

# Bicester Gliding Centre

## Young Member Information Sheet

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### **An Introduction to gliding**

Gliding is a totally weather dependent and not inexpensive sport. That said, the cost compares very favourably to other forms of flying (powered aircraft for example) and when combined with the savings and opportunities brought to you by the BGC Cadet Membership scheme becomes considerably more affordable.

Gliding is the art and science of flying unpowered aircraft, staying aloft by taking advantage of rising air from thermals, hills and mountains. There are many forms of gliding; soaring, hang-gliding and paragliding for example.

At the Bicester Gliding Centre (BGC) we fly fixed wing gliders, training on aircraft made of traditional materials and then progress onto sleek fibreglass machines. Modern gliders are highly efficient designs and the best can glide at a ratio of 60:1 (that is to say for every metre of vertical height, you can glide for 60 meters in a straight line). Pilots regularly take these gliders cross country on flights of hundreds of kilometres. 300km would be a fairly standard jaunt for a good day and 750km flights are becoming increasingly common. In and around this area this is mostly done by hopping from cloud to cloud, circling in the rising air underneath. In Wales & Scotland more exotic forms of lift can be found when the wind blows up and over the hills and mountains, so when the winter sets in and the thermals die down in the flatlands many of us make pilgrimages to these sites.

You can go solo at age 14 – imagine, soaring across the rolling English countryside at 3000' years before your friends can even start to learn to drive! Gliders are also capable of aerobatics, and there are several instructors at the club who teach loops, rolls, inverted flying and all manner of stomach-testing manoeuvres. There are national and international competitions of all classes and standards, cross country, aerobatics, and various novelties. There is even one specifically for solo pilots under 25 years old – the Junior Nationals - and several of our Cadet Scheme members have gone on to fly in those. Other pilots just enjoy flying for the sake of it and steer clear of the competitive element.

## Bicester Gliding Centre as a Club

Bicester Gliding Centre is one of the bigger clubs in the country and we fly seven days a week apart from part of November, December and January when we fly every weekend where possible and each Wednesday. It is, however, a club with the vast majority of tasks, including maintenance and instruction, being performed by volunteers. As such we expect all members to get involved with making flying happen. Many new members will have had their first taste of the club from a trial lesson, either directly with the club or via a commercial partner. They will have turned up at an appointed time with the airfield already setup and, had their lesson and then left as a very happy student.

**Normal Club operation is slightly different and even though instruction is bookable (morning and afternoon sessions) we do expect those in the morning to help set up and those in the afternoon to help clear up and put the aircraft back in the hanger. Remember the instructors and other people that make that day's flying happen are volunteers and this is a club not a commercial flight training operation. As such when coming out to fly expect to spend either a half or a full day on the airfield.**

## Membership for Young Pilots & Costs

There are two classes of membership for young pilots; 'Junior' and 'Cadet'.

The 'Junior' membership category is available to any person under the age of 25 and brings with it a some big discounts on membership and some reduced flying fees. There is a further category for those under 18 of 'Cadet' membership. This latter category offers an even more reduced membership and flying fees but Cadet membership does have some extra conditions attached (see later) and is not automatically available to all.

Details of the various membership classes can be found on the club website at:

<http://www.bicestergliding.com/categories.htm>

The cost of gliding comes in several parts:-

- Membership
- Launch cost
- Aircraft Hire
- Instruction (free)

All the above costs depend on the class of membership and an up to date price list is available on the club website at:

<http://www.bicestergliding.com/fees.htm>

## **Help with the Costs of Flying**

There are several bursaries and grants that Juniors and Cadets can apply for. The club assists in helping young pilots to secure funding from these third party organisations as well as running our own Cadet Bursary scheme which is only open to Cadets (see later).

## **Bicester Gliding Centre Cadet Scheme & Cadet Bursaries**

At the Bicester Gliding Centre we run a bespoke Cadet Scheme. This scheme, as you will have seen from above, offers a very significant reduction to the cost of membership (typically 90%) and very much reduced flying fees. Applications for the scheme are made and have to be approved by the Cadet Scheme Manager. They are then re-approved annually based upon a Cadet's performance over the year. They are available to anyone who is a keen and budding pilot that meets the age criteria.

