

What's Up?



The Leinster Gliding Centre Newsletter

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A Welcome from our Chairman

It's March and that means that winter is changing to spring, and at LGC, preparations are underway for the upcoming soaring season. Could there be another 200km, 300km or heck, even another 500km flight in the year ahead? Oh, I love this time of year!

On the flying front, despite huge efforts by our CFI and duty crews to keep flying wherever possible over the winter months, the combination of weather and the resultant sodden runway conditions have kept us frustratingly on the ground. But, as I write, just two days after winter wonderland conditions outside my window, it's now wall-to-wall blue sky

and things are already drying out. So, get your flying kit ready, check your maps and pack the hats and gloves, because Paddy's Day is usually the cut-over date that sees us back in the air on a regular basis. Be sure to set yourself your goals for the upcoming year and then speak to the instructors on what is needed to achieve them.

March also means that we are heading towards our AGM; that time of the year when we look back at what was achieved in the prior year and what is planned for the upcoming one. As usual, there will be some changes to the Committee, and I am hoping that the incoming

A Welcome from our Chairman (contd)

committee will reflect the greater gender balance that now exists at LGC.

As we look to the future, you can expect to hear more from me in relation to planning; planning for the long-term future which is a core part of the Committee's job, but also planning for improvements, repair and maintenance of what we already have. Whether or not you wish to participate on the Committee (and if you do, be sure to put your name forward), please do consider how you can be a part of the continuous improvement of our club.

If you have IT skills, we need you. If you have carpentry skills, we need you. If you get a kick out of organising club social events, we.... you get the idea! Our Site Officer and Technical Officer are

tasked with organising the various club maintenance activities. These are busy jobs and the volunteers who've taken on the roles rely on the help and assistance of others, so please speak with them to discover where you can help.

One last word, over recent months there may not have been much flying conducted, but there has been a colossal effort going on behind the scenes to get things ready. Whether it was our tuggies grabbing brief weather windows to get up in the tug for currency purposes or aircraft being readied for their annual inspections, the effort has been enormous and carried out largely out of view. Our CFI has had annual reports to do, our treasurer the annual financial statements to prepare – all this has taken a lot of effort and time and is done to ensure that we are ready to go when the weather improves.

LGC Travel Feature:

Kevin Houlihan - Namibia Adventure

Part 2



Kevin began his gliding career at the Dublin Gliding Club in 1981, went solo in 1982 and became an Instructor in 1983. He has also served as the DGC Chief Flying Instructor.

A retired solicitor, Kevin has many records under his belt including the only glider pilot to have flown 500kms in Ireland. He is also the only pilot to have flown between LGC and the Ulster Gliding club – in both directions. This is the second of a two part article . [You can read Part 1 here](#)

Airspace. Along with the African experience on the ground, the airspace arrangements agreed with the authorities were a very pleasant surprise, particularly compared to the unnecessarily restrictive situation at home. During my visits, almost the entire southern half of the country, an area 500x400 kms, was designated a gliding sector up to FL195. Power pilots had to switch to the gliding frequencies and give regular position reports! It extended another 900x200 kms into neighbouring Botswana and the northern finger of South Africa, which as I mentioned above, was available up to 14,500', in both cases with absolutely no formalities. During one flight, I deliberately did a circle which brought me from Namibia

into Botswana, then South Africa and back into Namibia just to be able to say I had done it. And now I just have! At the northern end of the glider sector was a semi-circular band. This



was an outer ring around Windhoek and was agreed for Kiripotib pilots up to FL145. Since my visits, the gliding sector has been extended in all directions and pilots can freely go practically anywhere in the country up to FL145 while the original sector up to FL195 remains!

The flying. The routine is to get to the gliders around 7am so as to get them ready before it gets too hot. This includes ensuring enough fuel and



oxygen is on board for the day (all gliders are self launching and most of the day will be spent above 12,000'). Breakfast is served at 8am with a daily briefing following at 9am. This includes a detailed met. analysis and suggestions where to go. Thermals kick

Namibian Adventure (contd)

off around 10:20 and gliders take to the air almost immediately, soaring until sunset, which is around 18:15 with almost instant darkness.

