Sailplane & Gliding



Aeros before solo

Fiona Dalzell shuns the straight and level

BARRY LAUNCHES INTO RETIREMENT

Enjoy your first comp – top tips from Andy Davis

June – July 2004
£3.85 Vol. 55 No. 3

General Aviation Safety Awards

Civil Aviation Authority

"Both he and his two passengers escaped with only very minor injuries thanks to his high standards of airmanship in very difficult circumstances."

Do you know anyone within the General Aviation community whose good airmanship has averted a serious incident or potentially fatal accident during 2004?

The General Aviation Safety Awards are presented to individuals and organisations in the UK to recognise their good airmanship or practical skills and abilities when faced with potentially serious incidents directly related to flying. Anyone involved in UK general aviation may be nominated – pilots, instructors, engineers, aircraft operators and air traffic control staff. Nominees should be over 16 years of age and may be either individuals or organisations. Please note that only 'one-off' incidents will be considered. The selection committee regrets that it cannot consider awards for life-long service to aviation.

Nomination form for CAA Safety Awards 2004

Closing date for nominations: 17 December 2004

Nominee's Contact Details: Name: _____

Address and telephone number: _____

_____

Brief details of reason for nomination: Description of incident: _____

_____

_____

Continue on separate sheet if required

Your Contact Details: Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

How to return this form to the CAA: By Fax: 020 7379 4784. By Post: Civil Aviation Authority, Corporate Communications Dept, CAA House, 45-59 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE (photocopies are acceptable). Alternatively you can visit our web site www.caa.co.uk/airsafetyawards.asp and fill in the form online.

The magazine of the
British Gliding Association

June ~ July 2004
Volume 55 No 3

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For the BGA office, please use the number below

Deadlines

August ~ September 2004

Articles, Letters, Club News	June 15
Display advertisements	June 25
Classifieds	July 2

October ~ November 2004

Articles, Letters, Club News	August 10
Display advertisements	August 25
Classifieds	September 3

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***S&G* annual sub:** still just £22.00 in UK
US **$55** for airmail; $35 for surface mail



Paraglider pilot and sailplane ab initio *Fiona Dalzell can't see the point in flying straight and level, so she went to fly aeros at Saltby (see p18). Our photo is of a K-21 looping at Lasham* (www.whiteplanes.com)

Sailplane & Gliding

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Gillian Bryce-Smith, editor of *Sailplane & Gliding* from 1973 to 1998, talks to Barry Rolfe on his retirement after 33 years as Secretary of the British Gliding Association

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Royal Aero Club
and the
Fédération Aéronautique Internationale

From the BGA's Chief Executive

BY the time you read this, I will have started work as the BGA Chief Executive – the successor to the BGA Secretary, Barry Rolfe, who retired on May 8. The change of job title is more than cosmetic. This new role will involve being a gliding ambassador, helping to develop and protect the interests of our sport, as well as administering BGA support to our member clubs.

I'm no stranger to gliding or the association. My experience ranges from professional club CFI, aircraft maintainer, office administrator and occasional floor sweeper to volunteer safety committee chairman, CAA and BGA examiner, committee member and competition director. I'm a syndicate private owner, and I like to spend as much time as possible flying cross-country, both at weekends and at the occasional regional or national competition. I'm well aware that, increasingly, pressure on time is a limiting factor in our pursuit of gliding fun – for example, in our house child-minding duties (my partner Lynsey and I have a two year old) tend to be arranged around the weekend forecast!

I hope you'll be hearing from me (but not too much) via *S&G* and elsewhere, as I settle into the job; if you want to get in touch with me for any reason, feel free to use the email address below or call the BGA office.

And finally, I'd like to thank Barry and all the staff and volunteers who have already helped with a handover, and to friends and gliding colleagues who have offered advice and support.



Pete Stratten
pete@gliding.co.uk
April 21, 2004

CAA Safety Awards

THE winner of the tenth CAA Safety Awards was due to be announced on May 11 from a list of finalists that, unusually, contained no glider pilots.

The CAA scheme recognises people within the UK general aviation community whose outstanding airmanship, practical skills, quick thinking and common sense have averted a serious or possibly fatal incident. Anyone involved in general aviation – pilots, engineers, aircraft operators or air traffic control staff – can win an award.

This year's finalists were: Surrey pilot Les Morley, who made a successful forced landing on a disused landfill site after his Stampe biplane lost its propeller, half the cowling, half the crankshaft and the pistons; and a group of individuals (Martin Grogan, Steven Anthony, Jim Ririe, Sam Shields, Brian Britton and James Clift, and PC Yates) who helped pilot James Meeson make a forced landing at night after his Cessna 152 suffered engine problems.

If you want to nominate someone for the 2004 awards, see the inside front cover of this issue of *S&G*.

Awards from the Royal Aero Club



Award winners at the Royal Aero Club's annual ceremony included two Gold and Medallists and, below, Max Bacon. The awards were presented by RAeC President HRH The Duke of York (Belgrave & Portman Photography Ltd)

HONOURS went to a whole host of glider pilots – and to the retiring BGA Secretary – at this year's Royal Aero Club (RAeC) Awards Ceremony.

HRH the Duke of York, who is the RAeC's President, presented Andy Davis with the Britannia Trophy for the British aviator accomplishing the most meritorious performance in aviation during the previous year. Andy has been a member of the British Gliding Team for 12 consecutive Worlds – an unparalleled achievement.

At the same ceremony, the FAI's Paul Tissandier Diploma for 2003 was presented to Barry Rolfe, who retired as BGA Secretary in May after 33 years of service *(see also opposite and page 22 of this issue)*. Barry had served as the Secretary of the RAeC since July 1975.

The British Gliding Teams collectively won the Prince of Wales Cup for the most meritorious performance, feat or event by a team or group during the preceding year for their outstanding results at the 2003 FAI World and World Junior Championships. (Andy David won Gold in the Standard Class, Steve and Phil Jones took Silver and Bronze respectively in the 18-Metre Class, with Dave Watt and Peter Harvey also highly placed – the British Team led the medals table. In the World Juniors, Jez Hood took Gold and Luke Rebbeck Silver as part of a strong team performance.) Jez Hood was also awarded the RAeC Silver Medal for his performance in the Junior Worlds.

Derek Piggott, who learned to fly with the RAF 61 years ago and is still flying at 81, was awarded the Old & Bold Trophy, and a Certificate of Merit went to Max Bacon, who pursued a successful career in the RAF, rising to Air Commodore, and who served British gliding for many years as, *inter alia*, an instructor, club chairman and chairman of the BGA Development Committee.



Update on the Junior Worlds

PLANNING is well under way for the Junior World Gliding Championships to be held at The Soaring Centre, Husbands Bosworth, July 31 to August 20, 2005. This will be the first time since 1965 that a gliding World Championships has been held in the UK.

A large team of volunteers has come together to form the local "Working Group". This group is chaired by Harry Middleton, and is made up of the volunteers who will run and organise this major event.

The Working Group is being assisted by the BGA/Soaring Centre Joint Steering Committee, which was established to oversee the planning for the event and provide guidance where needed. Andy Davis chairs the Joint Steering Committee.

The Working Group meets regularly and is making steady progress planning the many things that need to be considered, from catering, to maps, to airfield layout, to weather forecasting, to glider weighing, to risk management, to accommodation and camping, and many more besides.

Sponsorship and media awareness is a vital component of this competition. Marilyn Hood is working together with the BGA to obtain National Sponsorship and Media Coverage, whilst Carol Steadman is working with local companies and the local press. Hopefully you will start to see some of their hard work in the media near you soon.

The Junior Worlds Training Week is being incorporated into the Midland Regionals, which are running at The Soaring Centre from July 31 to August 8, 2004. There are already 62 entries for this combined contest, including 14 entries from overseas Junior pilots, namely the Austrian, Swiss, Dutch and Swedish Junior teams.

The training week will be an excellent opportunity for foreign pilots to familiarise themselves with UK flying, and the local site layout. In addition it also provides a very important opportunity for the Working Group to test out their proposed systems for administration, scoring, task-setting, control, IT, etc, as practice for the 2005 competition.

For the 2005 competition we anticipate junior pilots entering from as far afield as the USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, to name just a few.

Some of these pilots have already expressed an interest in hiring a glider for the competition, in preference to the very expensive business of shipping a glider to the UK. Some may also be prepared to do a glider "swap" – that is, in return for the use of a glider in the UK they will let a UK pilot have use of their glider in their home country.

If you would be interested in hiring out your glider, or doing a glider "swap", please visit the competition web site and register your glider information.

All the latest news about the competition is at *www.worldgliding2005.com*, which is updated regularly.

Finally, if you would like to help out with either the 2004 training week or the 2005 competition, contact Harry Middleton at *Harryandmarjorie@middleton700.fsnet.co.uk*

Siobhan Crabb

Competitions calendar and other diary dates

UK National VGC Rally*	Soaring Centre	22/5 - 30/5
Overseas Championships	Ocaña, Spain	24/5 - 4/6
National Aerobatic Comp	Saltby	3/6 - 6/6
Bidford ('turbo') Regionals	Bidford	12/6 - 20/6
Booker Regionals	Booker	12/6 - 20/6
Club Class Worlds	Norway	13/6 - 25/6
BGA Safety Presentation	Lasham	17/6
Whispering Wardrobes Rally*	Booker	26/6 - 27/6
1954 Worlds Rally	Camphill	26/6 - 4/7
Competition Enterprise	Aston Down	26/6 - 4/7
18 Metre Nationals	Tibenham	26/6 - 4/7
Northern Regionals	Sutton Bank	26/6 - 4/7
Oldtimerflugwoche*	Gundelfingen	2/7 - 10/7
Buckminster Vintage Rally*	Saltby	3/7 - 4/7
Lasham Regionals	Lasham	3/7 - 11/7
11th National Czech Rally*	Vrchlabi	3/7 - 11/7
Club Class Nationals	Pocklington	10/7 - 18/7
Standard Class Nationals	Aston Down	24/7 - 1/8
European Championships	Lithuania	25/7 - 7/8
Inter-Services	Cosford	31/7 - 8/8
Regionals/Junior Pre-Worlds	Soaring Centre	31/7 - 8/8
VGC Rendezvous Rally*	Grunau, Poland	1/8 - 8/8
VGC International Rally*	Gliwice	6/8 - 15/8
Gransden Regionals	Gransden	7/8 - 15/8
Western Regionals	Nympsfield	7/8 - 15/8
Junior Championships	Lasham	14/8 - 22/8
15 Metre Nationals	Lasham	14/8 - 22/8
Dunstable Regionals	Dunstable	21/8 - 29/8
Open Class Nationals	Tibenham	21/8 - 29/8
Eastern Regionals	Tibenham	21/8 - 29/8
Two-Seater Competition	Pocklington	22/8 - 29/8
Slingsby Rally*	Sutton Bank	27/8 - 4/9
Mountain Competition	Aboyne	5/9 - 11/9
Saltby Open Trophy	Saltby	11/9 - 12/9
Gleitertreffen*	Laucha	15/9 - 19/9

For contact details for the organisers of vintage events, marked with an asterisk, see *www.vintagegliderclub.org/*

The Guild of Aviation Artists' 34th Annual Summer Exhibition will be at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London, from July 20-25, 2004 (*www.gava.org.uk*)

Links to most of the above competitions can be found at *www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/competitions/calendar.htm*. For news of British Teams see *www.glidingteam.co.uk*. For a pre-season overview of this year's racing action, see Jay Rebbeck's article on page 26 of this issue of *S&G*

BARRY Rolfe's retirement as Secretary of the British Gliding Association was marked in early May at his retirement dinner by the presentation of a cheque, contributed to by member clubs, and of the first BGA Gold Medal, a new award designed to complement existing BGA Diplomas and recognising exceptional service. For more about Barry's time at the BGA, see Gillian Bryce-Smith's article on p22 of this issue.

