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Meet the Members - Keith Buchan

My first flight at Portmoak was aged 14 on a day when the weather wasn't the best with little or no flying activity. However, an Instructor agreed to do the flight and with the then customary briefing, 'if I say bail out, don't say pardon..' off we went to the Bishop hill.

I must have been impressed, as my first logged flight was in April 1971 in a T21B. The winch launch and 5 minutes cost 6 shillings, or 30p in new money. (Decimalisation started in February that

brought to Portmoak from Aboyne. The most notable flight in the Sky was Diamond Height to 18,600 feet altitude from the winch at Portmoak



year.) There was no cadet scheme.

The first aerotow was 4 months later in an open-cockpit T21B behind a Tiger Moth. I wondered why the instructor was wearing goggles, and soon found out the reason. Eye-watering stuff. Solo in 1973 in a T21B aged 16, then the minimum age, later flying the club K8, T45 Swallow and KA6CR before buying a Slingsby T34 Sky in 1980 which was

and 63km silver distance to near Friockheim, all in 1 hour 47 minutes. Loggers didn't exist, so the 50km flight was usually a downwind dash to a field landing carrying a sealed barograph.

My work as an airport ground handling agent took me to England in 1981, and I flew from Husbands Bosworth and Kirton in Lindsey as well as frequent visits back to Portmoak. I obtained my PPL whilst working at East Midlands Airport in 1984, utilising the reduced hours exemption for a gliding Silver Badge holder.

Becoming an Airline Pilot had always been the goal, and I became Portmoak's summer Tug Pilot in April 1990. At that time, you needed 700 power hours to be allowed to sit the frozen ATPL exams. I had 103 hours and finished the season at 690 hours at the end of October. Usually 6 days a week including launching either one or two gliders on the Monday-

Friday full-time courses. Changed days! The club record for one tug pilot in one day stands, I think, at 72. I managed 56.

After quickly getting the extra hours, commercial ground school followed, then flying training to be issued a frozen ATPL and Instrument Rating in June 1991.

Airline pilot jobs were aplenty when I started the commercial training, but a sudden downturn resulted in a lull before managing to secure a position with an aerial photography company at Gamston.



Their maintenance organisation at Sturgate had some 6-seater twin aircraft on which I was qualified, so I did some work for them mainly based at Norwich. In the office next door was a company that operated Fisheries Patrol for the Scottish Government based at Prestwick, and being able to understand the local language was given a job in February 1997 on a Cessna Caravan II. I moved back to Scotland in July 1998.

In 2001, I transferred to airline flying on the Dornier 328 with ScotAirways based at Edinburgh and Dundee, then BMI Regional on the Embraer 135/145 jet in 2005. The jets were transferred to Loganair in 2019 and I finished my flying career with them on 30th. November 2021.

I currently have a share in the Discus 2C-FES and Grob 109B at Portmoak, also flying the EuroFOX Tugs.

Keith Buchan

First XC flights of the year

In the last few days some of our pilots had the first cross country flights of the year, with height gains of 13000'. Below is an extract from the BGA ladder, followed by the pilots comments and some pictures of their flights.

ing wind strength above 7000' – with the potential of forward breaking wave as a result. I'm not a fan of this as it tends to hurt as you bounce off the canopy and you have to keep counting wings to make sure you have a

Date	Pilot	Glider	MoP	Task	Cmts	Dist. km
15-Jan-24	Alastair Mutch	VENTUS 2CX (18.0)	☼	STF - EDZ - CRI - STF (40)	1	235.6
14-Jan-24	Keith Buchan	Discus 2c FES (18)	☼	GFG - MVN - CFF - MVN - CFF - GFG (83)	1	97.4
13-Jan-24	Alastair Mutch	VENTUS 2CX (18.0)	☼	DNG - STF - CAI - LEA - DNG (66)	1	222.4

Alastair Mutch

The forecast for Saturday 13th looked a bit blah with potentially weak wave lower down and reduc-

set. Sunday looked better but I couldn't fly then so it was Saturday or nothing. The forecasts had some hope as they indicated that

the wind picked up again above 10,000' and showed that there might be an upper wave sys-



could see that it was 8/8 cloud to the north with very little wave structure. Outside temperature (and inside) was below -20 deg C and it was not a day for going anywhere near clouds.

