737 hang, plus I'm sure we would all like to know what happens next. So Stevie has generously agreed to write a follow up article on the next stage of his time as a Ryanair First Officer and the mysteries of landing a Boeing 737!.*

LGC Member's Story:

Damien Mulloy - LGC Technical Officer



Damien had his first flight in a Glider in 1994 and was so impressed he took a second one the same day. As the LGC Technical Officer, Damien puts in a lot of time and work to ensure that the Glider Fleet is ready and available. Damien has an FAI Bronze badge, Silver Distance and Duration and holds an SPL with an Instructor, Cross Country and Aerobatic Rating. He cooks a mean paella and is often seen holding forth at club BBQs. Damien works in Fin Tech and outside of gliding is a talented guitar player and a keen Rugby fan. His favourite saying ? 'If you're not here, you can't fly!'

You may be interested to know how we keep things flying?

I was asked to pull together a few words to describe the role of the Technical Officer.

A simple description would be that for anything in the club that flies (apart from our Super Cub tugs), it is the responsibility of the TO to ensure that it continues to fly safely and legally and is available for members. There you are, a simple Leinster Gliding Centre Job Description for the Technical Officer – I must write it down!

Of course, it's a bit more complicated and probably best illustrated by the annual lifecycle routine of every LGC Glider, and I expect, any Gliding establishment.

Apart from regular and ad hoc housekeeping, there are three milestones in the annual lifecycle. These are undertaken by the Certifying Staff, a team who have been trained and qualified to run maintenance across the fleet. This applies to all our aircraft registered with the Irish Aviation Authority [IAA] and includes private gliders.

The annual milestones are:

The Annual Inspection – or 'The Annual'. This involves taking the aircraft offline. The aircraft are derigged, cleaned and made ready for the as-

signed Certifying Staff (CS) to undertake The Annual. I need to stress that no work can be carried out on any aircraft without clear oversight by the CS, ie. as a member, you can't do any work on an aircraft unless the CS supervises and agrees.

Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) – is issued once The Annual has been completed and certifies that all required or requested maintenance has been carried out.

Airworthiness Renewal Certificate (ARC) – this is the Certificate which is issued when all requirements have been met, including any mandated updates or changes. Once this has been completed, the ARC is issued. Along with various other documents, the ARC must be in the document folder on board before the aircraft is cleared to fly.

These are planned and scheduled tasks which are the mandatory jobs we undertake to keep the fleet ready. It is worth noting that we are audited by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) as a recognised Aircraft Maintenance facility and for this, all records must be kept accurate and up to date. Although updating the records falls to the Certifying Staff, we need to keep things like the workshop, hanger and clubhouse tidy in order to convey a professional air in all our activities. For this, we need the help of all club members - the main expertise required are the ability to use a brush and Hoover!

The Role of the LGC Technical Officer (contd)



All the certification work and associated paperwork are undertaken by the Certifying Staff who are assigned to and oversee the maintenance tasks at the request of the LGC Technical Officer. The involvement of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has brought with it a more rigorous process. The increased bureaucracy, procedures and paperwork can be frustrating at times but it's all in a good cause – it's done to ensure we can safely enjoy the sport we love and to ensure the airworthiness of our fleet.

Members are encouraged to help out in order to get the aircraft through the process. However, any such assistance can only be provided under the guidance and supervision of the Certifying Staff member assigned. For newer and/or less experienced members, this is a very valuable exercise. It provides the opportunity to learn, hands on, the technical side of looking after our fleet, something you will have to do when you progress to becoming the proud owner of your own glider.

In the coming months we will be completing the annual inspections on all club aircraft.

This will include all maintenance and paperwork - depending on aircraft hours this could include routine housekeeping tasks, weighing (yes, they need to be weighed on a regular basis), instrument calibration and whatever else is mandated.

When the paperwork is complete, copies are filed with the relevant aircraft file. These are stored in the clubhouse. If you want to take a look at one of the files, don't hesitate to ask. It is also a requirement that the documents are kept in the document folder in the aircraft along with the Certificate of Airworthiness, Radio Telephony Licence and Insurance Certificate. These are checked as part of the Daily Inspection to ensure they are in place and valid, ie within date and placed in the correct aircraft.