WE are very sorry to have to report the death of Alan Purnell of Lasham Gliding Society in a mid-air collision near Lasham on April 26. Alan, a former chairman of the Surrey club, started his gliding career at Cambridge and was an enormously experienced pilot. An investigation is under way and there will be an obituary in the next *S&G*.

BGA Executive Committee member Diana King has been appointed as secretary of the Royal Aero Club. Regular readers will also know of her through her contributions to *S&G* – including a recent article on Euroglide. She is a member of Stratford on Avon and Herefordshire GCs, has been gliding since the age of 16 and holds a Diamond Badge. Diana is a former Council member of the UK Sports Council and was awarded the OBE in 2000 for services to sport.

The BGA course operation is now operating from Husbands Bosworth with Simon Adlard as the new National Coach, assisted by Mike Fox.

CARR Withall, chairman of the BGA Airspace Committee, has written a letter to all UK flying clubs – enclosing a piece of winch cable! – to remind them of the dangers of flying low over gliding sites.

DON'T forget that you can now subscribe to receive the BGA Newsletter and updates from the BGA website by email. Just visit the BGA website at https://www.gliding.co.uk/subscriptions/login.php

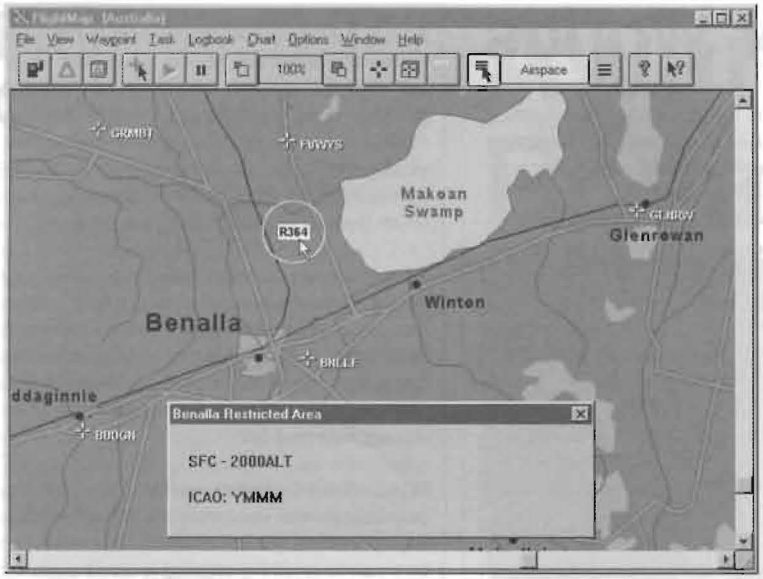
APOLOGIES to Roy Pentecost of Lasham Gliding Society – not London GC as stated in the last issue (p25) – and to Hugh Kindell, who was P2 in the 649.9km two-seater flight for which he collected the Seager Trophy on their behalf at the BGA AGM.

A NEW commercial operation will be based at Omarama in New Zealand from September 2004. Southern Soaring, due to be launched this June at Gliding New Zealand's AGM, takes over the business of Alpine Soaring. The company's new website – *www.soaring.co.nz* – is due to go live on June 4.

THE Cotswold GC is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The main event will be a party on Saturday, July 4, the last Saturday of Competition Enterprise, and everyone is invited – especially past members.

The BGA club at Sackville has changed its name to Sackville Vintage GC. It aims to collect as many vintage gliders as it can and to have as many of them available to fly as it can. For more, call 01234 708877.

THE winner of the BGA 1000 Club Lottery for March 2004 was M Pope (£37.75), with runners-up A Towse and BA Kimberley (each £18.88). The April winner was A Mayhew (£37.75), with runners-up E Smith and J Delafield (each £18.88).



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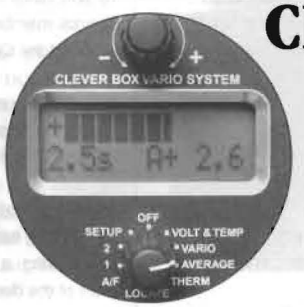
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Illustration shows the Inspect facility being used to interrogate the airspace map layer.

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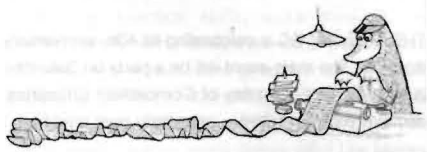
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British Gliding Association

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SCA3	19th – 23rd July	Shenington Airfield
SCA4	26th – 30th July	Pocklington Airfield
SCH2	30th August – 3rd September	Husbands Bosworth

Instructor Courses:

IC5	19th – 27th June	Husbands Bosworth

Hire of the BGA gliders:
The BGA fleet of gliders are available for hire when not in use on BGA courses by clubs and individuals. For more information, please call the BGA office.

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Could this be war?

LAST year I wrote complaining that the non-UK Isle Of Man had been lumped in with England in the *BGA Club Directory* (June-July 2003, p6). This year what did we get? Same again with *a subtitle*! It really is not good enough.

I also threatened then to annexe the UK if this foul deed were perpetrated again. On examination, though, I don't think we would gain anything. We might get better thermals than we have now but we would also get your politicians and other problems and membership of the EU!

I think we'll stick with narrow thermals and a free country. Sneak attacks to fly UK clubs' aeroplanes will still be carried out occasionally by members of Andreas GC Freedom Flighters. You have been warned!

Brian Goodspeed, RAMSEY, Isle of Man

EU bureaucracy

SINCE gliding in UK is soon to be smothered by futile EU bureaucracy, your readers may be interested in Philip Wills' comments made shortly before we decided to join the European Economic Community (*British Gliding and the EEC*, August-September 1971, p252):

"...We may struggle and complain about our multiplicity of red-tape, but compared to most European countries we are virtually free, and particularly this is the case in gliding. The powers delegated to the BGA are greeted with incredulity everywhere in Europe. Worse than that, most European Aero Clubs – and even the FAI – have come to accept ever-increasing governmental control of all aspects of sporting aviation as inevitable and almost as necessary, in spite of the hard evidence to the contrary provided by the BGA's successful record of self-discipline in our own country ... There can be little, if any, risk that, in joining the EEC, we will be offering our gliding selves up to the possibility of similar chains, but if anyone here has the time to fight for more freedom for our European friends, they should be as keen for us to join their community as I am."

If Philip Wills himself could have been so naive then (though now perhaps turning in his grave), the rest of us may have some excuse for having allowed ourselves to be gulled by the politicians to place our freedom and democracy in the hands of the European bureaucrats.

Peter O'Donald, CAMBRIDGE, Cambs

Our freedom is at stake

SINCE the earliest days of gliding in the UK we have enjoyed freedom from bureaucracy. It has been quite legal to make a glider from bamboo and tea chests, cover it with old shirts and launch it from the nearest hill. As for licences and pilot training, neither of these have been required either.

In 1959 two young boys designed and built the Westmancot Skylark, total cost £5.



The debate about racing finishes continues with input from John Cochrane in America, where the competitions rules committee has this year rejected a proposal for a 500ft minimum height rule. See Minimum finish heights, *below right*

(www.whiteplanes.com)

They towed it with an old Jowett Bradford van and achieved a number of flights over the fields of their father's farm (some as high as 300ft). As far as I'm aware they came to no harm.

Many years ago some pro-Europeans decided to form a Common Market; stupidly, we decided to join them. I don't remember voting for a European super-state but that seems to be what is being foisted upon us.

I have never been against change when it has been for the better, but no clear-thinking person could support the needless bureaucracy which will be heaped upon us.

As for the Westmancot Skylark, long may it fly; and as for bureaucracy, long may it be resisted.

Come on, everybody, wake up, our very freedom is at stake. Would men like Philip Wills and Nick Goodhart have gone so meekly to the slaughter? I think not.

Martin Breen, HIGH WYCOMBE, Bucks

For the latest news from the BGA on the European Aviation Safety Agency, see p24 of this issue – Ed

Bronze books

ISN'T it about time that somebody brought out a book that covers all of the topics examined in the Bronze test papers?

The only materials that currently stand for information and revision are the popular Laws & Rules for Glider Pilots, Meteorology Simplified and the BGA Manual, as well as various navigation books written for Private Pilot's Licence exams.

It might make things a lot easier if a book was brought out that had all of the relevant info and revision notes under one cover.

This would make learning easier as everything could be picked up from one book, and if each club got hold of a copy it would be easily accessible. Any offers anyone?

James Collins, *via email*

Airspace databases revisited

IT HAS been pointed out to me that my *Airspace databases* letter (April-May 2004, p10) could be read as suggesting that there were errors in the BGA waypoint list.

That was not at all what I meant. The discrepancies were in other waypoint and airspace databases in various bits of equipment and programmes I have acquired over the years. They were revealed when I checked them against the BGA list and the AIP. In the third paragraph "errors in the scoring programmes database could show" should be read as "conversions and roundings between seconds and decimal minutes and back again in the analysis programmes could show". I apologise to our dedicated waypoint and airspace co-ordinators for any misunderstanding that may have arisen.

Sam St. Pierre, *via email*

A difference of degree

IN REPLY to Sam St. Pierre's letter regarding the use by gliding of the Degrees/Minutes/Decimal minutes (ddmm.mmm) rather than ddmmss format, the use of ddmm.mmm format is perfectly logical and should be retained.

Flight Recorders consist of two basic components, The GPS Engine and the Recorder, and these two components converse with each other in a protocol standard called NMEA 0183. NMEA 0183 transfers Latitude and Longitude data as Degrees, Minutes and a variable number of digits for decimal-fraction of minutes.

This variable number of digits allows for the differences between Consumer GPS (as used in IGC Flight Recorders) and Survey Grade GPS (High resolution and much higher price).

The IGC file format also uses the ddmm.mmm format. There is also an IGC Standard for Waypoints and this also uses the ddmm.mmm format.

With the ddmm.mmm format being so extensively used in Flight Recorders, there seems to be little case for using another format. If another format is used then dd.ddddd would seem more logical than ddmmss as computers can work with Real numbers but would require any base-60 system (minutes or seconds) to be converted to Real numbers first, and data in seconds requires a double conversion.

It is true that the present format of the Air Pilot uses ddmmss, but this is a fairly recent change. When the Waypoint List was first published, the Air Pilot used the ddmm.mmm format. It was only when they changed the Geodetic Datum from OSGB36 to WGS84 that they changed to ddmmss format. Why, I have no idea.

Incidentally, use of an incorrect Geodetic Datum can produce significant errors. For instance, using OSGB36 instead of WGS84 produces errors between 140m (Kent) and 80m (Scotland).

Some PC files of Waypoints, which do not come from either of the recognised sources – the Soaring Turning Point Exchange (Harvard) site or TPselect.exe from the Waypoint website – do have errors. It looks as though this could be Sam's problem as the Waypoint lists from recognised sources do not suffer from the problem Sam reports. The message has got to be: "use a recognised source for your Waypoint files".

It should however be recognised that some recorders (Filser/LX for example) use a file format that only resolves to two decimal places of minutes, and one (Peschges) uses the ddmmss format and both these will have some degree of degradation of resolution.

Tim Newport-Peace, *via email*

Minimum finish heights

I AM delighted to read several letters and the safety suggestion in recent issues of *S&G* on raising the minimum finish height for comps. We in the US have been actively discussing this idea for several years. As in the UK, we have also experienced several accidents, including fatalities involving marginal final glides. I wrote an article (*Safer Finishes*) on this subject that analysed the accidents and the minimum finish height proposal in some depth. It appeared in *Soaring* (October 2002). It is available along with a related *Plea for the 500ft rule* on *http://gsbwww.uchicago.edu/fac/john.cochrane/research/Papers/* Those of your readers interested in these ideas may find the articles useful.

