

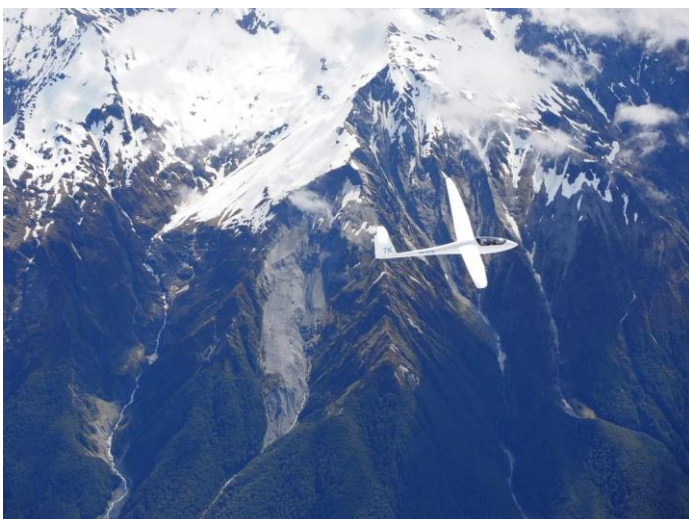


OGC Captains Log ~ Full Moon 16th November 2024

Another lunar month rolls by and the flying in Omarama has been awesome!
Here is a sample courtesy of Malcolm Wright.



Lake Pukaki ~ taken from Aoraki Mt Cook.

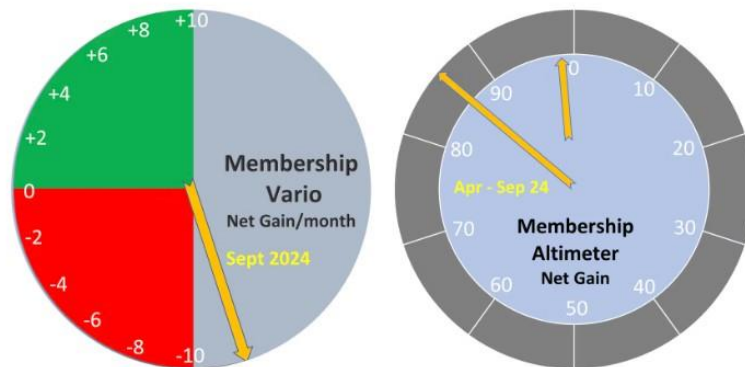


Malcolm in 7K ~ Taken by Milan

This Captains Log I have chosen a difficult and interesting topic. One that has been discussed and mulled over for many years by many gliding clubs worldwide. Perhaps my experience on the journey to XCP status can cast some light on this topic. 50 odd years instructing hang gliding might add a few gems into the mix too. Rest assured, gliding is in good hands and there are many small efforts each of us can make to help maintain a healthy club membership.

“How to entice new members and keep them” ~ A student and hang glider pilot point of view.

If you hang out at a gliding club, sooner or later the topic of dwindling membership comes up. Gliding NZ even has a membership variometer to show the gain or loss of members each month. <https://gliding.net.nz/> GNZ membership is currently 596.



I am here to tell you that there is always a little sink just before the lift! Here are a few ideas we can all keep in mind and work on to help maintain a healthy club membership.

Referrals and trial flights:

The best place to find new customers is through happy existing customers. If you are a current happy club member, you will most likely know one or two people that may like to give gliding a try. Help them book a flight, take them to the airfield and introduce them to the duty instructor. Help them to fill out a day membership form and show them around. Did you know you can charge their trial flight on your account, so they fly at club rates. Tip: Turning up at the winch launch caravan on a good day with a duty instructor and club twin glider available is gold. Statistics tell us that only 7% of people that try gliding will give it another go. So don't be surprised if your friend does not return. Keep trying and some will take on our amazing sport. Please check out the OGC planner or text Brian Sharpe on 0272481780 for bookings.

Money:

Gliding is not cheap and there is no escaping this. Especially when you are bashing out circuits during training. However, with careful budgeting and choosing good days to fly a student can easily progress towards their desired ratings relatively economically. It is a good idea to clearly point out the expected costs to student pilots. Setting up a monthly deposit of around \$300 into your club account could be an ideal way to keep control of your spending. Some clubs have different incentives to save you money. Courses, 6 trial flight deals, fixed rate flying schemes and high/low user subs are some of these. It pays to keep an eye on what is on offer. And remember to let students know that once you are rated, club flying does become cheaper because you will often only take one tow and be flying a single seater. And if a student disappears for a few years, I bet they will be working on finding money and time and then “They will be back!”

Time:

Gliding takes time and there is no escaping this either! A good day flying usually takes up a full day. Briefing, daily inspection, towing your glider onto the grid, waiting for a launch, an amazing flight, towing back to the hangar and après flying at the Wave Bar. Planning your time for flying is important. Spending a whole week flying twice a year is ideal for some while two or three weekend days a month is ideal for others. Flying every day is best! It is well worth helping new pilots to plan their flying time and work in with loved ones.

3.

“A Great Day on the Airfield” (Quote: Brian Sharpe):

People join a gliding club for two reasons. Firstly, because they have an interest in flying. Secondly because they want to feel like they belong. If each of us turns up in the morning with an attitude of having ‘a great day on the airfield’ then you will surely infect others. Involve everyone you see, be helpful, be enthusiastic, laugh and enjoy yourself. If a student pilot feels part of the fun, they are sure to join in and come back to the airfield for more! And don’t forget to invite new members back to the Wave Bar for some après flying fun.