Responsibility for purchasing materials or spares for the upkeep of our aircraft also sits with the Technical Officer (I'm really selling this role...). 2023 was an exceptional year due to the 3000 hour check on EI-GLZ and the requirements to support the project (which included the installation of new heaters in the workshop!). In any year we could purchase Tyres, Tubes, Harness replacements, Airbrake Handles, Polish, Tow Hooks and all sort of strange items. These will require a Form 1 or Certificate of Conformity to ensure that the items can be used on aircraft. With the departure of our close neighbours from the EU, we are now relying on small suppliers in Europe who have been helpful but charge a lot more for shipping.

Speaking of filthy lucre, it would be remiss to not mention how all this is funded. Materials and spares, along with aircraft insurance, is where a large

The Role of the LGC Technical Officer (contd)

part of the membership fees get spent. And the man responsible for managing that side of things is our Treasurer, Michael Walsh.

How can you help? Apart from required maintenance regime mentioned earlier, there are some simple housekeeping tasks which members can assist with on flying days, or on those days where we are waiting for the weather to improve. These include routine cleaning, polishing etc. For our new members, or not so new members, rather than waiting to be asked, please ask the Duty Instructor or Duty Pilot on the day how you can help. This is the glamorous part - you may be handed a bucket and sponge and asked to provide some TLC to a glider - it's all part of learning and being a club member.



Other important tasks include:

- Cleaning aircraft before and after flying.
- Ensuring canopy covers are in their boxes when in the hanger.
- Ensuring wing covers are replaced.

log keeping is an significant part of the Technical Officer brief. Accurate recording of the aircraft take-off and landing time is a key task and accurate completion of the Log sheet at the launch point is vital. The logs sustain our billing

system, record pilot flight details and very importantly, each aircraft hours. This data is managed by our club log keeper (Walt) who has the exacting task of keeping the database updated. These times are recorded in the aircraft log books which are kept in the aircraft files mentioned earlier. The accurate recording of flights and hours is used to calculate times for maintenance of not only the aircraft but also individual components such as release hooks. We often joke about handwriting, but trying to read a poorly managed log sheet from a carbon copy is not amusing. And yes, we have had many suggestions about doing this electronically, but we still need to manage it accurately – not an easy task (suggestions welcome!).

Recently we started to look at the Hanger and Workshop facilities. To get the ball rolling we have installed shelving along the end wall of the hanger, and on the side wall of the workshop. In the coming weeks we will be looking to make a few changes to facilitate the moving of aircraft, and better storage of ancillary equipment. We will need help doing this – please offer your time when we appeal for assistance. We have installed additional shelving on the side wall of the hanger specifically for the storage of Canopy Covers and Wing Covers in their boxes. Please do not leave them thrown on the floor or shelves - place them in their allocated and labelled boxes.

Before finishing, I need to acknowledge the core of members who assist with all the tasks mentioned. I encourage more members to support it – this is your club, and your help is needed. In the coming winter months there will be an opportunity to assist and support the annual process so please respond when the call goes out.

I am bound to have missed something but have tried to give a flavour of the role of the Technical Officer. I'm sure you get the gist.

Cecily Begley - New Members' Corner



Cecily is Chief Flying Instructor of the Leinster Gliding Centre. She has been a member since 1971 and an instructor since 1975. A keen soaring pilot, she and her husband Dan – who is also an instructor and tug pilot – jointly own an ASW22 glider for the good weather, and an ASK18 which they enjoy flying on the annual Kerry Trip.

Winter's here!

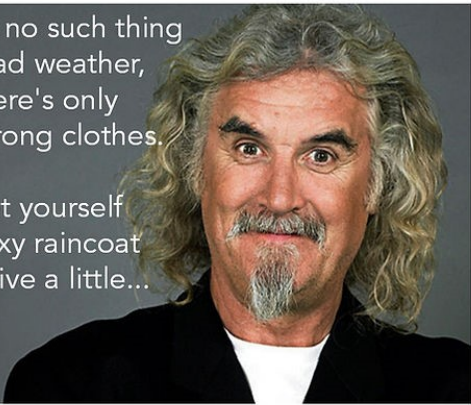
One of the most common queries we get is: “when does the gliding season stop?” And the answer is: it doesn't. We fly all through the year, weather permitting, and it is very important to keep flying as often as you can so that you continue to progress. A break of even a few weeks can leave you feeling as though you have forgotten everything but, don't worry, your skills will come back again after one or two flights.