Alas, we have also learned that many racing pilots are dead-set against these sorts of changes, even though it's pretty clear that it makes no difference to the soaring aspect of the competition whether the race ends at 500ft or at the airport fence. Many pilots believe that some element of physical danger is important; the force of tradition is always strong. Given these opinions in the annual pilot survey, a 500ft minimum finish height was rejected this year by our rules committee.

The equally sensible and more important (given the large number of outlanding crashes from low altitude thermalling), but more audacious idea of scoring pilots as landing out once they pass 500ft was similarly considered and rejected.

Those of us interested in safer competitions have learned that these things take time, and we will keep trying. I wish good luck to similarly-interested UK pilots.

John Cochrane, Chicago, USA

Please send letters (marked "for publication") to the editor at editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk *or the address on p3, including your full contact details. The deadline for the next issue is* ***June 15***

Your letters

So what's new?

THE World Gliding Championships were being held at South Cerney in 1965 and, as a tug pilot "qualified to launch in the championships" I was one of the *dramatis personae* in the great event.

As it happened, my friend Alan East had found himself as a QFI on the two-seater Folland Gnat, flying from the nearby airfield at Fairford, so we had got in touch, and arranged for a crossover flight: Alan to come to South Cerney and fly in the left-hand seat of a T-21, in return for which I would find myself airborne in the back seat of a Gnat. Well, the Air Force was rather different in those days, and it seemed like a good deal to me.

So Alan came over to South Cerney and we were duly aerotowed to about 3,000ft, after which Alan flew the Barge down to an uneventful landing. A couple of days later I presented myself at RAF Fairford, Gnat Squadron, was duly briefed, kitted out and we walked out to the tiny aircraft.

The take-off, climb, presentation of aircraft position on Decca scroll carefully and proudly explained, we launched into a sequence of aerobatics – well, you would, wouldn't you? – and then whizzed back to the circuit, where Alan did a couple of rollers and then asked if I would like to have a go. Of course I did: one roller and the final landing.

As we were walking in, Alan said: "Those were reasonable landings. Most people have trouble landing it from the back seat, so how did you manage?"

After a short, but deliberate, pause, I said: "Well, anyone who has ever flown a Kranich would have no trouble with a Gnat!"

Do you know, he was quite put out – miffed, even – when I told him that the Kranich was an old wooden glider!

Richard Gregory, DISS, Norfolk

In a Plat spin?

IN the *Tail Feathers* of the December 2003-January 2004 issue (p16) Platypus wonders why we continue with spin training and appears to believe that all gliders need to be forced into such a situation.

There is a variety of gliders that will spin if mishandled, especially when attempting to soar in rough thermals. I, for one, have inadvertently spun an Astir CS77 many moons ago in such a situation and wonder what would have happened to me if:

a. I had been scratching away from very low and,

b. I had not had any spin recognition/recovery training.

The mishandling most likely to cause a spin in types prone is, typically, increasing rudder towards a lowered wing and, incorrectly, applying up elevator to counter the very powerful visual clue of the nose going down. This is actually yaw in a banked attitude but is interpreted as pitch.

Simultaneously the aircraft is likely to roll towards the rudder input (further effect of rudder) and the basic trained response to this is to correct with out-turn aileron.

If the extraneous rudder input is excessive, or further increased, the stick will eventually end up in the opposite corner to the rudder. If the type is prone to spinning it will do so at or just before this stage.

Many types of common trainers are either impossible to spin, without aerodynamic or ballast add-ons, or will only spin from what must be described as aerobatic entries which no-one, unless they are suffering some kind of seizure, is likely to perform inadvertently.

Some single-seaters, which *appear* to be a clone of the front cockpit of these two-seaters, will spin like a top when mishandled as above, that is, the picture looks correct right up to the moment of departure from controlled flight except for the yaw indications (string/ball). But our early solo pilots could be forgiven for believing that it is extremely difficult to spin where they have not had access to a trainer that can reproduce this type of behaviour realistically. Unfortunately I believe that Plat has, no doubt unintentionally, potentially added to this belief.

Unlike the power flying fraternity, which gave up this type of training some years ago, glider pilots spend a lot of their time flying close to the stall. Stalling with yaw present will result in a spin if the type is prone.

On a lighter note, in his section on *Return to Kitty Hawk*, the usually linguistically perfect Plat seems to believe that landable and laudable are the same thing when considering the suitability of landing places.

Roy Ferguson-Dalling, *via email*

Bob Pettifer, BGA Instructors' Committee chairman, replies: I agree with Roy's comment about spinning and think it is essential that glider pilots recognise the symptoms of the inadvertent spin entry. I also think it is a shame that the modern two-seaters are reluctant to spin, causing complacency on the part of the pilot when single-seaters spin readily. Training in good flying practices will help to avoid inadvertent spins but the human brain seems unable to process the important elements when spinning occurs – being the least of its perceived problems at the time.

About that far-from-laudable typo... please blame the less-than-linguistically-perfect editor rather than a never-less-than-perfect Platypus – Ed

Let's be positive

I FEEL I must join in the discussion regarding lost gliding members, as a pilot, instructor, and keen club member, who has only been around flying for the last decade. Why are we giving so much time and effort to those less than committed members?

When I first started flying, which was at a small club, my flying day also was filled with three winch launches giving around 15 minutes' flying, and over a period of time, training under different conditions I eventually soloed. The rest of the day was spent supporting other members or working or some other project. As an instructor, now at a large club, my time is just as valuable as anyone else's, but I turn up to support the club regardless of the weather. Even today these people are around eroding club morale, with the small core of dedicated members there at the end of the day struggling to put away the last of the club machines.

Gliding clubs are not just flying centres, they are a way of life, where community spirit was deemed to be important, with everybody helping out in all manners of ways to keep costs down and flying at a maximum. Some clubs are more efficient at this than others. This is another subject, and one we all need to work at, but for me it has never been time-efficient anyway.

If I were to join a sailing club and said to them that the sport is fine but I really don't like getting wet, or joined a tennis club and asked them to pick the balls up for me, what would they say? I know what I would say...

So why do we want new club members who only want to participate at convenient times because they would rather be shopping than holding a wing? There are other sports out there, so help yourself, and let's continue building our sport that's worthy of its membership.

M. Hughes, DAVENTRY, Northamptonshire

30-day tickets

WE often hear of gliders not being able to fly because a 30-day ticket has expired and the 12-month ticket has not arrived. It has happened to me and to my club. Sometimes this is because the inspector has delayed sending the paperwork, but in many cases it is caused by delays in processing. Why do we have the present cumbersome system?

If I take my car in for its annual test, the garage issues the certificate there and then, and I do not have to rely on another document coming from the MOT. If even government can have a simple system, why can't we? Under our present arrangement the glider can still fly immediately, and for up to 30 days, even if there proves to be a problem with the paperwork during that period, not that I have personally ever heard of that happening. My suggestion for the Technical Committee to consider, therefore, is for the inspector to issue the 12-month C of A ticket, and send the paperwork for processing. If there is a problem, then the C of A can be suspended just as quickly as it can now. There is no danger, however, of the glider not being able to fly because something was in the post. It would also save the cost of printing 30-day tickets, surely a major boost to BGA finances.

Dave Salmon, *via email*

Jim Hammerton, BGA Chief Technical Officer, replies: The 30-day ticket system offered by the BGA is the exception rather than the rule. In all other forms of aviation the aircraft is not allowed to fly until the C of A has been renewed by the relevant authority. In at least nine out of 10 cases of the renewal being delayed is because the paperwork is withheld by the inspector, usually until a batch has built up, and then sent to the BGA. It is not unusual to receive the renewal paperwork three weeks after the work is complete



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Cutting the cost of business rates

THE DEVELOPMENT News column in the December 2003-January S&G (p13) contained details of the new tax and business rates benefits available to clubs which register as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs).

The major breakthrough, for which the BGA and other sporting organisations had been lobbying parliament for some time, was the Government's decision to grant 80 per cent mandatory rate relief to CASCs, giving them the same benefit as registered charities.

Business rates payable at gliding sites have long been a contentious subject as well as a substantial cost item for many clubs. But now that there is no need to pay more than 20 per cent rates, few clubs are taking advantage of the opportunity to cut costs. Response, to date, has been extremely disappointing.

Gliding clubs have been slow to register as CASCs and many continue to incur unnecessarily high costs as a result. The Inland Revenue's office at Edinburgh which is dealing with CASC registrations reports that 940 CASCs had registered at March 31, 2004, and of those, only three (Booker, Cotswold and York) were gliding clubs.

However, we understand that some clubs have experienced difficulties with the registration process and have had their applications rejected because their club constitutions fail to meet some specified requirements.

For CASC purposes, the Inland Revenue requires a gliding club's constitution to provide for the following:

(i) The Club must be of a non-profit-making nature. Any surplus income or gains need to be re-invested in the Club for the benefit of the membership and there must be no distribution of assets or profits.

(ii) A dissolution clause must be included to determine that, in the event of the Club being wound up, any remaining assets are distributed back into the sport. In practice, this means that any surplus assets must be transferred either to another CASC or to a registered charity or to the Sport's Governing Body.

(iii) Amendments: procedures must be laid down for changing club rules by approval of a substantial majority (say, 75 per cent) of the membership.

(iv) Membership must be open to the whole community without fear or favour and this must be clear from the club rules and promotional literature.

(v) A stated purpose of the club must be to promote the sport itself.

In order to assist clubs in meeting the Inland Revenue's criteria, the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) has produced a model constitution and a series of model clauses.

These can be used either completely to replace a club's existing constitution or the model clauses can be inserted to replace clauses in an existing constitution, thus enabling the Inland Revenue's standards to be met without having to replace the whole document.

Constitutional changes take time. They cannot be implemented without their adoption by the club's membership and that usually means seeking approval at an AGM. Nevertheless, the Inland Revenue has confirmed that when a club has adopted the Model Constitution or when the Model Clauses appear in a club's constitution, then it will be acceptable for registration as a CASC (provided, of course, that it meets the other registration criteria). More details about eligibility and registration can be found on the Inland Revenue's website at *www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/casc*.

The model constitution and model clauses are at *www.ccpr.org.uk* – the CCPR website – or they can be obtained as hard copies direct from:

CCPR,
Francis House,
Francis Street,
London,
SW1P 1DE.

Generally, both Sport England and its predecessors have insisted upon compliance with similar criteria before awarding capital grants. Thus, applications from clubs which have been in receipt of Sports Council grants or Community Projects Capital funding from Sport England are unlikely to be rejected.

The message is that gliding clubs don't have to pay Business Rates any more (not more than 20 per cent, anyway). So why are clubs not taking advantage of one of the best offers they have had for years?

Contact your BGA Development Officer if you need further help or advice in applying for CASC registration. The potential cost savings are too important to risk losing them for the sake of filling in a form.

Roger Coote
BGA Development Officer

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The point of National Gliding Week, organised by the British Gliding Association and supported by BGA clubs, is to maximise gliding's exposure in local and national media in order to get more people to take up the sport

National Gliding Week

NATIONAL Gliding Week will be taking place shortly – between June 19 and June 27. Clubs around the country are holding special events and you can see full details on the week's dedicated website, *www.nationalglidingweek.co.uk*.

We believe that we can maximise exposure for gliding in the national and local media by concentrating activities, aimed at the general public, into a short, focussed period. If successful, your club will be welcoming lots of visitors to your events.

However, the real objectives behind National Gliding Week are not simply increased publicity and more visitors.

We want to enthuse people about gliding and, ultimately, get them to take the sport up. More glider pilots are good news for all of us.

So, with National Gliding Week now only a few weeks away, I am asking for the help of everybody involved in the sport (that's you!).

