

Apologies for the long delays between newsletters..

Despite that, there has actually been activity at the club with students being taught



the Pawnee being maintained





and the fairies have even been cutting the grass, maintaining the roadway, planning trips, reviewing accounts and working on fee structures for the coming season.

AGM

The AGM will be held at midday on **September 27th 2025** at the clubrooms and over zoom. Documents and more details will be forthcoming.

Also there are two committee member openings which need to be filled at the AGM, so we are seeking nominations. Please do consider putting your name forward

Fees for the upcoming season

After a lot of behind the scenes work reviewing accounts and costs, we are near to finalising the fee's for the July 2025 – Jun 2026 year. Whilst we have held fees and flying costs relatively unchanged over the last few years, this year there needs to be some increases and we would like to discuss this with club members prior to locking the changes in.

To this end there is an open invitation for any club member to join us at the clubrooms on Sunday August 17th at 11:00am where we will present details of the analysis taken to get to the proposed fee structure and take any questions.

Chasing Ghosts (Kevin Johnson)

I'd been using Condor for several years but had never really looked at the ghosting feature — until I chanced across a YouTube video showing how to set it up ([link here](#)).

Ghosting lets you download recorded flight tracks from real Condor races and fly them yourself under exactly the same weather and thermal conditions as the original pilots. You'll see their gliders in the sky, climbing, gliding, and racing the course just as they did. It's like stepping into a race that's already happened — but you're in it too. For someone with only “a very mild” competitive streak, it opened up a whole new (and very educational) side to Condor.

First Attempt – Ridge Race Reality Check

The first scenario I tried was a [155 km ridge race \(3 laps\)](#).

It turned out to be quite... humbling. I thought I'd at least keep up with the ghosts — but they were all flying faster, staying higher, and generally leaving me for dead no matter what I tried. Even when I shamelessly cut corners and skipped turnpoints, they just sailed away again.

After several frustrating attempts, I decided to see if I might fare better on a thermal task.

Switching to Thermals

The next task was a [220 km triangle of moderate difficulty](#) — mostly flatlands with one side over a mountain range, in completely different weather.

When you join, you can see all the other gliders milling around the start line, waiting for the gate to open. Once it does, each competitor chooses their own start time. This can take a while, so Condor gives you the option to jump into the race at any point — even mid-task — and fly alongside the ghosts during a specific section you want to practise.



Learning the Ropes

One of the neat features is that each ghost shows the glider ID and its distance from you. You can pick a “target” and see exactly how you compare — even if they’re 20 km away.

On my first thermal task attempt, I was still slower than everyone else... until I realised they were all ballasted to the max. After filling my virtual water tanks, suddenly I was in the game — and even managed to beat a few ghosts home. (Note to self: *dump the water before landing.*)

What I’ve Learned So Far

- Fly first, compete second, not the other way around or you land out very quickly 😊
- Smooth, consistent thermalling and quick centring is everything.
- Practice with the LX9000 and other avionics: tweaking McCready settings, swapping between vario and speed-to-fly, using the joystick to navigate the LX9000 menus, final glide calcs, and making the most of the thermal assistant.
- With the FLARM going off regularly you quickly learn how to determine where traffic is – including if someone is catching up to you from behind
- Gaggle flying: positioning, pacing, and using others to find the lift.



Flying with ghosts has been unexpectedly useful. You can see exactly how other pilots handle climbs, when they leave thermals, what lines they take, and how they use terrain. It’s like getting a personal debrief in real time — except you can pause, rewind, or try again without annoying

anyone. It's also great for motivation: on your own, you might just plod around the course, but with ghosts ahead of you, you're always pushing to keep up.



And something to finish on - here's an interesting video link to get you thinking about things before the upcoming season where G Dale talks about Human factors and poor decision making <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3xy3JKES70>

As always, if you want better and more frequent newsletters, we are on the lookout for a someone to take on the Newsletter Challenge.

If anyone is interested drop me a note at secretary@glidingauckland.co.nz

Enjoy
Kevin