Some Winter Wisdom Words:

1. Dress warmly – it is always colder at Gowran Grange because it is 500' AMSL, away from the

There's no such thing
as bad weather,
there's only
the wrong clothes.

Get yourself
a sexy raincoat
and live a little...



coast, and in an open area that attracts winds.

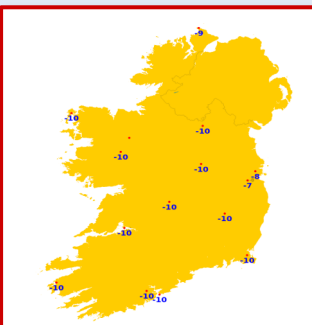
Always wear a woolly hat, gloves and scarf, plus a number of layers including a wind and water-proof top, possibly waterproof or padded trousers, 2-3 pairs of socks, and waterproof shoes or boots – the grass is ALWAYS wet. A small flask of tea/ coffee/ soup to have at the launch-point helps as well.

2. If you've had a break from flying, do a practice flight in your head the day before you come out again. Go through your cockpit check item by item; sit on a chair and pretend to move stick and rudder together; practise a few turns, remembering to look out before each one; remind yourself how to plan a circuit, and how to fly on approach. Your first “return” flight will feel much more familiar then.

3. How do you know if the weather is OK for flying? Well, it's a bit of a black art, as all the forecasts differ, and they change from day to day. Checking them all at 9pm the day before flying is best. We need winds from North or South, with less than 30° - 45° cross-wind, and 7-10 knots is nice. We almost never get that. As the wind strengthens, the tug can tolerate less cross-wind; and if the wind is gusting, flying becomes less likely. Infrequent light showers are OK: heavy rain is not.

4. How do you know if the runway is firm enough? You can check the soil moisture deficit (SMD) here <https://www.met.ie/forecasts/farmin> Scroll to the “Poorly drained SMD” map and check the number SW of Dublin (minus numbers are worse).

The matting at 21 allowed the K-21 to fly on a recent Saturday with an SMD of -7 on Thurs and light showers on Friday. An SMD of -8/9 on Thursday with no rain on Friday would also work. SMD of -9 on Thurs and light showers on Friday could still allow the K-13 and Ka8 to fly.



(Sometimes, if there has been prolonged water-logging, these figures won't work).

Kevin Houlihan - Spreading Your Wings



On yet another wet July day, Kevin and I discussed where members might go if they wished to gain more flying experience but without breaking the bank. I smelled the bones of an interesting article which Kevin kindly agreed to write.

As I write this, we've just slipped in to the 3rd week of August and I'm still waiting for the hot August nights. Actually, I'd be very pleased if we got some hot days – the type that allow good soaring. But so far August has followed the dismal pattern set by July. Even June, which was hot, was either the wrong kind of hot and soaring was poor or launching at Gowran wasn't possible due to cross-winds. It seems that the Jet Stream is zagging when it should zig. The result is the poorest soaring season I can remember. Task weeks & week-ends were essentially non-events, flights posted to the OLC are down and I'm not even sure if we've had a Silver Distance this year. And it seems that the pattern is set to continue.

So maybe it's a good time to think about a safari abroad and to make plans for next year. While there are no guarantees on the weather anywhere, the chances are better the larger the landmass and the further from the Gulf Stream you go. There are options for members at all levels. For instance,



[Edgehill Gliding Centre](#), Shenington, near Oxford offer 7 day courses. They bang in as many launches as possible,

mostly winching. The advertising suggests solo in a week and while none of our Instructors would endorse that (and even if you were to achieve it you will be firmly back dual on your return!) having a large number of flights together does wonders for your progress. Many other clubs in the UK and throughout Europe offer similar courses.