The BGA and probably your club have put a lot of effort into organising events, generating publicity and generally getting people to come along.

Please back this up by making yourself available to assist on the day and by doing everything you can to present the sport in a positive light. Be welcoming, helpful and enthusiastic. In short, please go that extra half-mile to ensure that all your visitors go away thinking: "this is something I want to do"

It's still not too late

Although National Gliding Week is now very close, there is still time to organise something. It is probably too late to do anything very sophisticated, but there are some types of events that can be put together very quickly.

Remember that the week is all about publicity and participation, so why not arrange a day of trial lessons?

If you invite a local journalist along to try it for him or herself next week, you could have an article in your local paper to coincide with your event.

Run a competition in the paper with a free flight as the prize and you could get more press coverage.

Put posters in your local libraries, community notice boards, workplaces, etc.

Position a glider in the car park of your nearest supermarket on the morning of your event or the day before and hand out leaflets offering a special on the day price to really encourage people to come along.

Don't forget to post details of what you're doing on the National Gliding Week website.

Make sure that you have enough two-seaters available, with instructors and members to meet, greet and explain.

I can provide you with sample press releases, posters that you can customise and flyers that you can hand out.

If you think that something like this cannot work (or that it will generate lots of visitors who you will never see again), take heart from our friends in New Zealand.

Their recent National Day of Gliding – in February this year – consisted of events just like this and they signed up piles of new members.

Keith Auchterlonie
BGA Communications Officer

BY the time you read this the results of Windrushers GC's bid for the lease of Bicester airfield should be known. A comprehensive business plan envisages membership fees at c £250 with a junior rate of about £75. Trailer parking costs will be c £50, with the option of hangarage for a higher fee. (All rates to be confirmed.) If you are interested in joining what hopes to be a dynamic and welcoming new club, with many years of gliding experience, please email *enquiries@windrushers.org.uk*. You can pay £1 to register your support or a £30 joining fee (which will be deducted from the membership fee as and when, or refundable if their bid is unsuccessful). See *www.windrushers.org.uk* for more information.

IF you have any responsibility in your club for employing staff, make sure you have seen the letter sent by the BGA to all clubs in early May that alerts you to changes to the law on employing people and the checks that, from May 1, you must now make.

THE 14th Edition of *Laws & Rules for Glider Pilots*, published last year, omitted in error the definition of a Professional Instructor. You can find it via the link at *www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/news.htm*

THE CCPR – the national representative body for sports organisations – has heard from the Inland Revenue that some applications for registration as Community Amateur Sports Clubs *(see also* Development News, *p12)* are being rejected because they are using out-dated and inaccurate material about club constitutions (*www.ccpr.org.uk*)

THE BGA Competitions Handbook (*2004 Rules for BGA Rated Competitions*) was updated in March to Issue 2 and can be downloaded via the link at *www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/competitions/news.htm*

PLEASE note the following changes to the BGA Club Directory published in the last issue (p33). Deeside GC's URL is *www.deesideglidingclub.co.uk* while Welland GC's membership secretary is Michael Neal (01733 266616), the secretary is Jane Cooper (01536 330217) and the club's telephone number is 07944 822201.

Important training



THE BGA has authorised training for clubs in Child Protection awareness raising. This is to be carried out at venues around the country. The training will complement and enhance the work already put in place by clubs and not replace it. The BGA has endorsed and paid for the programme.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safer Activities for Everyone *(SAFE) Pack will form the basis upon which training will be given. Each club will receive its own pack containing all proformas that are also available on the provided CD within the pack. All forms are available for copying and distribution.*

Individual attendees will receive a separate training booklet and certificate on completion of the training which is valid for three years.

The trainers of the programme have a sound working background and knowledge of Child Protection investigation and prevention work and are aware of the difficulties faced by clubs on this subject.

The training of three hours is free for two nominated members from each club. Further places are available at £10.00 per person. The programme is recognised by Area Child Protection Committees from the Eastern Counties, the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit and Sportscoach UK.

Prior to December 2004 six training sessions will take place across the country, there will be 30 places available on each course.

It is recommended that each club delegates a designated Child Protection officer and a deputy to attend, or in their absence a member with recognition of Child Protection issues within our sport.

The first awareness session took place at Husbands Bosworth in February (attendees are pictured above) the York date for April has been deferred until later in the year and by the time you read this we will have held another event at Lasham in May. Further training venues are being sought at York and Gloucester with additional requirements in Scotland, the South West and East. Details of venues and dates will be published in the BGA newsletter. Please ensure applications are made three weeks prior to the event.

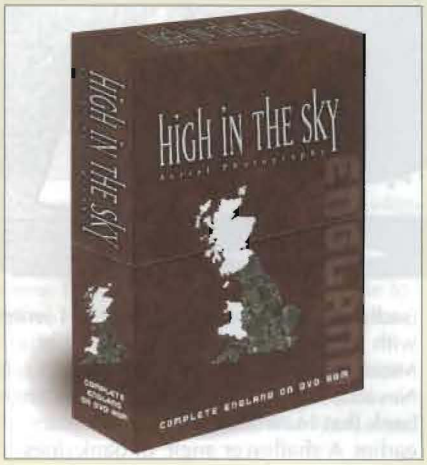
Further details, advice or enquiries surrounding policy and procedure can be obtained from Phil Burton on 01986 895314 or email: PhilBurtonD100@aol.com

Phillip Burton *(on behalf of the BGA Executive)*

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Here are a few items to keep you busy if you are unlucky enough to experience a wet weekend – or, even worse, a wet week, this summer...



HIGH in the Sky, *the photographic "map" of the UK that* S&G *reviewed last year (August-September 2003, p16) has now been released on a compilation DVD-ROM that contains all 49 English counties. At £89.99 it could well be a worthwhile investment if your club's pilots range far and wide.* www.highinthesky.com *or call 01256 707727*

Soaring the South Downs Ridge
by Dick Dixon
Southdown GC

A QUITE splendid fully illustrated booklet, detailing the glories of the longest hill soaring ridge in Britain, has been produced by Dick Dixon, erstwhile Chairman of the British Gliding Association and of the Southdown club.

With eight beautiful colour photographs and Ordnance Survey maps covering the total run from Rowland's Castle in the west to near Lewes in the east, Dick has produced a detailed step-by-step document for soaring pilots and a must for those who have yet to experience the immense satisfaction of hill soaring the ridge. as well as a great pictorial souvenir of this glorious part of Southern England.

In a northerly wind, many pilots from the Southdown club at Parham and large numbers from Lasham have enjoyed the long run available; many have completed their Gold distance and some even their Diamond distance by using the ridge.

Robert Kronfeld, the famous pioneer showed the way when on June 17, 1930 he flew from Itford Hill to very near Portsmouth – a feat which amazed the other pilots at the time.

An extract from his book is well worth repeating here:

"I only cleared the last small hill near Petersfield by three hundred feet. In view of the noiselessness of my flight and the advanced evening hour it struck me that I was very indiscreet in flying over a small wood swarming with courting couples. I imagine that it was not exactly considerate of me to call out at the top of my voice "Where's Portsmouth?"...

Obtainable from the Southdown club, or Lasham or the BGA for a mere five pounds plus P&P.

Wally Kahn

MARTIN Carolan has written The White Stuff, *about how to repair and refinish gel coats. "There is a great deal of interest in the gliding world on gel coat," he says, "and very little information on the subject. I hope this booklet goes some way to filling this void." It is available for £11.80 from Severn Valley Sailplanes on 01452 741463*

DICK Georgeson's book, The Leading Edge: A life in gliding, *by Dick Georgeson and Anna Wilson (reviewed in the February-March 2004 issue, p24) is now available in the UK from Luke Roberts for £16 plus £3 P&P. Write to: The Lawns, 26A Mount Pleasant Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 1AS or call 07817 676886*

A second Smoking Vid *– this one created by Adam Laws, Jim Crowhurst and Shaun McLaughlin and with interviews with many familiar faces from the UK – is available on DVD for £10 plus P&P:* www.smokinvid.co.uk

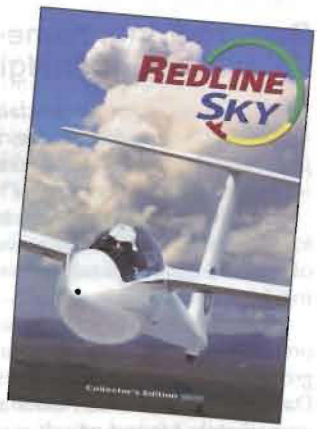
Argentina: gliding in the 5th dimension

If you're impressed by Klaus Ohlmann's amazing adventures in the Andes, just watch his video about his world record-breaking 3,000km flight. The scenery is spectacular, the soaring is inspiring and Klaus himself (speaking English) as enthusiastic on film as in person. His experience and footage of five years' soaring over this hostile, beautiful terrain is unforgettable. Even his retrieves (walking the fus 12km down a dirt track) are on the grand scale. Cost: 41 Euros (www.quovadis.aero/uk/p36.html)



Redline Sky

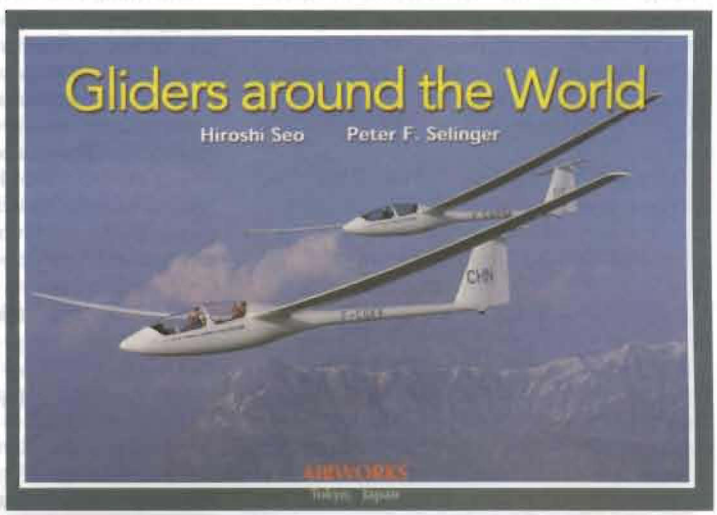
This US-produced DVD of films and images of gliding runs to nearly two hours in total, with contest footage (lovers of small furry animals, look away now), high-speed soaring along low Californian cliffs at Torrey Pines, stills from the UK's white planes *picture co, and* that *video of Manfred Radius's extraordinary low-level inverted aerobatics. Vintage glider fans will enjoy the visit to the National Soaring Museum at Harris Hill. What better way to while away a damp afternoon? Available from the BGA – see advert on p32*



A fine week of Soaring

More from the USA, more racing (this time at the Mifflin PA regional contest), but this DVD (or VHS) has the production values of one of those classy art films about rural America: every scene seems to open with a loving, lingering shot of cows or countryside. Having said that, you get to meet some of the great names of US soaring, thermal in a Nimbus, and see Pennsylvania's famous, forested ridges. They make Hank Nixon's famous water landing (in what is now, of course, known as Lake Nixon) seem a good call. www.geovisiononline.com/fineweek





Gliders around the world *is a book of photographs of common and less common types – a great gift for fans of all shapes of sailplane* (airworks@tp-airworks.com)



Bar-propping, name-dropping and nostalgia

"AAHHRR, when oi were a lad – thank'ee, young fellow, aye, another jar of Theakston's'll go down noicely – now then, where wuz oi...?"

Sorry, I am just getting into training for when I am the gliding movement's oldest and most tedious, beer-scrounging inhabitant.