Those with cadet membership can apply once a year for Club bursaries for specific activities or training. The amounts awarded are variable and range up to £500.

## **Flying in Non-Club Aircraft at Bicester**

There are opportunities, while at the club, to fly in privately owned aircraft. Generally we feel that these flights compliment the training that club members get and are very worthwhile but we would encourage parents to discuss such opportunities with the pilot of the aircraft and seek the advice of senior club instructors prior to their son/daughter embarking on such a flight.

## **Club Camping and Catering Facilities**

The club has a designated "Junior Campsite" which is available at all times to those under 18 so that they can stay on site providing their stay is primarily for flying purposes. Rooms are also available but the communal "bunk room" is not available to minors. Additionally there are washing and showering facilities but these are shared with adult members.

There are licensed bar facilities at the club and all members are welcome to use them but under 18s are not permitted to purchase or consume alcohol. Alcohol is also banned in the "Junior Campsite".

Catered food is available during the day at the launch point at weekends. For the evenings, there are basic kitchen facilities at the club but also a large number of "Take Away" establishments that will deliver to the club entrance gate.

## **Behaviour**

Whilst the club is entirely realistic about young adults we do expect young pilots to understand and obey the club rules. Persons who feel that rules do not apply to them or who do not follow the reasonable directions of those in responsible positions will simply be asked to leave the airfield and the club. Flying cannot tolerate such behaviour.

## Activities that young pilots can be expecting to get involved in

All pilots are expected to fully participate in most of the operations inherent in running the Club on a daily basis, and so whilst this list is not exhaustive it illustrates the type of activities that we all get involved in while training.

- Learning to fly!
- Helping to take the aircraft and other equipment out of the hanger at the beginning and return it at the end of the day's flying activities
- Helping to perform Daily Inspections on gliders and Ground Equipment – including making sure that they are washed, dried and polished as necessary
- Showing visitors the Club's facilities
- Ensuring that visitors are not "ignored" or otherwise overlooked
- Escorting them to and from the launch point and introducing them to the Duty Instructor, Basic Instructor or Launch Marshal
- Log keeping at the Winch Launch point
- Log keeping at the Aerotow Launch point
- Assisting the duty pilot
- Hooking on and wing tip running
- Radio calls
- Cable pulling
- Glider recovery
- Driving the golf buggies
- Driving the club vehicles
- Driving the winch
- Helping rig and de-rig private and club gliders
- Fly in a tug aircraft while it is not towing gliders
- When solo join a "duty team" and commit to helping on a roster approximately once a month, though we always understand the importance of exam commitments

Note:- Several of the above activities do require specialist training (driving any of the club vehicles or the winch) and there are age limits associated with them. All instruction on these activities is strictly controlled by the club.

Occasionally activities will involve leaving site, for example to retrieve a glider that has landed away from the club. We consider this "normal" and encourage everyone to get involved but appreciate that parents would like to know if this is happening.

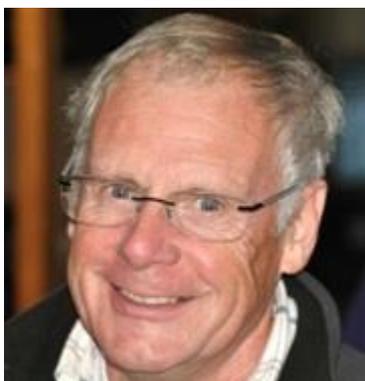
## Useful People & Club Contacts



**Julian Bane**

**Cadet Scheme Manager & Senior Instructor**

Julian is the main point of contact for parents and cadets.



**Roger Wilson**

**Club Chairman & Instructor**

The club is managed by an elected Committee and Roger is the elected Chairman; he is always available to help or point people in the direction of those that can help on almost any matter.



**Dave Watt**

**Chief Flying Instructor**

Dave is responsible for all flying activities and always happy to give advice on flying matters for which he has considerable experience as both a national competition pilot and commercial pilot.



**Alan Twigg (known as 'Twiggy')**

**Airfield Manager & Senior Instructor**

Twiggy is responsible for all mid-week flying and club facilities. An excellent contact for all activities outside the usual club weekend operation.