If you are solo and just want the chance of some decent local soaring, again plan on a visit to a UK club in the first instance. Many of them are 7 day operations and will have club gliders available, possibly subject to a check flight and taking out temporary membership. Some have bunkhouses, sometimes a caravan on site can be hired or you can set up a tent but at least they will recommend local accommodation. Portmoak has been very welcoming over the years and is a lovely place to fly from. Some UGC members have based themselves in Denbigh, North Wales recently. Talk to Ricky Logan. Gordon & Cecilia Craig, who turn up regularly (particularly for the Kerry Safari) will give you information on other possibilities.

Pilots with Cross Country Endorsements should also consider visiting a UK club with a view to a Silver Distance – or better! The advantage of trying this in the UK is that there are usually gliding clubs at the other end so field landings are avoided. You can sometimes even get an aerotow back (if you are prepared to empty your wallet!). It might be possible to hire a glider for a week, depending on where you go and your experience.

Pilots looking for height gains usually head to Aboyne in Scotland. October is the traditional wave season but

Spreading Your Wings—(contd)

can be very busy as many pilots from southern UK clubs, such as Lasham, visit then. I chose Easter instead and, while there were some dud days, I was lucky to come away with my box ticked. Portmoak, mentioned above, is another good place but airspace is an issue for Diamond climbs. Talgarth, in the Black Mountains, is another option. I would caution that flying from a mountain site, particularly at height with the risk of cloud closing in below, is something I would recommend only for quite experienced pilots.

If you are experienced and have some cross countries under your belt, I would highly recommend entering a UK regional competition. If the weather cooperates you can expect to come back having done maybe 1,800kms. You will be pushed outside your comfort zone but at the end will marvel at what you and your glider can do! The bar will be raised and you will bring that higher skill level back and see better results at home. I would recommend HusBos or Shennington in particular. I have guaranteed a few members that if they came to HusBos with me they would get a 300k – and they did! We have had members compete at Dunstable and at Lasham but the further south you go the more complicated the airspace becomes. Again, talk to Gordon about possibilities in the middle of the UK.

The suggestion of the UK in the first instance is based on it being quicker and cheaper to get to, English speaking and, at the moment, no licence requirements. However step onto the Continent and chances improve further. And, though being dragged into EASA-land has been a pain in the ass for us, at least now we have acceptable licences throughout Europe and further afield.

France, of course, is the next nearest and Issoudun, in the centre of the country, hosts an International competition annually which also incorporates a Libelle challenge! The local terrain con-

sists of huge flat fields and I would recommend a visit. Baillieu, further northwest, also hosts an 'Amical', though the land locally can be a bit hilly in spots. I spent a very enjoyable week at Saucats, just south of Bordeaux with a couple of ex-members. However, with forests and vineyards for 100k all round, it is a place for local soaring only for most. The south east of the country is where the French Alps live with huge potential for some stunning flying. Talk to Bruno.

Further into Europe, German pilots would turn their noses up at thermals we would consider stonkers and glide 20kms 'to the next one'. Ronald Staeps will advise. Martin Feeg, who used to fly at Bellarena, might give other options. Fuentemillanos is the go to place in Spain at the moment. Hungary is normally fabulous – and almost totally flat! Andy Mazan & Peter Moskovits will help set you up. Poland is another fantastic place to glide with big distances on offer normally. Our own Pawel will steer you. Steve Crabb would be a contact for gliding in the Wroclaw region.



We have had members fly in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa,

Namibia and the USA but in this piece I am focusing on fairly local possibilities. I can put you in touch with any of the people mentioned above, or contacts elsewhere if you wish. The point is – there is life beyond our own shores and sampling it is actually easy and can be very productive!

Editors Note: I learned to fly in Cambridge Gliding Club. They run regular week long training courses and have some on site accommodation—which is basic but adequate. It's close to Stanstead Airport so is easy to get to. Give me a shout if you would like more info.