The hope is to find a convergence and run along it



A thermal kicks up

for distance. Flights of 1,000kms and more (OLC (OnLine Competition)) are common. The convergences are caused when warm moist(er) air from the Indian Ocean streaming southwest meets cold dry air coming north up along the west coast. They normally set up running north/south along the eastern side of the country. This means hav-

ing to work the low, weak morning thermals to get to them - up to 200kms away! This low, hot & dusty initial part of the flight is known as 'coalmining'! Thermals top out at 6500' gradually rising to 8,000'. Remember – the terrain is at c.4,500' and unlandable!

Then. maybe after an hour and a half, you go for the next thermal and suddenly – bang – stonking lift up to maybe 12,000'. Next one 14,500' and you're off. It seems like you're operating in different air. Thermals are stronger, better organised and go way higher! Connect with a convergence then and you're soon at cloudbase, maybe 19,000'. From then, energy is used for speed, not height, and runs of 200kms at 200kph are not unusual. There can be two, sometimes even three, lines of clouds. The second one in usually gives the stronger lift. If you notice a line with rain falling from some of it that's where the strongest lift will be. "Always go for the rain" is the mantra.

There aren't always cloudstreets and even when there are they can stop short of your planned turnpoint (yes, even pilots not flying declared tasks will have a plan to try to get to a turnpoint or two as a measure towards a hoped for distance). However, there are usually the normal thermals to keep you going (assuming you can relate to 10-12 knot climbs to 19,000' as being normal!). In that case the pilot runs off the end of the street, thermals a distance out, maybe 180kms, then back the same way to pick up the convergence again. A common target, as an area to pick up a convergence in the morning and end up back at in the evening for a final glide home, is Gobabis. This is c.135kms north-east of Veronica, the closest gliding centre. It's a disused airfield with a large concrete runway, specifically drawn to your attention as a land out option if necessary. However, the folklore has it that Gobabis has the largest concentration of poisonous snakes in the world! If a convergence isn't ex-

Namibian Adventure (contd)

pected, pilots sometimes head west to the mountains where lines of thermal activity can also allow big distances. Quite often the plan can be to fly a convergence down the east side, cross westwards then fly over the mountains back northwards, just for variety!

If you do stay in the air for the day, the final glide home can be magic. After the rush of charging along convergences and the battles with thermals trying to rip your wings off, you find yourself gliding through clear skies, air smooth but seemingly buoyant everywhere, I suspect being pushed upwards by the baking hot floor below. The leg home, quite often along the same route taken out, is a complete but very welcome contrast to the 'coalmining' earlier.

I have stated above that the terrain was unlanda-



Landing in a quiver tree not advised....

ble. Is that true? In a nutshell, yes. There are simply no fields anywhere. There are airstrips at Gobabis, mentioned above, Rehoboth to the west

and Mariental to the south. Fine if you happen to be within gliding range but generally about as useful as saying Cork, Knock or Shannon are there for us. There are farm strips here and there for flying doctor type services but these are generally not wide enough to suit gliders. There are small salt pans here and there but again, may not be large enough to land on and this is very hard to judge at height. These are not an option if there has been rain. There is absolutely nothing in Botswana or the bit of South Africa used.

The overall conditions dictate certain precautions.

All gliding centres have OGN (Open Glider Network) receivers and gliders are tracked. Due to the flat terrain, the vast majority of soaring will be within tracking range of one of the centres. Data is displayed on large screens at the lodges. Pilots must make position reports every 45-60 minutes. Most gliders are equipped with ELTs (Electronic Trackers). In addition, pilots carry Spot or Magellan locators, sometimes one of each, and a first aid kit. These are attached to the 'chute straps so that if you have to bail out, they will be with you. A second mobile phone is carried with a fully charged battery at all times. The pilot must have 5 litres of water in the cockpit and, in the event of an attempted land-out, water ballast is not dumped. Last but not least, all the gliders are self-launchers so hopefully an 'iron thermal' will help avert a disaster if a pilot cannot climb away.