When I first made a pilgrimage to Lasham on May 10th, 1959, it was as a mere ground-borne visitor, but on a very exciting Day One of the British Nationals. Almost immediately I found myself roped in – quite literally – to help rescue fellow-Dunstabler Dan Smith's Skylark 3 from a dense pine-wood into which he had plunged after discovering that his ailerons were not properly connected. (They had apparently worked on aero-tow, but the sharp turn on release at 2,000 ft unhooked them – an early example of the vital need to do positive control checks on the ground.) Amazingly Dan was unscathed; what saved him at the last second was a young pine tree that had become wedged between the sturdy front skid of the Skylark and the sturdy fixed main-wheel. The tree's slender trunk had not quite snapped but had cracked half-way through and bent right over, letting the glider descend vertically but gently onto its nose on a soft bed of pine needles.

Dan, who had been expecting the worst, undid his straps, opened the canopy and stepped out, somewhat stunned by his escape.

Getting the awkwardly-parked glider derigged and out of the dense wood, with only a couple of holes in the wing where other saplings had been less helpful, absorbed all our officer-like qualities and tree-climbing skills that afternoon. The Skylark was ready to fly the next morning thanks to the speedy work of Fred Slingsby's repair team, who regularly attended Nationals in those days. Such heroic overnight fixes are much less common in this age of plastic. Dan did some good flights that week, despite his experience.

The big event of the day was Nick Goodhart's 359 mile flight to the Scottish Gliding Union's site at Portmoak (distances were announced in miles then, as they still are in America and probably will be for the next 100 years, but I make that 578km), which he had light-heartedly declared as a goal – after two relights.

He reached 18,000ft in cu-nims and from a ridge where he was field-picking, went to 10,000ft in wave. It still stands as a goal record. Anne Burns reached 18,400ft and landed at Bellingham, not far from the Scottish border. Philip Wills made Newcastle after a 21,000ft climb in which his oxygen equipment fell apart and had to be mended in violent turbulence.

The next day was taken up with monster retrieves, without benefit of motorways. Great numbers of pilots who left too early got sunk in fields, were de-rigged, rushed back to the site at illicit speeds, re-rigged in great haste (it's amazing there weren't more cases of mis-connected controls) and launched again, to fly immense distances on their second or third try – almost invariably without radio, or of course mobile phones. The Goodhart crew drove 960 miles in a Land Rover (not a luxury ride in 1959) using 69 gallons of petrol over a 36-hour stretch. Crews these days don't know they're born.

"Aaahhrr, they were real men (and women) in them days, lad. Oi well remember..." (Cut it out! – Ed)

One thing I noticed then in the early, struggling part of the day when the best people had at least one re-launch, was that while many other pilots banked as if they were taking motorbikes round the Wall of Death, Philip Wills went around in almost dreamy, shallow circles. (Philip incidentally was in the lead after four days but had booked into the Dutch Nationals which overlapped the UK championships. So he went off and won the Dutch championships. Geoffrey Stephenson was the eventual United Kingdom Nationals Champ that year, by very steady flying, he did not win a day.

A family trait

What I shall now attempt to do is what the Yanks call a segue, a sort of ballroom manoeuvre where you go smoothly from one dance step to another without falling over your own feet.

When for the first time I flew in the Janus C (sadly now *en route* to Belgium as I write) with Justin Wills during a safari out of Minden in 2003, crossing the desert to Ely, Nevada, I noticed the same shallow angle of bank that I saw his father use 44 years earlier. A shallower angle of bank does permit a lower circling speed, and reduces the sink rate and G-loading. (In the last edition I hit you all with more trigonometry than you probably wanted, so I will just say that at 30° the force on the seat of your pants increases by 17 per cent, at 45° by 41 per cent and if you are mad enough to do 60°, it doubles and the average pilot would weigh a heart-straining 300-plus pounds.) Justin reasons that the pilot's sensitivity to all air movements is enhanced if he is not pulling too much G.

Gliding textbooks have to assume, for the sake of simplicity, that the typical thermal is more or less circular in section, has one definite core and is reasonably consistent in the climb it yields as you circle. However, I believe that if we could actually see the air going up like coloured fluids in a heated laboratory tank we would only observe such nice well-behaved thermals occasionally, say around four o'clock on a good day. But a lot of the time it would be near-chaos. Much of one's time, particularly in Britain on mediocre days, is spent wafting about not quite sure which of several potential cores is the real centre, whether the area one is in right now is worthy of further exploration or whether it should be abandoned. I believe the star pilots are much quicker at assessing the potential of a chaotic zone and working their way to a useful core - or quitting the area and moving off to better pastures. The rest of us either spend too long seeking – and probably not finding – the local core, or we get impatient and push off in hopes of something better, only to get very low and seriously delayed, or even sunk. It occurs to me – addicted to hauling it round at 45° at all times – that circling at lower bank, lower speed and lower G-loading makes that process of exploration and sensing the air easier. Whether the process of exploration is itself capable of analysis, or can be taught, is another question.

Having mentioned two Willses, I ought to mention a third outstanding pilot, Gavin Wills. (Gavin's father was Philip's cousin.)



gel-coat marks on every rock

However there is no way in words for me to describe, much as I wish to, the experience of mountain-flying with Gavin in a Duo Discus in the New Zealand Championships five years ago. It would take someone of Philip's gifts to paint the picture. My relative ignorance of alpine soaring technique is already a handicap: to analyse that virtuoso performance is beyond me. How Gavin got round the course each day I cannot explain. I can only say I would not have missed such a vivid, dazzling experience for worlds. If there are not gel-coat marks on every rock and crag in the neighbourhood, it is a miracle. If you enjoy flying in spectacular scenery rather than over it, this is for you. I was totally useless in the back seat, except for passing pee-bags. It is difficult saying anything intelligent when you do not understand what is going on or when your jaw is hanging open the whole time.

Don't hit the spuds short of the fence

Justin's most important piece of advice to me was: "Platypus, you must be prepared for the Final Glide of Life." That sounds pretty ominous, but all it means is: "For God's sake don't run out of money before you die!"

Two heads are better than one – aren't they?

Teamwork of a high order in a two-seater is possible: I have that on good authority from George Moffat. George believes strongly that the best climbing performance in a two-seater is obtained by having one pilot fly the glider and the other "command" the thermal by calling "open out to the north" etc: a strict division of labour, rather like the skipper and the helmsman in a ship.

I have no doubt that this can work well if the pilots are reasonably well-matched and practise together a lot to perfect their technique. However, when we tried it flying Milt Hare's ASH 25 from the Texas Soaring Association past Dallas Fort Worth up towards Illinois during the transcontinental race to Kitty Hawk in 2003, the pilot at the controls (Platypus) made a total hash of it. When, for instance, George asked me to shift the centre of the turn west, I was in complete "Duh?" mode for a good 60° or more, trying to figure out where west was from the sun, which involved remembering what time of day it was, what time-zone we were in and the sun's azimuth (the angle of the sun's shadow on the ground plus 180°) at that latitude. By that time I had overshot the point when I should have taken off the bank. George was much too polite to curse, but I can imagine what he thought.

Of course I had forgotten that over most agricultural parts of the USA the roads run east-west and north-south, creating a grid like the chess-board countryside that Alice observed in *Through the Looking-Glass.* Most of my American flying has been done over places like Death Valley and the Donner Pass and other notoriously desolate areas where wagon-train pioneers died like flies from thirst or starvation, there is not a lot of what a visitor from further east would call countryside, and the regular pattern of roads you find in Texas and the Mid-West is not seen. That is my excuse anyway.

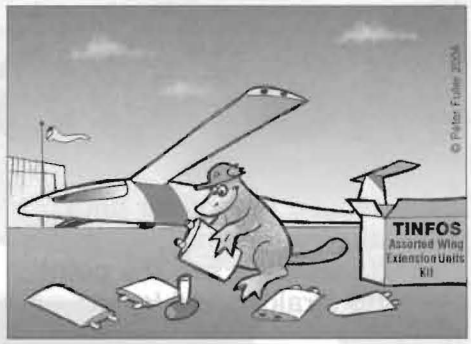
Political Correctness on the rampage – again

This year there is a lot of fuss being made about the psychological trauma and the suffering inflicted on young people when they are not merely soundly beaten at soccer matches but positively thrashed – and to add humiliation to defeat, see the result trumpeted in the local press the next day. After one junior team had beaten another by 29 goals to 0, a Derbyshire newspaper headline used the word "trounced" – which to me seemed like masterly British understatement. However the newspaper was immediately assailed for its crass insensitivity to the losers' feelings. But what are the poor scribes to do? To have said that the winners "squeaked ahead by 29 goals" would have sounded very much like sarcasm.
One suggestion has been to "freeze" the reporting of all scores above 14. Indeed, I believe that is being practised right now.

I have in the past had cause to chide editors of *S&G* about the embarrassment caused by competition reports. These should not state that a pilot had landed out, but that he had decided it was time to go down and cement relations with members of the agricultural community who otherwise tend to feel alienated and socially excluded.

A serious prang should either be brushed under the carpet (the pilot retiring for urgent personal reasons) or better still, earn praise for selflessly providing income for hard-pressed glider-repairers and importers.

Some in high places in the world of soccer have decided that manipulating the media is not enough: they want to go further and tinker with the scoring system, or even reform it radically. For instance it is being suggested that the first-half losers be given two extra players during the second half, and even have the leaders' indecently large margin reduced or cancelled. (No, I am not making this up. See the *Sunday Times* for the 4th April, 2004.)



plug in several more metres

I like that solution. Many gliders have the facility for adding extra span. After, say, three competition days, those skulking at the bottom of the numbers could be allowed to plug in several more metres. Again, under current rules those who have wrecked their gliders beyond hope of repair are currently disbarred from using another aircraft. This rule could be rescinded for pilots who are trailing by a sufficiently traumatic margin. And as for trimming the leaders' points scientifically, what else are computers for?

Of course you would have to watch with care for cunning individuals exploiting the new rules. If, for example, we find Andy Davis skulking unaccountably low in the rankings in the early days of a Nationals, I'd want to go back to the drawing-board.

SPAN, SPAN, SPAN

Talking of adding extra length on demand, I have had an uncalled-for ad, of the kind that my male and female friends alike say they get by the hundred, in my email inbox for the very first time. It arrived complete with greengrocer's redundant apostrophe, which I preserve for the record, so send no pedantic letters, please. The spammers must be getting desperate to target me after years of leaving me alone. Or they think I must be getting desperate. Well, I'm not.

The email could stand (pardon my French) some very small modification to serve as an ad to glider pilots – of either sex.

Here is my first attempt:

ENLARGE YOUR WINGSPAN NATURALLY...

Guaranteed & proven by Doctor's *(sic)*

SEEN ALL OVER THE WEB & ON TV

- Gain up to 3+ metres
- Thicken your wingroot
- Gives partners increased pleasure *(they won't have to retrieve you so often)*
- Improves self-esteem & motivation *(of course it would)*
- A longer-lasting, healthier soar
- All Natural, wholesale cost, try it!

100% $-back guarantee...

plat@thereisnosubstituteforspam.com

The Platypus Papers: fifty years of powerless pilotage
(hardback, 160 pages, 100 Peter Fuller cartoons)
costs £19.95 + £3.50 p&p
buy at *www.gliding.co.uk*

Aeros before solo

Experienced paraglider pilot and sailplane *ab initio* Fiona Dalzell just can't see the point in flying straight and level...

I AM IN a 45° diving line, the needle licks 95, and I have my fate and that of another human in my hand. I pull her up; check my aircraft on the horizon at a perfect 100, then divert my flight towards the stars. For a moment my world is completely blue, I am covered in sky, and if we continued this way for many nights, we would meet the moon. But it is the morning, so I let my head fall back, and watch for the horizon promised me, not just by the instructor, but by the beautiful design of my aircraft. Sailplanes are female, I am sure. I see the earth above me returning in a horizon of green. We do a perfect circle, exiting to steady level flight. My soul is stolen. I have just made my aircraft do my first loop.