LGC Member's Story:

Michael Walsh—Our Man in Green



A Glider hanging from the roof of Nutgrove Shopping Centre was the prompt for Michael to seek out Dublin Gliding Club in 1999. He visited the club in July, took an air experience flight and has been coming back ever since. Michael went solo in Jan 2001, became an air experience instructor in 2004 and a class II instructor in 2014. Despite being a retired banker, Michael can't escape from matters financial and is currently treasurer of the Leinster Gliding Centre, so be very nice to him! Here he describes his recent success in the Five Nations Championships

Many of you know that I do a bit of running and that each year I run the Dublin Marathon. I aim to complete two marathons every year. (one somewhere in Spring followed by Dublin in October)

I started my running adventure in 1981 when I completed my first Dublin Marathon and repeated the exercise in 1982. Life got in the way in the intervening 30 years, but I returned to running in 2011 and haven't really looked back.

While the marathon distance poses a very significant challenge requiring a long term commitment and many miles of training, I always used races as a shorter term motivational tool, and as a great way to measure my progress. The competition element is the real joy of running for me.

In the winter I run cross country and hit the roads in summer. Race distances (strangely, a combination of metric and imperial measurements) range from 5kms to Marathons at 26 miles 385 yards.

I tend to increase race distances as the season progresses culminating in a marathon at the end of each season. Then I start all over again....

By 2018 I was beginning to feature in championship races, winning a few Dublin County champion-

ship medals. Then COVID arrived and shortly afterwards I retired from work.

This gave me the opportunity to train intensively with a small group of competitive runners and by 2022 we were ready and eager for competition.

The advent of the groundbreaking carbon plate in running shoes also helped with times. Most runners initially resisted the temptation of these magic shoes, but it soon became apparent that not having them put you at a significant disadvantage.

So I followed the herd.

During 2022 my race times tumbled. I was beginning to appear on the podium again and it felt good!

Although racing is about pace, it is also about strategy and in 2023 it all came together. I was running big mileage in training (100k per week) and my speedwork was continuing to show in race times.

I kicked off 2023 by being placed second in the Belfast Marathon in April and success continued with podium finishes in every National Championship road race of the year

While taking stock towards the end of the year, I had discussed with my training partners the potential for targetting an Irish vest for 2024. The opportunity came earlier than expected.

Ireland sends a Masters team each year to compete in a Five Nations Cross Country International

Our Man in Green—(contd)

Championship. Qualification for the team is based on performance in a single selection race. I was encouraged to give it a shot and two weeks later was selected as a team member.

On a freezing Saturday morning in a very hilly park in Glasgow I made my international debut. The whole experience was an education! Five team tents each topped with a national flag. Race organisation and marshalling on point. Warning whistles followed by a gunshot to get us underway.

My teammates are both World Championship medallists so the step up in standard was breathtaking and replicated in all the national teams. During the race when legs and lungs were burning and with a Welshman right on my heels I did pause - but only metaphorically - to remind myself to treasure every millisecond of the experience be-

cause moments like that may never come my way again.

Our

team was placed 4th in the Over 65 category but the combined



Ireland team was placed second to England, so there were modest celebrations that night.

This is the kind of experience that once tasted you really do want to repeat. I will certainly be looking to qualify again in the future, but either way I am delighted and honoured to have had the opportunity to represent my country on the athletic stage and to wear the Green Singlet. It has without doubt been the pinnacle of my running career.

Committee Corner — New Membership Categories

Trevor McHugh

Full membership: as at present. Members may fly any day the club is flying, as often as they like, and may also fly with the Ulster Gliding Club under our reciprocal membership scheme. All members have voting rights at the AGM, may serve on the committee and have access to all social activities, and online and 'in-person' training sessions. Cost €750

Family membership: as above. Cost €110 extra per additional member.

Associate membership: allows up to 10 flights per year at club member's rates, and access to all social activities, and online and 'in-person' training sessions. Cost €375

'Mid-week only' membership: these members may fly on Wednesdays or other mid-week flying days organised by the club, **excluding courses** (which can be purchased separately if desired), and have access to all social activities, and online and 'in-person' training sessions. Cost €375

'Keep-in-touch' membership: allows up to 5 flights per year at club member's rates, and access to all social activities, and online and 'in-person' training sessions. Cost €195