There's so much more to say but I'm already past double the length requested for the piece. I'm happy to talk further with members about the experience any time.

Kevin.

Editor's Note: You can read Part 1 of Kevin's story in the [September edition of What's Up here.](#)

Cecily Begley & Ian de Bri - New Members' Corner

How to be a Forward Marshall



Cecily is Chief Flying Instructor of the Leinster Gliding Centre. Ian, who is Chief Duty Pilot, had his first introductory flight at DGC in 2015, left for a couple of years and qualified as a solo pilot in June 2022. As Chief Duty Pilot, he organises Duty Pilots, who are responsible for ensuring that gliders and equipment are ready for use each week, as well as safe and efficient operations on the airfield. Ian works as a psychotherapist and also works part time in film post production.



The Forward Marshall

One key role each flying day is the "Forward Marshall"; this is a lovely job, nice and peaceful most of the time. Ideally, you will be shown how to do the FM tasks by an experienced club member, but these notes may help. Your main task is to make sure that the upwind end of the runway is clear before each glider takes off. You may also be asked to retrieve a landed glider to the parking bay or back to the launch-point.

1. Positioning – please park the buggy at the innermost downwind corner of the parking bay, facing out, so that a glider can taxi safely past you. You can then assist the crew to bring the glider further in, and rotate it ready for towing back to the launch-point. Ideally, the retrieve buggy should line up ready to start towing back as soon as the next launch has gone (just check, as it moves, that there hasn't been a cable-break and the launched glider doesn't need the runway to land back on).

2. Radio preparation – check you know how to turn on the radio, and turn the volume up almost full. Use the squelch controls to reduce the static noise to barely audible. Check the radio is on 130.40. Check functioning by pressing the transmit button and saying "Launch-point, Forward Marshall, radio check please". Launch-point will respond with "Strength 5" (or similar) and you can reply with "Reading you strength 5 also" (or similar). In general, radios should be held upright,

stored safely in a holder on the buggy, & not carried/swung by their aerials (rubber ducks).



3. Radio

usage – before transmitting, engage brain, think what you want to say and listen for a few seconds to ensure you are not interrupting a transmission.

Avoid transmitting during the first 300' of a launch and while an aircraft is on final approach or landing. Keep messages short and to the point, use correct terminology and avoid idle chatter. To speak, hold the microphone 4-5 cms from your mouth and at a slight angle so that you are speaking across not into it, press the transmit button, wait a second, say the call-sign of the station you are speaking to, give your call-sign, pass your message clearly, release the button.

4. Keeping the runway clear –

if a glider lands on the runway at your end, you can start retrieving it with the buggy. The instructor or pilot will let you know whether to take it into your parking bay, or back to the launch-point. When pedestrians or gliders being towed approach O3 end you can wave them on if a launch has just gone and no aircraft is on circuit. In general, gliders will be landing on the grass so it is usually OK for people to cross to your parking area while they are on circuit and landing.

New Members' Corner—(contd)

The key time to check that the runway is clear is when you hear the tug engine starting up, or opening the throttle to taxi out; then you will be ready to give a quick response when asked by the tug if the runway is clear. If someone is approaching the windsock at that time, walk clear of the buggy and hold both arms up above your head until they stop. When the launch has passed by, you can wave them on.

5. Radio messages – the tug will usually say “Oscar Oscar taking up slack, Forward Marshall is the runway clear?” You respond “Affirm” (not “Affirmative”) if it is, or “Neg-a-tive” if it is not.

If you are pulling a glider off the runway, or a member is running off, you can say “Negative, standby one” - means ‘runway is blocked, wait and I will call you in one minute’. Then you call “Oscar Oscar (or India Kilo), Forward Marshall, runway is clear.”

Other messages you might send: “Launch-point, Forward Marshall, is a launch imminent?” (if someone is waiting to cross the runway); “LP, FM, please can someone relieve me?”; “LP, FM, please send a buggy to retrieve the 13.” Messages you might receive: “FM, LP, can you bring the 13 back here?”; “FM, LP, please can you help the tug re-fuel?”; “FM, LP, that was the last launch.”