Talk to new members:

A gliding club can seem a little intimidating at first. Turning up to the morning briefing and not knowing anyone is a bit like your first day at school. It is gold when a senior member takes an interest in you and asks some questions. Forging a new relationship is hard but being noticed by other members means a lot to students!

“Your new around here, where are you up to with your flying?”

“How was your flight yesterday?”

“What have you got planned for today?”

“Who is instructing you today?”

As an old club member you will be so appreciated for making an effort to talk with new club members.

Youth Glide does work:

I have been very impressed with the Youth Glide movement in Omarama. They are very much part of our club and give the most amazing experience to our younger members. Many have gone on to become adult club members while some have found work in the flying industry. Their flying is subsidized, and I have little doubt that many have taken a break when their training ends. However, they will be back to join the club and fly again when money and time allow. Personally I found hanging around the Youth Glide crew while they are having a training camp is an amazing way to get some cheaper circuits in with top class instructors. Just sitting on the camping chairs around the winch launch caravan is a valuable learning experience. So let student pilots know when a Youth Glide camp is on and find out if there is some spare instructor capacity.

New members that know how to glide already:

This is an amazingly easy way to gain new members. All we need to do is make new members feel welcome in our club and include them in our club activities. If you notice a new member then please make an effort and get to know them. Ask about where they have flown before. Help them with local knowledge and invite them to club social events. Too easy!

Be selective:

Flying is not for everyone and being a little selective of who we put our energy into can help our success rate. It is never easy telling someone they might want to try another sport, but we must be realistic. I have noticed that most new members these days come from other flying disciplines. Airlines, Airforce, general aviation, microlites, hang gliding, paragliding, ballooning and parachuting. Some careful marketing towards these groups of existing pilots is sure to bring new members. The ‘catchment’ for potential new OGC members is large. Dunedin, Timaru, Oamaru, Cromwell, Queenstown, Wanaka and Twizel to mention a few. Are we doing our best to let these towns know we exist? Some clever social media marketing may be worth a try.

So, there you go, said Bob Monroe. All club members can play a part in helping maintain a healthy club membership. Get to know our new members and students, engage with them and help them become great glider pilots. Foster the mantra “A great day on the airfield” and everyone is sure to enjoy belonging to the Omarama Gliding Club.

4.

Links:

Check out our website: <https://www.omarama.com/>

Check out our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Omarama.gliding>

Check out our Airfield Calendar: <https://www.omarama.com/general-8> Here you will find flying weeks, course dates and competition dates.

Check out the OGC Planner: [Click here to view the OGC planner](#) See when club gliders are available. You can book on our website or simply text Brian Sharpe on 0272481780.

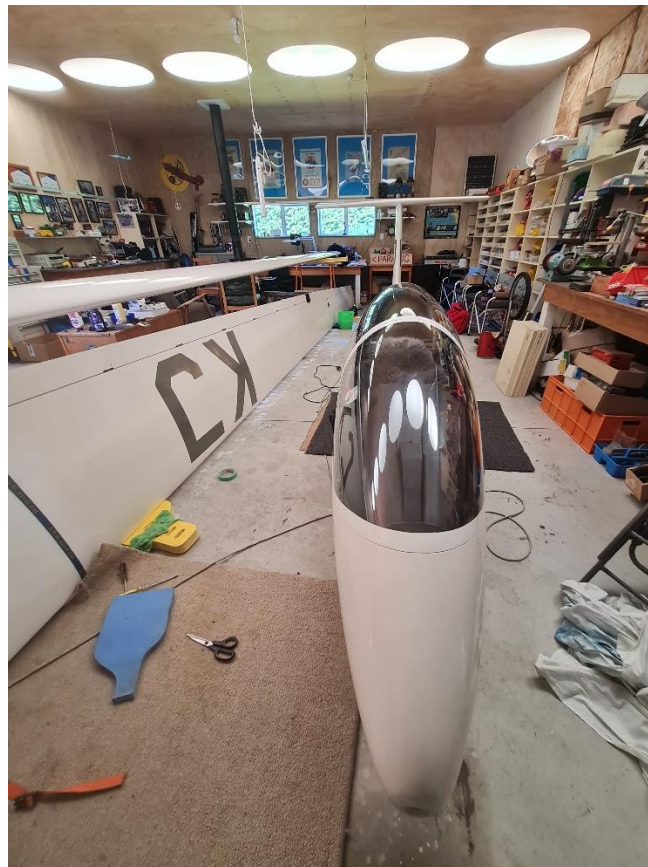
SI Regionals ~ 16th to 23rd Nov 2024

Nationals ~ 2nd to 11th Jan 2025

Join our club WhatsApp group: Omarama Gliding Club ~ All current members can add others to this group. Text your first name to Rod 0274344822 ~ ask and I will join you. Please keep your posts and pics on topic.

Get our weekly email newsletter: <https://www.pilots.omaramaairfield.nz/Pilots/OmaramaMailing>

Download the Omarama App: Search for Omarama App in Google Play or Apple App Store



KJ is returning to Omarama on Sunday and is ready for a test fly.

Excitement knows no bounds!

Happy landings

Rod