Lines of Flight—Peter Denman

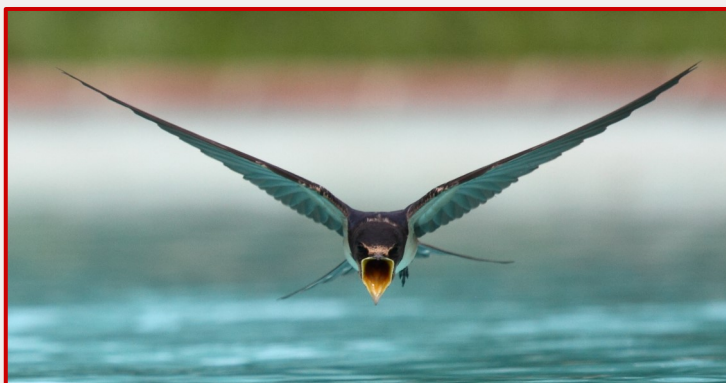


Peter is an experienced glider pilot and a club instructor. He joined DGC as an ab initio trainee in 1989. He is an Emeritus Professor in English at Maynooth University and has had poems published in Ireland and abroad.. As well as his interest in gliding, Peter is active with the Irish Astronomical Society.

Allergy warning: This article contains poetry.

There's a poem that went with me during my learning experience as a trainee glider pilot. It's an eight-line piece by Robert Graves. Graves was part Irish – his grandfather was bishop of Limerick and owned what is now Parknasilla in west Cork. Graves served in the WWI trenches, where he was wounded and reported dead, before going on to lead a long and colourful life, spent mostly in Majorca before that island became tourist-fashionable. Anyway, the poem is called "Flying Crooked".

The butterfly, a cabbage-white,
 (His honest idiocy of flight)
 Will never now, it is too late,
 Master the art of flying straight,
 Yet has – who knows so well as I? –
 A just sense of how not to fly:
 He lurches here and there by guess
 And God and hope and hopelessness.
 Even the aerobatic swift
 Has not his flying-crooked gift.



That described my flying, sure enough. I once modified Graves' words to bring them into line with my experience - I'll share that version at the end of this piece.

I've always kept an eye out for poetry that captures something of flight and gliding. Too many flying poems are about crashes and fatalities, whether it's Yeats writing about the Irish Airman foreseeing his death (oh yes, it's a good poem alright) or way back with Ovid in Metamorphosis telling of Icarus soaring aloft and falling from the sun. Indeed, I plead guilty myself – one of my own first poems to get into print was about a crash, another little version of Icarus.

Magee's "High Flight" is a favourite of many, but its sentiments are rather too over-stated for me. For a religious poem with really stretched language, I'd much prefer Gerard Manley Hopkins in "The Windhover" (1877), a great evocation of the exhilaration of flying. He describes a kestrel riding

...the rolling level underneath him steady
 air, and striding
 High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
 In his ecstasy! Then off, off forth on a swing,
 As a skate's heel sweeps on bow-bend: the
 hurl and gliding
 Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
 Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery
 of the thing!

Slingsby produced a sailplane in 1970 called the Kestrel; I don't suppose they considered the other name of the bird, "windhover", which refers to its

Lines of Flight (contd)

stationary positioning in the air before a stoop. And still less the kestrel's older, less-used name from the 1600s, "windfucker" (although that does suggest greater performance).

By the way, a tenuous local connection to Hopkins: in later life, while living in Dublin, he was an occasional visitor to Monasterevin, so he got to know our Kildare skies. Those same skies have often teased us with early promise and then failed to deliver. The best description of over-development killing off a day is in Shakespeare's Sonnet 33, where the deteriorating sky is a metaphor for disappointment:

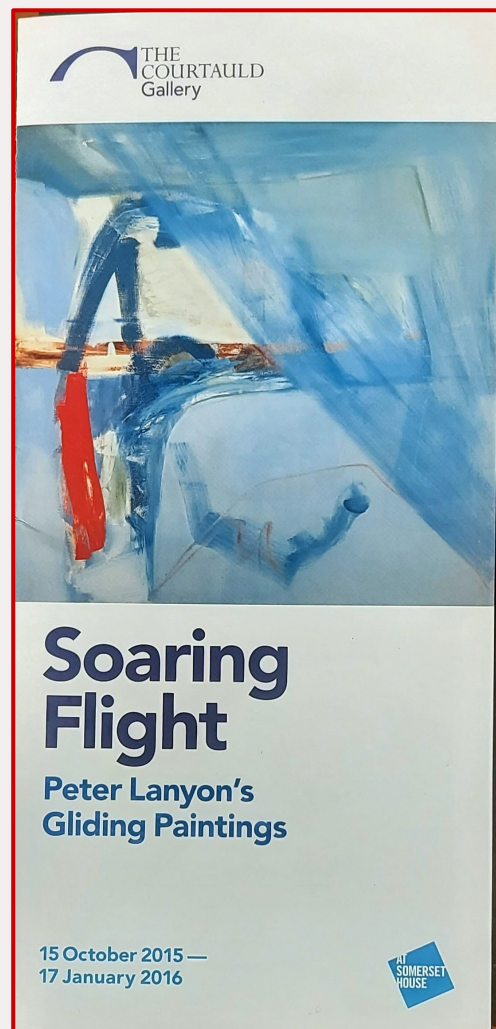
Full many a glorious morning have I seen
 Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.
 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
 With ugly wrack on his celestial face
 And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
 Stealing unseen to west with his disgrace.

To which we can only say "Yeah, been there brother!". In another sonnet, comparing his beloved to a summer's day, one line got our weather this year right: "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May". Shakespeare was just out by a month; our rough winds came in June and July.

On a more positive note, if you want a motto for a cross-country task or free flight, then there's no one better than Wordsworth. He had a strong line in clouds ("Wandering lonely as", etc), but the bit I

like comes near the start of his long autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*. Setting out on that he writes:

The earth is all before me. With a heart
 Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
 I look about; and should the chosen guide
 Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
 I cannot miss my way.



It's all there: check your position, look out, go to the next likely cloud, set your course, and enjoy. Words to stick on your instrument panel.

There's a poem by W. S. Graham called "The Thermal Stair", which commemorates his friend the painter Peter Lanyon, who died in 1964 after his glider crashed on approach – death

again. But it is one of the few poems that really mention gliding. Graham and Lanyon were members of the artistic community based around St Ives in Cornwall. Lanyon found inspiration for his large semi-abstract paintings in the aerial views of the landscape and coast that he got while gliding. Another artist at St Ives was Tony O'Malley, from Callan Co. Kilkenny. Lanyon was his

Lines of Flight (contd)

friend and mentor, and influenced much of O'Malley's later work. In later life O'Malley returned to Kilkenny, and he and the Connolly family of Bagenalstown were acquainted. – Brian Connolly, of course, was a CFI and prime mover in DGC during the 1980s and 1990s. Lanyon's paintings, informed by the ever-changing view from a soaring glider, represent the most sustained interaction between gliding and art that I know of; they have titles like "Cloud Base", "Thermal", "Cross-Country" etc

For an aerial view of own territory here, Austin Clarke offers a bird's eye view of our local soaring range. He imagines a raven (curiously enough, it calls "Grob! Grob!", but Clarke doesn't mean the glider) setting out from Kippure and coming to the "green/ Bowl set among hills, Punchestown, its race-course" and sees

.....the pewter cloud

Above Church Mountain, past the double lake,

Flaps by the King's River, sandy spots.

Behind him the dairy farms – the acres tree'd

Thin-streamed – then flies up where the gusts are blowing

Over the ceannavaun.

Anyway, before I run out of my allotted space here, I do want to share my little rewrite of

the Graves poem I quoted at the beginning – with an inclusion of our own swallows rather than swifts.

This glider pilot, pale and white,
 On my umpteenth training flight,
 Has not so far, it's fair to state,
 Mastered the art of flying straight.
 Yet I've (who knows so well as I)
 A just sense of how not to fly.
 In every turn I skid and slip
 And let the nose go up, then dip..
 Even the aerobatic swallow
 Would find me difficult to follow.



I dedicate that to all pilots in training, - but hey, co-ordination does come in the end.

CONTROLLED DEFLECTION

To win a bottle of wine, enter this quiz set by Q-Nim

This puzzle by Q-Nim features three multiple-choice questions that somehow didn't get included in the SPL examination papers. Again, a bottle of wine for a correct answer received before next issue of *What'sUp* goes to print and is picked from the bulging email inbox of the editor.