6. Radio terminology – “Roger” means “I understand” (could be used to answer the last message above); “Wilco”, means “I understand and will comply” (to answer the request to retrieve the 13); (NB ‘Roger’ and ‘Wilco’ should not be said together, despite what you see in old war films); “Say again” is used if you didn’t understand the message; “Request” asks permission to do something (“Request to back-track K-13”). Use “Repeat” to emphasise a point (when the launch-point of the day is 21 “Landing 03, repeat 03”).

Being FM can be enjoyable, but please don’t let yourself get stuck there – always ask for relief if you are cold, tired or hungry, and definitely when it is your turn to fly!



Don't get stuck at the end of the runway

Committee Corner— Club News

Trevor McHugh



Recent meetings have been focused on housekeeping works, combined with securing the logistics for transporting GLZ to Poland for her re-finish / repair works. Additionally, there has been ongoing work to get India Kilo's engine back from the UK, together with an enormously frustrating situation that saw a replacement propeller being delivered to us in a damaged state and needing an immediate replacement.

The result has been a bureaucratic nightmare of truly Brexit proportions. However, courtesy of an enormous amount of time and energy donated by various committee members, work on GLZ is now well underway and a further replacement propeller was delivered directly from the US manufacturers.

Separately. the Committee has been working on various long term projects, including a bursary for young people. This will be funded, initially, through proceeds from the book sale that Cecily has been operating and future funding channels are being investigated in order to ensure that this is a sustainable initiative. To date, €1,000 has been put in place for this and more details will be announced shortly.

The biggest undertaking commenced by this Committee, and which will need to be completed by the incoming one, is a 10 year development plan for LGC. This work was commenced some months ago. Once completed, the new Committee will call a members' meeting to present the plan to club members for feedback, prior to its finalisation and the beginning of its implementation.

The last item of this Committee's work agenda has been, of course, preparation for the upcoming AGM on March 20th, 2024 and we look forward to "seeing" you all at this. Zoom details will be sent by email.

Gliding Adventures in Hungary

Colin King

Colin studied aeronautical engineering but now works in medical device development. He took his first glider flight in 1994 and has since gained his Silver badge. He moved to Cork for work and to do more sailing. The job worked out – the sailing didn't and he hasn't been on a boat since! Colin is an LGC Instructor and has a share in a Lak 17 glider.



Gate Guardian

My base for the visit was Dunaújváros airfield, situated a few kilometres south of the city on the banks of the Danube river. A large grass airfield, it boasts three parallel runways oriented 14/32, the longest stretching 900 m. A very large hangar will induce envy in all Gowran Grange residents - unless you need to find an aircraft from the back of the hangar! The airfield is home to two gliding clubs and hosts a commercial parachuting operation on weekends. A decommissioned MIG stands guard at the airfield entrance.

Day 1 commenced with a filling Hungarian breakfast of sausage and eggs, followed by rigging Golf Juli-



On the Grid © Andras Mazan

In early 2023, I twisted Andy Mazan's arm to invite me to fly in Hungary, a plan originally conceived in early 2020 but which went awry for obvious reasons. A reboot was long overdue. Over the past few years, I have taken some small steps in my cross country gliding ambitions and I was keen to progress with the promise of more favourable and reliable weather than Ireland offers.

I learnt that the best conditions usually occur in July and August, though June and September can still offer decent soaring days. Taking into account personal commitments and aircraft availability, I planned a two-week visit starting mid-June.

et, my LS4 for the week, and a familiarisation with the local area and airspace. The airspace to the West and South was largely unrestricted. Ground familiarisa-

Adventures in Hungary (contd)

tion, however, revealed a clue as to why June was not the most favoured month. Local fields were



Golf Juliet ready for the day ahead.

abundant with various crops, all of considerable height! Fields of wheat, artichokes and sunflowers surrounded the airfield. Subsequent views from above confirmed that this was repeated across large areas of the country, with few grass fields. Fortunately, fields tended to be large and flat with unobstructed approaches. However, an outlanding would have been interesting given the crops - occasional fields being harvested only in the final days of my stay.