I am on an aerobatics course at Saltby, with a real BGA aerobatics instructor, John Gilbert, and whatever it cost, for that moment alone, it's worth it. And so far I have been in the air just 10 minutes. This Gilbert chap is a fast worker.

The idea of this had been fluttering around in my mind ever since I had my first trial flight at the Long Mynd.

Knowing what I do now about the limits applied to trial lesson flights, I realise how lucky I was to have the instructor I did. I wish I could name him, but feel it would be prudent to keep his identity secret.

Prior to the flight I briefed him as to my wishes. These were to have more than normal or less than normal G, as often as possible. Being a gentleman, he obliged with enthusiasm. My trial flight therefore, included loops, rolls, chandelles, and finished with a great approach to the airfield. As an introduction to sailplaning, I could think of nothing better, nothing more enticing.

This was just before I went home to New Zealand for a few months. On my return, Foot-and-Mouth Disease grounded free flight for what felt like forever. More travels abroad and when I eventually returned to the UK for a spell, I had a new job in Derbyshire, and so finally enrolled at the very beautiful Derbyshire & Lancashire GC at Camphill in the Peak District. I soon realised the instructors there harboured quite unrealistic expectations. These would have to be changed if I was to progress. Whilst I wanted to loop, they seemed to think it perfectly reasonable to insist I should be able to fly straight and level before contemplating any other position.

This straight and level business in itself was quite a challenge, but a challenge I like to think I have occasionally risen to meet. After a few flights of a less wallowy nature than normal I decided to start executing my plans. Having lost my first logbook, my new logbook was featureless, no real clue as to how much I had done. Perfect for my new plan.

In the front cover there was a list of tasks. Tasks I was expected to perform in the course of my training. Whatever a high-speed stall was, it sounded fun, as did the idea of spinning. I decided to start asking about these activities, as they sounded very much in the right direction. If one must do these things, what was wrong with now?

I tried my new plan on my first victim. He asked me what I wanted to do in this flight, and I said: "High speed stalls and spins."

So we had a briefing. I never mentioned the number of my previous flights, still in single figures. He never got a chance to ask, as I artfully diverted all conversation well away from that area. Off we went, and I had a go at this stall business.

It was great fun. I loved finding myself pointing at the ground with the needle hitting 90; I loved the sensation of falling that was my version of the stall. Though I did not feel it was a pure textbook execution, I did think everything was fine for a first effort. However, there was some distracting shouting from the back seat. Generally, I have found shouting and screaming to be signs things are not going well. Silence or, better still, munching luncheon noises are the best audible markers of a happy instructor. Not screams.

'They started bribing me, which I felt to be dubious behaviour. It is, in my opinion, immoral to use flying manoeuvres as metaphorical carrots'

"That was just terrible!" my instructor cried. I was most disappointed, and a little hurt. How could something that felt so wonderful possibly be so awful? But he was the instructor, he knew best, so I just had to do better. I tried to improve, not quite all the way down to the ground, but to a safe level.

Once back on the airfield he suspiciously reviewed my logbook.

"Exactly how many flights have you had?"

I told him. He looked at me sternly for a while.

"We don't usually do this till near solo..."

My heart stopped; I waited. I watched him with what I hoped was a neutral expression, the expression of a sensible mature pilot, a pilot who wanted to improve in complete safety, the expression of someone who would never damage a club aircraft.

"Get in; we'll do it again, but this time..."

This wonderful man of vision became the thin end of my wedge, the wedge I had just got it in the very door I so wanted to open. Now, it was in my logbook that a senior instructor had taken me up for such things, so it was then no problem carrying on with my plans after that. I started having even more fun, at an appropriate height of course. But you never really get ahead of those Camphill instructors. With in a couple of weeks they were all back in control. They started bribing me, which I felt to be most dubious behaviour. It is, in my opinion, immoral to use flying manoeuvres as metaphorical carrots.

"No spins unless you can do perfectly coordinated banked turns."

So this is how I eventually started to learn to use stick and rudder together.

"Climb up to over 2,000ft and then we will do a loop."

So this is how I learnt to thermal.

Is that a proper way to teach?

Then my CFI mentioned, in conversation, real courses for real aerobats. I hoped I might be able to go to one, so started investigating his suggestion of Lasham, but it looked unlikely. Courses were booked up months in advance, and I got the impression you had to have soloed to participate. It looked very large, almost military. I was not sure I would fit in. But not being easily put off, I kept investigating. Buckminster ran aerobatics competitions; it was smaller and closer to home, so I rang the clubhouse at Saltby.

Some nice chap was extremely warm on the phone, although I wondered exactly what type of club it was when my second most important question revealed they had no bar. What kind of gliding club has no bar? However, as all the training was in Puchaczs (pushchairs, as they affectionately call them) I would be welcome.

Then the dates and details came on an email. I hoped the Bronze Badge required was just a minor element, one that could be ignored. I allowed myself to be overcome with excitement at the prospect of what was about to happen.

John Gilbert felt emotion, too, but of a somewhat different nature, when he heard that a pre-solo pilot wanted to come. But I was so certain I would learn something, and probably so many things, from a day with a real aero instructor, I would not be put off. It felt like such a natural desire that I could not really see why anyone found it odd. John asked my CFI's permission, but Mike, my CFI, was at Pocklington all week. I begged another instructor to ring up and convince John I would benefit. My main



A Lasham K-21 at the top of a loop. Fiona's course was at Saltby in a Puchacz (www.whiteplanes.com)

concern was that the courses would be so popular I would lose my place. Nigel did this, bless him. It sounded like my nationality inched me forward into a better position, and then my CFI happily gave me a formal Camphill day release pass.

This was how I found myself rushing from work on a Wednesday night and driving down to near Grantham, and around, and around, a strange airfield in the dark. I had been warned Saltby would be hard to find, and extracted contact phone numbers of nearby club members, and GPS coordinates. I came prepared. But, having successfully located the airfield – a small miracle in itself – the gate was locked. I rang the clubhouse; no reply. I drove round the whole thing, and to no avail, no other entrance.

Then I spotted a car leaving the farmer's house, I established from them he was awake, and so drove down to the farm and asked how I could get in to the airfield. It was a rather alarming conversation. He had locked the gate after unsavoury and criminal activities, involving incinerated cars and get-away vans, and seemed most concerned I intended to camp overnight there. He even very kindly offered me a place to stay, but I was sure with the competition on that weekend, I would not be alone, so I headed off through the farm, having been given permission to use the farmer's private track.

I emerged from a wood into a scene from Watership Down. Thousands of rabbits danced a quickstep under my rotating headlights. What shocked me most were the miles of airfield, all completely flat. It was a mystery to me how anyone could land on something so regular and featureless. I had enough trouble managing this with the advantage of just a small area to focus on with so many helpful contours.

Then I found the hangar, and met Mary, the treasurer, who showed me round and offered to help pitch my tent. I could hardly sleep, I was so excited. I had only one can of Ruddles, mindful of the obvious concern expressed in one email from Mark, about airsickness. I would consider it the height of rudeness to arrive as a visiting pilot and throw up in someone else's plane. However, they seemed to think I had no manners and put extra sick bags in, just for me!

In the morning, I made my coffee, and was wandering round when John arrived in his Mini Cooper. I wondered how much of a nutcase he must be to want to teach aerobatics. He looked deceptively normal. Very polite and gently spoken, no macho patter, but of course, this is the genteel and refined world of the sailplane, where skill and bravery speak so much louder than the empty vessel echoes of machismo I have heard in shadier corners of free flight. He seemed calmness itself.

I like to see unflappability in instructors I fly with. They need it, especially on landing.

Then the others on the course showed up. Barry was an instructor, and Dave was obviously post solo, as I gathered he was also flying the tug. At our first briefing, I asked some very basic question, and Barry looked at me with a doubtful expression.

"And how much experience have you exactly had, then?" he asked.

"Um, none, not gone solo yet".

This was the first and only moment I felt any uncertainty, when I saw the frank disbelief on Barry's face. I thought of Mike, my CFI, and Nigel, my instructor, who had placed their judgment on the line to let me do this, and I felt a responsibility to my club, not to let anyone from Camphill down.

But Barry and Dave, despite their great experience, made no further comments, and proved excellent, entertaining and supportive companions for the day.

Somewhere round ten o'clock I found myself on a concrete runway, with John, who told me to get in. It looked like I was going first. Oh, dear, that pre-flight need to release ballast came upon me. The trees available all looked a little inadequate for the task in hand, but I could not keep him waiting, so did the necessaries in a very public place. Camphill has vastly superior selection of trees for such moments, I must say, and as I think I have mentioned, we also have a well-stocked bar.

I was getting in and ready, with no visible means of getting the plane in the air. With only three people present, and two of them in the glider, this seemed most irregular. We did pre-flight checks and got to eventualities. At Camphill, "E" can easily take 15 minutes, or longer, to discuss. At Saltby, with this elephantine-sized airfield, apparently devoid of rotor, hazards or idiosyncrasies, "land

ahead" seemed to cover all possible problems. Amazing.

Then a collection of bean cans stapled together with a hornet whine scuttled across the grass and squatted in front of us. Yes, across the grass (those from Camphill will appreciate why I was so shocked at such outrageous behaviour) .The noisy metal rivetted object was trailing a string; within seconds of hearing it, we were attached to it.

"You have not done aerotow before, have you?" John asked, as the whining throbbed up a notch.

"No," I confirmed my complete lack of experience in yet another area.

"Ok, I'll do the first bit".

First bit? How many bits were there?

I looked around, where were all the people? Barry had a radio, and was holding the wing, and suddenly we were off, sliding along behind the tug, a dolphin being towed by a walrus. As always, the thrill of being in the air burnt away all my concerns and after a couple of hundred feet, John said: "You have control; just keep the tug about – there!"

Easier said than done, as the tow line periodically looped and then whanged tight. Oh, how I felt for the tug pilot, how I wished each time I could signal apologies, but we eventually made it to 4,000ft, and released, to her relief, I am sure.

I had asked John what we would be doing, and he was a little cagey. I guessed he wanted to see how things were with me at the wheel before he decided how far he was prepared to risk his mental wellbeing, and the club's plane, so I did not push it. I was pretending to be a model student. He would learn otherwise, all too soon, when it came to the landing.

We began with 45° diving lines. Somehow, flying so much closer to VNE than I have intentionally done before focused my mind to a knife-edge. Then again, there is something, somehow very comforting about pointing the nose straight down at that angle, letting the speed build up to 95, and pulling it up to a ton on the horizon, and knowing you can do that and she flies beautifully. Just the sensation of pulling up and checking her was delicious, but this was only an appetiser. Climbing lines, and that sweet over-the-top moment came next.

A few of those, and then came what I had been wanting for all these months – my first loop.

My first loop! Pure happiness became a gas dissolved in my blood and with the G it bubbled out, filling my lungs. I bit my lip, I tried to act sensible, but it was impossible and quite unreasonable to expect anything of any sense from me then, laughter displaced air, and all I could do was giggle helplessly. While the giggling went on, I managed more loops and John started teaching me the elements of a chandelle. I fell off the top, and spun, but recognised it for what it was, and then it was landing time. Just too soon, much too soon, I could fall to earth doing that forever.

It could seem odd, I admit, to be teaching the forbidden elements of aerial pleasures to someone who has yet to learn to land. But odd or not, John was an instructor, and I felt I might as well get my money's worth. After discussing 2G turns, I made him go over the landing and roundout. Privately I thought we had way too much height, and the approach seemed unnecessarily large. Perhaps very big flat airfields necessitate expansive circuits, and tight odd-shaped fields induce curved fast approaches.

Somehow, with a deluge of hormones disturbing every neurone in my head, I rounded out in time and landed acceptably. I was really surprised at myself.

Aerobatics is good for you, obviously.