TAKE OFF

1. ***We often fly over or near this stone on climb-outs. What neighbouring townland is it situated in?***

- Cradockstown West
- Morganstown
- Punchestown Great
- Swordlesltown South



2. ***X-COUNTRY DISTANCE -around the houses and beyond***

Here's an ambitious task around turnpoints selected from the roadmap of Ireland. The start line is a couple of miles west of our airfield at X Mile House. The first three turnpoints are X Mile House, another X Mile House, and an Xmilehouse (each in a different province south of the border). Then it's into Munster for Xmilebridge, another Xmilebridge, Xmileborris and a very remote finish at Xmilehouse (not the same as the start line). That's eight Xes in sum; what is the total "mileage" adding together the different values of X?

- A: 33 miles B: 34 miles C: 35 miles D: 36 miles

3. ***WHAT'S UP? – Some of these are...***

All of the following might be said to end up in America, and all but one have been seen in the skies over Kildare, recently or in the past. Which is the odd one out, and why?

- A: Rain cloud; B; Astral swan; C; Sun god; D: Flying disc.

Interesting Links & Books



Messerschmitt Me 163B-1a Komet at the National Museum of Flight in East Fortune, Scotland

At 600MPH, the Me 163 Komet was the fastest aircraft - and glider—of WW2. Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown talks about his exciting—if somewhat terrifying—flight in this very aircraft.

[More about the Me 163 and the Museum of Flight here](#)

Captain Eric Winkle Brown was a WW2 Test Pilot who held the world record for the number of aircraft types flown, at 487.

[More about Captain Eric Winkle Brown here.](#)

Eric Brown's fascinating Autobiography:

[Wings on My Sleeve](#)

CONTROLLED DEFLECTION

Below is the solution to the September quiz

“NOT A TOUGH ONE” - Solution

Each of the following phrases is a clue to a member of a particular set – with one member of the set omitted. Once you identify a couple of answers the other members of the set should follow easily. The phrases were clues to the NATO alphabet in random order, and with Q-Nim’s initial, “Quebec” omitted. The initials of the puzzle title were another oblique clue. Solution as follows (Answer in **bold**, with explanation in square brackets):

The bottle of fancy wine available to the winner was not awarded

Bronze energy? **Tango** [tan + go]
Tug drugs **Yankee** [yank + E and E]
Two secretaries **Papa** [PA (personal assistant) twice]
“NYMPH” - Nymph” - “nymph . . .”? **Echo** [name of a Greek nymph]
Wing - or mouth **Delta** [river mouth]
Fib follows overcook **Charlie** [char + lie]
Sounds as if something’s stirring in the kitchen
Whiskey [e.g. egg whisk]
Winner **Victor**
I make a mistake in South Africa **Sierra** [“I err” in S.A.]
Sounds as if he should speak to himself **Mike** [sounds like “mic”]
Ca. one seventieth of 154 lbs **Kilo**
Mail sorted **Lima** [anagram]
Mountain – high area **Alpha** [alp + h a]
Same clothes **Uniform** [double definition]
Not out, and help is returning **India** [in + “aid” backwards]
Sell back **Golf** [“flog” reversed]
Capital O **Romeo** [Rome + o]
Sexy letter **Hotel** [hot + el]
Eleventh of twelve **November**
Communist follows beast following follow **Foxtrot** [trot {skyist} after “ox” after f(ollow)]
Support in front – half over over **Bravo** [bra + ov reversed]
Adult-rated sunbeam **X ray**
Large vehicle **Oscar** [o(ut)-s(ize) + car]
Heroine – to a T! **Juliet** [Shakespeare’s Juliet + t]
Temporally GMT. **Zulu** [Time zone UTC/GMT + 0 hours]

Educational Links :

[Circuit planning](#)—Walt Kilroy

[Take-off and aerotow](#) - Rudi Villing

[Turning](#) - Trevor McHugh

[Approach and landing](#) - Ron Staeps

[September Newsletter](#)

If you have seen anything aviation related or read any books you think worth recommending, please send a link to Brian

Leinster Gliding Centre Newsletter

December 2023

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Thank you to all the contributors—if you too would like to see your story in this prestigious newsletter, I would love to hear from you!