Aerotowing behind a Rallye tug into the promising sky provided lively conditions in a hot



Airfield to the right of the antenna with the nearby bridge across the Danube.

cockpit. Identifying the airfield was aided by the steelworks situated 5 km to the north, a substantial bridge across the Danube to the east, and motorways to the north and west of the airfield. This initial flight served as a glider and local area familiarisation exercise, reaching 20 km out to Sárbogárd to the West, with thermals up to 5500'. The 2 hour flight was a pleasant introduction to flying in Dunaújváros.

Day 2 dawned with the promise of favourable conditions and a gaggle of glider pilots keen to do some cross country flying. A 342 km triangle group task was



En route

set: Dunaújváros Tower (S), Tab (69 km), Sándorfalva (164 km), Dunaújváros Tower (109 km).

I set off to the West after a short climb to 5500', cruising past Sárbogárd without having to stop for thermals, just pulling up in the lift - this looks easy I begin to think! Halfway to Tab and with Lake Balaton in view, conditions changed and it became necessary to stop for thermals and work for climbs. Andy, flying a Ventus, had started after me and caught up at Tab. I was down to 2500', working hard, but Andy marked a

Adventures in Hungary (contd)

thermal and we subsequently moved off to the South East in the direction of Sándorfalva. I regretted not taking a photograph of Lake Balaton from the air - something to do again. Conditions were nice but certainly not as easy as the first 30 km. We crossed over the Danube south of Paks, Andy staying nearby to ensure I didn't attract any fighter jets protecting the nuclear power plant.

Once clear, Andy accelerated and I continued on my own, with occasional sightings of other gliders on the task. Approaching Sándorfalva, it was marked by a large lake to the South. Across the lake was the city of Szeged and views over the borders into Serbia and Romania. The final leg back to Dunaújváros was straightforward with good thermals. The bridge and steel works served as prominent landmarks from afar. I completed the task at a speed of 74 km/hr - not very impressive compared to the locals but a very enjoyable first cross country flight in Hungary. If it was this good on my first cross country day here, the days ahead held wonderful possibilities!

After a great start, aspirations increased and a group task of 409 km was set on the following day: Dunaújváros Tower (S), Sándorfalva (109 km), Sárbogárd (129 Km), Kiskunmajsa (96 km), Dunaújváros Tower (76 km).

The first leg down to Sándorfalva progressed smoothly, with climbs up to 6500' over familiar terrain. Reaching the turnpoint, nice views out to Szeged were presented again, followed by a turn back to the north west for Sárbogárd. Crossing the Danube, the sky ahead was very blue, with a lone cumulus cloud on the far side of the river. A climb to cloudbase gave me sufficient altitude to reach the turn point at Sárbogárd and return back to clouds near the river. High clouds were moving

in from the north west, killing most lift to the west of the Danube. I pushed back east across the Danube heading towards Kiskunmajsa but I subsequently retreated to the nearby airfield after completing 255 km of the task. Andy's continued flight until later in the day confirmed that I would have had time to complete the task but, alas, I didn't risk it.

Subsequent days delivered reasonable weather for local soaring but no great cross country condi-



Lake Balaton

tions. A week after the last cross country flight I was anxious to have another go. Cumulus started popping, I took an aerotow and climbed to 4000' off tow. I'd be very happy with that back home, so I decided it was worth an attempt at the 232 km task I had declared: Dunaújváros Tower (S), Karád (85 km), Németkér (70 km), Kölesd (27 km), Dunaújváros Tower (50 km).

Setting off, it was relatively calm until I found a thermal at Sárbogárd, giving me some confidence to push on. Another good climb at the halfway point on the first leg convinced me that conditions must be improving. I continued on to Karád where this time I did get a photograph of Lake Balaton in the distance. Turning back to the west, clouds were dissipating fast,

Adventures in Hungary (contd)

as was my bravado. I was now in survival mode and as I subsequently learnt, had a large audience of Hungarian glider pilots live tracking my flight online, pondering who was stupid enough to be flying cross country today. I wasn't alone in my thoughts! The remainder of the flight was a search for the slightest wisp of a cloud or any potential ground features that might trigger a thermal. Occasional weak thermals were found, none amounting to much. Collectively they allowed me to inch closer to home. Anxiety levels remained high until quite close to the airfield. I did make it back, much to my relief, with 143 km of the task completed.