On reaching Spital I decided that the task wasn't on – due to the weak lift and time remaining of the day. I headed back down to Loch Earn and then home from there.

It was a nice day for admiring the views of the mountains and pretty clouds but not really great for a long XC flight. Still good to get a flight in dur-

tem.

I declared a 500km task with the intention of making a start then finding a hot spot to climb to 12,000' or so to allow me to blast around the task in the upper system. I arrived at Portmoak early to find fog on the airfield. It started to clear just after 10am and so I pulled out the glider and got ready to go. After a final canopy clean (thanks Stuart) I self-launched to 4,000' and headed off towards my start at St Fillans. At Dunning I found a bit of blue wave from 1,600' and worked this up to 6,000' before pushing on toward the start. After making a start I hung a left and headed up to Loch Tay to try and get some height. As expected the lift dropped off as I climbed and I had to move about a bit to find the start of the upper system at about 11,000' when the lift started to increase again. I was right on the edge of N560 and so was talking to Scottish in case I needed to climb into it. It's much easier for them if they know what you are doing and can talk to you if there are any potential conflicts.

I kept climbing until reaching 14,000' then headed off toward my next turn point at Rhynie. I had been talking to Roy Wilson who was flying A31 and had heard him heading back to Aboyne due to the weak lift and building cloud to the north. Hmmmm. The upper system was sort-of working but unmarked so I was turning 15 degrees each way as the lift dropped off trying to feel for the best energy. As I reached the Spital of Glenshee I



ing January but you need to be well wrapped up to enjoy it.

Keith Buchan

Sunday was promising good conditions with some wave locally, improving further north-west. Showers would likely be an issue in the mountains, and Aboyne's webcam showed snow in the morning. An aerotow towards Glenfarg in our Discus 2C FES was planned releasing at 3000 feet or above. There were well-defined wavebars ahead, but there were also quite a few showers looking beyond Perth.

I released at 3000 feet near Glenfarg and went a little way back to what seemed to be good lift on tow. The lift was marginal, and a small snow shower was now approaching Portmoak. Started the motor and flew east of the shower towards Bridge of Earn where the back of the shower was



evident.

Contacted wave from just above 2500 feet Portmoak QFE and it became stronger above 3000 feet. There was a previous task in the LX9000, so climbed high enough to be clear of cloud and start back at Glenfarg, then Methven and Crieff a couple of times.

It's quite satisfying flying at 100 KIAS and still climbing! I couldn't resist strong lift near Methven, so continued climbing reaching 16,442 altitude before the cold temperature persuaded me

to head home. I already have Diamond Height but I'm fairly sure it would have been achievable with ATC approval because of the engine off low point. Fortunately, the weekend P600/Tay CTA LOA had been activated with ATC at Prestwick. It's worth a read if you haven't already.

Note the difference between Indicated Airspeed and True Airspeed. The ASI under-reads at higher



altitudes. Also, altimeters misread due temperature difference from ISA. Both these subjects are a useful online read, especially pertinent when flying near controlled airspace. The glider has a transponder which I always have switched on. Although not necessary, I was in contact with Scottish Control on 124.500.

Royal Air Squadron Young Instructor Bursaries



The Royal Air Squadron is an association of friends with a common interest in all forms of private light aviation, promoting aviation in the United Kingdom and to de-

velop and maintain aviation links around the world.

With a focus on pilots between the ages of 16 and 26 years old and developing individual flying ap-

titude, knowledge and experience as well as encouraging professional ambition, the Royal Air Squadron is generously offering individual bursaries to support BGA assistant instructor training.

Individuals who meet the criteria to train as a BGA assistant gliding instructor (see the BGA website for more information on how to become an instructor at <https://members.gliding.co.uk/instructors/>), are aged between 16 and 26 years old, and would benefit from financial support, are encouraged to apply for a bursary. Applications must be supported by the pilot's Chief Flying Instructor and submitted via the application form below.

Closing date 15th February 24.

Applicants and their CFIs may be contacted by the BGA for further information.

The link to the application form is <https://forms.office.com/e/gMFNXTiRSp>.