Then I had to sit down for an hour and recover, while the chaps had their turns. I hoped they had noted the sick bags they put in for me remained pristine and all quite unused.

As I waited my turn I looked up, and it was raining gliders. In all corners of the sky there were planes at odd angles and strange positions. It was an aerobatic circus, and the sky had become a big top. I watched, utterly impressed. Just as I am utterly impressed by my own instructors who do 500km and 700km flights, and beyond. I think how wonderful it are that there are so many fantastic aspects to this form of aviation.

On the ground, before my second flight, John patted me on the head, while I was pulling apart my own performance.

"It's OK, you're doing just great!" he said in such a fatherly way.

My chandelles improved, and I inched nearer to what I imagined it should feel like with each attempt. In my mind I thought it would feel like a cartwheel.

On the second flight, I managed it, and I knew this was how it should feel, the plane felt happy, the motion felt perfect, and we flicked on a knife-edge in a perfect arc over a wing tip. I knew I had done it before John congratulated me.

Ecstasy of a purely organic endogenous form hit my brain, and again, the helpless giggling. Happily John seemed to think no less of me for this very un-English display of emotion.

I was allowed to do all the aerotow the last time, and my dolphin was surfing, trying to porpoise the air behind the dumpy, toothy, roaring tug. My beautiful plane was desperate to fly, and I had to hold her down, and stifle her, it was an alien sensation, to try to stop her flying. In fact, my head was so full of new sensations I felt like I was about to explode.

At the end of the day we had all had three flights. Dave had gone up and done his own programme and had a basic aerobatics badge, and if he plays his cards right could have a lovely young wife as well, thanks to Caroline. She was the fourth member of our team, who arrived late. She has done many courses with John, and has a very beautiful daughter, from all accounts. It appears the beautiful daughter would like to leave home, and a farmer with a penchant for loops could be just the ticket for the re-homing, according to her mother. Dave had done particularly well, a certificate and a wife.

By the end of the day, I had done my first aerotows, 45° lines, looped consecutively, chandelled, 2G turned and exited spins on a given heading, and landed three times without any cries of horror from the back seat.

John was, as I suspected, unflappable, and naturally shared my enthusiasm for those special things in my task book, the things that take the aircraft into the most fun corners of the playground. At the briefing I asked him if there was anything I could possibly do, that he would not be able to recover from. Barry gave me another instructor look. John thought a moment or two and replied with conviction: "No!" One wonders into what dark nights of the soul he has been taken by students that enable him to answer that so emphatically.

I have been asked why I want to do this, and I find it hard to answer. But I find it harder to understand why anyone even asks the question. The reason lies in the feeling of being totally at one with the aircraft, of feeling the wingtip becoming your fingers, the fuselage your body, the aircraft assuming your skin. It's taking pleasure in our ability to fly; the celebration of the gift of an aerofoil. It's almost a sin to have such a miracle at our disposal and not be interested in finding out its every possibility.

Would I recommend a day with John to others? Of course I would! Apart from the fun factor, even at my level I learnt an immense amount. No instructor is that likely to leave mid-flight, so once you are strapped in, as a student, you have certain positional advantages and these aerobatics instructors can really be pushed. If they claim there is nothing you can do that will alarm then, then testing them out and trying to get them to shout is such good sport.

Even for one as accomplished as I at alarming the responsible adult in the back seat, I have not managed to induce panic shouting in John, yet.

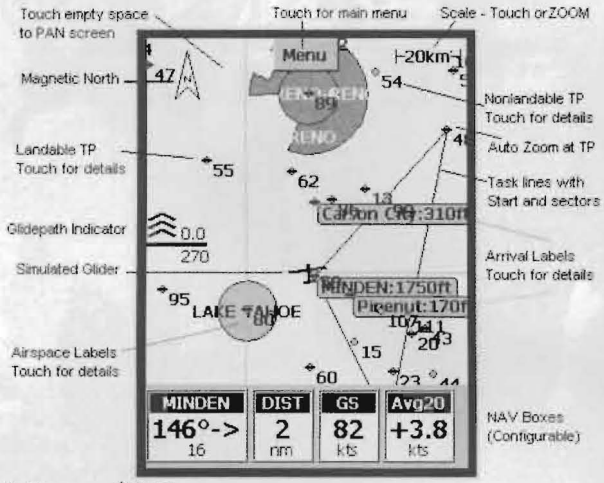
Flying closer to the boundaries of your aircraft's performance certainly sharpens your mind to the need for absolute precision. No staring out of the Perspex admiring the beautiful sunset and thinking romantic thoughts, then! My sense of caution has actually been heightened. So if you have these private desires, and know they just need to be satisfied, then the safest way to do this is surely to get taught by a qualified BGA aerobatics instructor, at a club with aerobatics enthusiasts like Saltby.

They may have no bar, but you do get complimentary sick bags with every flight.

Fiona is a 41-year-old paraglider pilot, with 400hrs, who has been flying for three years, in South Africa, Turkey, France, Spain, New Zealand and Australia. She took a trial lesson at the Long Mynd when it was too windy for a paraglider, joining Camphill after surgery on her arm temporarily grounded her

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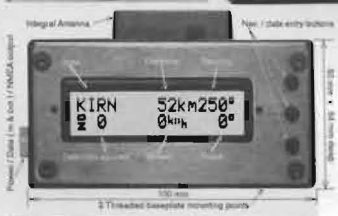
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33 years of service

Gillian Bryce-Smith, editor of *S&G* from 1973 to 1998, talks to Barry Rolfe on his retirement after 33 years as BGA Secretary



Barry with BGA office staff and his wife, Jenny in his last week at work.
Right: At the RAeC's Awards Ceremony this year, Barry was presented with the FAI's Paul Tissandier Diploma by HRH The Duke of York (left). Barry's wife Jenny (right) received a bouquet of flowers.

FEW OF US can say we've worked with someone for more than 25 years without friction or complaint, but I'm not alone in making this claim. The great quality Barry has always shown during his 33 years as the British Gliding Association Secretary is that he gets on with people. And this strength has been such as asset in handling the variety of individualists that pepper the gliding world.

This was picked up by David Roberts, Chairman of the BGA, in his annual report this year. He wrote: "Barry has the patience of Job and in my four years as Chairman working with him he has kept the ship on a steady course, always unflappable in a crisis and constructive in criticism when the Executive, or others, has developed a penchant for something he knows 'will not fly'".

No, Barry isn't a glider pilot. He has, though, taken part in another sport – rugby union – to an impressive standard. He has represented Bedfordshire, and later he has become heavily involved with Leicester. And his choice of sport isn't that surprising when you meet him – he's 6ft 4in tall and powerfully built.

So you wonder why a 26-year-old would even consider taking on the unusual, always challenging, job of BGA Secretary, when he wasn't already hooked on the sport.

In reply, Barry says that when he left school they all went to see the careers master alphabetically. "By the time R came around," he recalls, "it seemed that everybody coming out afterwards with A levels in the arts rather than science was being told to become a Chartered Accountant, so I asked the master if there was anything slightly different. He suggested becoming a Chartered Secretary. So there we are".

He studied through day release for the secretarial exams and became the assistant secretary of the National Hardware Alliance, a trade association in Hatton Garden, covering the various hardware and ironmongery businesses from manufacturing down to retailing.

It was then he saw an advertisement in *The Daily Telegraph* for the job he was to take for the next 33 years until his retirement this May.

"At school," he confesses, "I hadn't been in the Combined Cadet Force and had no special interest in aviation, other than the fact that I was living at Dunstable and, like a lot of people, spent time at weekends sitting on top of the Downs watching the gliders".

The selection committee all those years ago made an inspired choice and may have surprised many members by picking someone not involved with gliding. Actually, it probably worked in Barry's favour that he wasn't a member of any particular club and could stand back and take an independent view. And, when we met for a leisurely lunch, he made this very point: "I have always felt it was a great advantage to me not being a glider pilot, as I had no particular axe to grind or club or area allegiance and everybody gets treated in exactly the same way.

"The job is changing, however, and it will be an advantage for the new Chief Executive being a glider pilot and having that intimate knowledge of the sport, as there is much more representation required in the post today, rather than just management and administration".

Whatever the pros and cons, Barry's particular formula worked and he has steered an interesting collection of BGA chairmen with their characteristically distinctive Executive Committees through some of the most formative phases of the sport. In Barry's words: "It was quite intimidating at the age of 26 being put in charge of the BGA office, which at the time contained some extremely experienced but volatile people on the staff – including Rika Harwood, Naomi Christy and Ray Stafford-Allan.

"From day one the great majority of the people involved in the sport have been enormous fun to work with, which is why I have stayed with it for so long. There is no doubt the nature of the sport has changed since I started. It is generally more 'serious' these days and does seem to have lost a little of the lighter side".

It has also become more expensive. When Barry started working for the BGA in 1970 a winch launch was around four shillings and sixpence; and an aerotow could cost as little as £2. Cockpits had the minimum of basic instruments and *S&G* was five shillings (soon to be 30 "new pence").

I became editor of *S&G* in 1973, and still have memories of those early days at Artillery Mansions, when Barry would appear on Monday mornings with his rugby wounds and good-naturedly steer gliding enthusiasts, keen to recount the weekend's flying, from his office while he caught up with work. Being in London, the office attracted the gliding fraternity in amazing numbers. Often it was just to look in out of curiosity or to pick up an *S&G* or book.

"For those who don't remember Artillery Mansions," adds Barry, "the office was in a semi-basement with very little natural light and was very old-fashioned, with lots of leaking radiators and shiny green cracked lino. The corridors were all dark and if you weren't careful you tripped over all the boxes of *S&G* and books from the sales room, which were stored along the sides".

Barry remembers the move from London to Leicester as quite traumatic. He was the



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only headquarters staff member to make the switch and had to start again with a completely new staff. "It suited me," he says, "as I then had a young family and it was good for us to move away from the London area and to be able to buy more house for our money. "What it did eventually prove was that we were able to get a much better staff in the office at Leicester than we had been able to afford working in the centre of London in competition with other more glamorous and better-paid jobs".

After the move to Leicester Barry carried on playing rugby. He never actually made the Leicestershire side but played for a junior club based in Market Harborough. He has been involved with the Rugby Club ever since and is an active Vice-President. He has two children, Tiffany and Ashley. Tiffany worked for a while for the BGA – and broke the family mould by going solo.

Aside from rugby, his hobbies are reading, wine and travel. In fact, he has booked a holiday in New York immediately on retiring as that is somewhere he and his wife Jenny have always wanted to visit.

"It is my intention to travel as much as possible in retirement," Barry says "and to see many other parts of the world".

They have both enjoyed America, making several visits to pursue their own interests. Barry is fascinated by the American Civil War and has been known to cart home loads of books about it. Jenny, a gifted needlewoman who teaches and is writing a book on patchwork quilting, uses part of her holiday time researching the craft and filling her suitcase with samples.

While being the BGA Secretary was a responsible, time-consuming job, it did have its lighter moments. I remember Barry's horror – and amusement – when escorting the wife of a VIP across an airfield during a nationals she looked up and said: "Oh, I didn't know you had parachuting here, as well". There had been a mid-air collision. Happily, both of the pilots baled out safely. Two other stories came to mind, which Barry tells in his own words:

"I organised a formal dinner on behalf of the Royal Aero Club Council to which we invited the Duke and Duchess of York, but when they arrived to be greeted by 20 "penguins" in evening dress it became clear that I had omitted to inform the Palace that it was a formal black tie event! But they took it very well and I didn't go to the Tower."

"I remember well a BGA Nationals at Lasham many years ago because I forgot to send the winner's trophy down and just before the closing ceremony on a Sunday it was still sitting on my desk in Leicester.

I was informed of this by a call to home from the organisers on Sunday morning, who then asked me to collect the "pot" and drive it to the local flying club at Stoughton Airfield and wait for a helicopter to arrive and collect it to transfer it to Lasham.