Dunaföldvár by the banks of the Danube

My final day of flying was a little different. I had a long hoped for flight in Peter Moskovits'



Colin & Andy in Andy's T21

immaculate T21, my first flight in an open cockpit aircraft - thank you Peter. This was followed by some winch training in a Ka7 with local instructor Tamás. A lovely day doing some different flying.

I didn't spend all my time flying - Hungary has lots to see and do. The food was universally good and a Pálinka was always welcome after dinner. Local to the airfield I visited the town of Dunaf-

öldvár a short distance South along the Danube. There I received a personal tour of the local museum, learning that Irish visitors were a very rare occurrence. Additionally, I spent two days exploring Budapest, a beautiful city well worth a longer visit.

Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Central Europe, merited a visit from the ground too.

I had a fantastic two weeks in Hungary. Thank you to Andy for organising it and to everyone there for the warm welcome. Though the weather didn't deliver as many cross country days as hoped for, it was still a very enjoyable gliding trip. 8 flights totalling over 25 hours in the LS4, 6 winch launches in a Ka7, and a flight in the T21. A great way to spend a couple of weeks.

CONTROLLED DEFLECTION

Education and Fun—we do it all! Try this brain teaser set by Q-Nim



This wordsearch contains all you need for a short flight: CBSIFTCBE, LUST, as well as commands to initiate the launch. You'll also find the club glider fleet trigraphs, the two tugs (two letters each) and the K8 – that is, 8 Ks. Watch out for the CFI, fully present, and Leinster Gliding Centre appearing briefly. Answers may run in any sense – upwind and downwind, climbing or sinking either vertically or diagonally.

To win the wine: Answer both questions and submit the Wordsearch, either as a print-out with all relevant items suitably marked, OR as a list of the items and their orientation in the grid (N(orth), E, SW, etc). That should be enough to pass a wet non-flying day!

Q-Nim's Spring Puzzle

There were no correct answers to the December questions, so I have done a "go around" and reframed two of them in slightly simpler terms. And I've added a Wordsearch (above). Meanwhile, here's the answer to the question which asked you place a local orthostat, as pictured below.

Question 1: Here's a shorter task around turn points selected from the roadmap of Ireland. The start line is a couple of miles west of our airfield at X Mile House. You get around X Mile Borris, and X Mile Bridge in Clare, but land out in Cork at Xpohouse, where you enjoy a drink while waiting for a retrieve and totting up the "mileage". Adding together the different values of X, what is the total?

A: 10 miles B: 11 miles C: 12 miles D: 13 miles

The handsome standing stone is in Cradockstown



West, across the road from the main gate to Punchestown racecourse. It is a "twin" to the better-known long stone situated a couple of hundred yards away in Punchestown itself. But this one is of more interest to us, as it is under our climb-out from 03, and the field it is in would be a handy land-out in the event of a launch failure –

the west side of the field has quite a slope, but the east side is spacious and level. Just avoid the stone!

Question 2: Handicapped version

WHAT'S UP? – Some of the following are

All of these have wings and share an American ending, but only four are gliders; which is the odd one out?

A: Rain cloud; B; Astral swan; C: Sun god; D Mares' Tails; E: Flying disc.

Useful and Educational Links:

[Aerotowing](#) - Collin King

[Stalls and Spins](#) - Kieran Commins

[Approach & Landing](#) - Peter Denman

[Circuit planning](#) - Walt Kilroy

[Turning](#) - Trevor McHugh

[Approach and landing](#) - Ron Staeps

[September Newsletter](#) [December Newsletter](#)

Thank you to all the contributors . 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

March 2024

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Front Cover Photo: EGU