When I got to the airfield all in the control tower were very excited and were clearing the circuit before a huge Chinook came thundering in. The ramp was dropped and I walked up carrying this little box, which was then placed in the middle of this vast empty space to be transported to Lasham as part of a 'training exercise'."

As well as leaving the BGA, Barry is also giving up his work as the Secretary of the Royal Aero Club, which he has found to be an interesting additional role for the last 29 years. In March 2004 he was presented with the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale's prestigious Paul Tissandier Diploma at the RAeC's awards ceremony in London. It is given each year to those who have served aviation in general and sporting aviation in particular. This was the third time Barry's contribution had been formally recognised. Way back in 1987, the RAeC presented him with its Bronze Medal, while last year the Soaring Society of America awarded him for one of its major accolades, the Ivans Gold Medal, in recognition of his achievements. That was presented to him by Brian Spreckley at the BGA Conference in 2003. And the BGA itself, in May, rounded off this roll of honour with a fourth presentation: the first BGA Gold Medal for services to gliding, a new award to complement the BGA Diploma, at his retirement dinner.

Barry won't thank me for writing this, but he has always under-estimated the huge part he has played in shaping the workings of the BGA over all those years. His diplomacy, tact and gentle approach have been greatly appreciated by members who will, I'm sure, join me in wishing him and Jenny a long and happy retirement.

How might EASA affect you?

David Roberts and Terry Slater answer 20 frequently-asked questions about EASA – the new European Aviation Safety Agency that is looming ever larger over the British gliding landscape. It's worth making the effort to find out what's going on – and how *you* can help make a difference...

1. What is EASA?

EASA, the European Aviation Safety Agency, was set up to ensure common standards for all aspects of non-military aviation throughout the European Union (EU). It is designed to be the pan-European equivalent of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in America. Now based in Brussels, EASA will soon move to Cologne.

2. Who runs it?

As an "Agency" it is autonomous. Its board of management contains representatives of the 15 pre-enlargement European Union (EU) states; its staff is headed by Executive Director Patrick Goudou. The European Parliament and the European Commission (EC) are ultimately responsible for its work.

3. What legal basis does it have?

EU Regulation 1592/2002 – in other words, it is European Law.

4. How has it affected British gliding, so far?

In principle, we are already affected by requirements on "initial airworthiness" (known as "Part 21"). These cover things like aircraft original design, type certification and original Certificates of Airworthiness. Part 21 became law last September but in the UK we are negotiating about how to implement it. The rules will apply here from September 28, 2004. (See also Q10.)

These "initial airworthiness" requirements should not be confused with "continuing airworthiness" (known as "Part M"), which covers things like maintenance and periodic renewal of the Certificate of Airworthiness. Part M is still under discussion.

5. Was there any good reason for changing the law on UK glider airworthiness?

Prior to EASA, UK airworthiness law did not cover gliders, only SLMGs (self-launching motorgliders). The EU "initial airworthiness" Essential Requirements ("ERs") in Regulation 1592 were established with no consultation – and with only six weeks' consultation last summer on how to implement them through the "Implementing Rules".

Annex II of Regulation 1592 excludes certain categories of civil aircraft from EU regulation. Exclusions embrace microlight aircraft (<450kg), hang-gliders, model aircraft, and certain historic aircraft, but unfortunately the air sport representative bodies were never consulted before the law was passed in the EU Parliament, and gliders were included in the scope of the regulation. In fact, UK gliding evidence shows there was no safety case to answer: five gliding fatalities in 17 years (7.1 million launches) in the UK were ascribed to airworthiness causes; and three of those were failures to connect controls. (EASA's Executive Director has since accepted, in a meeting last November, that accident statistics are the outcome measure of the effectiveness of safety regulation.) But we are now stuck with Part 21 of EU law as it stands.

6. How is the British Gliding Association responding to EASA?

As soon as we became aware of these developments in early 2002 we set about representing our interests at national and European level. We are working with the UK Department for Transport (DfT) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to minimise the adverse impacts of EASA on the UK gliding movement, and are heavily involved in European-level representation and lobbying. BGA representatives have attended many meetings in the UK and in Europe over the last two years.

The BGA is represented in dealings with EASA by Europe Air Sports (EAS – a pan-European body representing all air sports, not to be confused with EASA).

We have access to EAS both through our National Aero Club – the Royal Aero Club (RAeC) of the UK – and through the European Gliding Union (EGU). Until now, the formal consultation route with EASA has been *only* via EAS, but EASA has just indicated it will listen to opinion from *anyone*, not only the formal consultation bodies (EASA/industry meeting, April 26).

Britons working on our behalf include:



Terry Slater, who recently left the BGA Executive to focus on BGA negotiations about EASA's impact

BGA Chairman **David Roberts**, who is also First Vice-President of the EGU and a Board Member and Treasurer of EAS; BGA Medical Advisor Dr **Peter Saundby**, who is EAS's Technical Officer (Medical Issues) and a recently-retired EAS Board Member; Sir **John Allison** – Dave Allison's father – is the RAeC delegate to EAS and has just been elected EAS President. **Terry Slater** is on the EGU licensing working group. **Howard Torode** sits on EAS and EGU working groups on airworthiness.

7. Why has the BGA adopted this approach?

The establishment of EASA is not something we can ignore, as it has the force of law behind it. We have no choice except to act within the provisions of the regulations, and to attempt to influence where possible.

8. What have we achieved?

At the national level, we have achieved a delay in the implementation of the "initial airworthiness" rules (until September 28, 2004) and we believe the DfT and the CAA are sympathetic to our cause. Our excellent relationship with these two authorities is the result of many years of contact and discussion, particularly with key people at the CAA.

At the European level, we have three significant achievements so far.

Firstly, our response to last summer's six-week consultation achieved both a delay in implementing *and* a one-year review of the "continuing airworthiness" (Part M) requirements, including a Regulatory Impact Assessment. In other words, our response created the chance to influence the law on maintenance before it is finalised.

Through EAS our presence has been felt in Brussels and officials increasingly recognise that air sport activities just cannot be treated in the same way as "heavy metal" commercial aviation.

Secondly, we must mention Dr Peter Saundby's hard work explaining the various ways of assessing medical fitness to fly, which he has done on behalf of both EAS and as the RAeC delegate to the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. (The FAI is the only air sports body officially recognised by ICAO, the global International Civil Aviation Organisation.) He has very clearly outlined the benefits of the UK system of medical self-declaration with GP endorsement – a battle that, at European level, is still being fought.

Thirdly, through our active and strong representation, EASA's recently-published proposed ERs for Licensing and Operations

(see Q14) invite our community to let EASA know, during the current consultation, what form of regulation we want for the future, including delegated self-regulation within an overall EU legal framework. The BGA system is well understood in Brussels and we have worked hard to get this recognition. Hopefully it will bear fruit.

9. Does EASA have any benefits for UK gliding?
There are several possible benefits in terms of common standards in certification, licensing and operations. It will make movement of aircraft and pilots simpler throughout the EU. A modification approved in one EU state is automatically approved in all EU states – something that could be of especial value in the case of tug aircraft.

10. I've imported a secondhand or new glider since September 28, 2003 – what must I do?
Ensure you obtain and keep all the correct documentation. All maintenance and flights must be recorded in the logbook, including any applicable airworthiness directives (ADs). Flight and Maintenance Manuals must be kept up-to-date, with manufacturer's revisions incorporated. Ensure the aircraft remains compliant with the type certificate; in other words, any modifications must be approved by the manufacturer as a service bulletin, technical note or similar, or by a European National Aviation Authority (NAA). The BGA is not an NAA.

You will also in due course need a CAA Certificate of Airworthiness, a G-XXXX number, and a fireproof plate for your glider. (See *www.gliding.co.uk* for more details).

The mechanisms for getting the CAA C of A, the G-number and fireproof plate have not yet been agreed, but for aircraft imported **after September 28 this year** (2004) they will need to be done immediately.

Aircraft imported **between September 28, 2003 and September 28, 2004** have a period of grace before they need to comply – how long isn't yet agreed.

The cost of all this is not yet known; the BGA obviously wants to reduce the financial impact on owners as much as possible.



BGA Chairman and EGU First Vice-President David Roberts, who is also the Treasurer of Europe Air Sports

11. What about my glider? It was registered with the BGA before September 28, 2003.
For gliders in the country before September last year, we have been granted a deferment of these requirements until March 28, 2007. We are attempting to get a permanent exemption for all gliders in this category and should know more by the end of this year.

12. What about the BGA C of A?
Your glider's "continuing airworthiness" is currently handled by the annual renewal of a BGA C of A (Certificate of Airworthiness). In future, there will probably be an "Airworthiness Review Certificate" (ARC) to revalidate a non-expiring C of A. How that will be managed is what we're discussing with the DfT and CAA now. EASA's review of Part M ("continuing airworthiness") *implies* that the earliest that the present system will change is possibly not until 2008.

13. I'm a BGA inspector – what might EASA mean for me?
Latest indications suggest that existing inspectors are likely to be able to continue within a new organisational structure. This – and the question of future inspectors – forms part of our dialogue with EASA over this next year. It is worth noting that EASA's use of the term "licensed engineer" does not necessarily mean what we in Britain currently understand by the term. We believe that in future people who are now BGA Inspectors could be "licensed engineers" in the EASA sense, within a sensible compliance framework.

14. What other aspects of gliding life in the UK could EASA affect?
Proposals – known as draft "Essential Requirements (ERs)" – for pilot licensing and for operations were published on the EASA website (*www.easa.eu.int/rulemaking*) on April 29. (ERs on pilot licensing have been renamed "pilot proficiency".)

There is now a three-month consultation, until the end of July, during which we will of course be very active, through EAS as before, and also for the first time via the RAeC and as the BGA.

15. What about glider pilot medicals?
We have proposed the continuation of the NPPL medical declaration system for air sports, although it is far from certain this will be agreed. Some gliding representative bodies in the rest of Europe actually favour ICAO Class II medicals! We will defend the UK system robustly, especially as the CAA has adopted it for the National Private Pilot's Licence (NPPL).

16. When will new laws on licensing and operations take effect?
This depends on the outcome of the current consultation, but we would expect political imperatives to determine these during 2004 simply because they apply to commercial aviation as well as to us.

17. What are the wider implications of EASA for gliding in Europe?
It should eventually be possible to fly anywhere in the EU on the basis of a common pilot's licence and internationally-recognised glider Cs of A.

18. What does the BGA want to see?
The BGA would prefer to see self-regulation continue in the UK, with mutual recognition of standards agreed with all other EU states.

19. How can I stay up to date?
Look at the EASA website (*www.easa.eu.int*) regularly. It is relatively new and lacks a lot of information, but we know efforts are being made to improve it. The BGA will keep you informed via *www.gliding.co.uk*, the BGA newsletter and *S&G*. In particular, it's very important that you watch the first two of these in early July. See Q20 for more.

20. What can I do to help?
For the first time since this whole process began, your own and your club's input could make a difference.

A very recent shift in EASA's approach means that it is inviting comment from relevant individuals and organisations on its proposals (see Q14).

It is vital that we all present a unified and co-ordinated front; and we urge all UK glider pilots and clubs to keep an eye on *www.gliding.co.uk* and the BGA newsletter in early July.

We will almost certainly be asking you to respond to EASA's proposals in support of the BGA's stance and supplying you with the latest news to help you do so.

In summary, EASA is a very young body, and has not yet recruited many of the staff we will have to deal with. Latest indications are that the BGA is highly regarded in EASA, and the somewhat draconian rules could well be relaxed for sporting and recreational aviation. *But* it is early days yet.

These questions and answers are based upon the best available information at May 2, 2004

Next issue: more about Europe Air Sports



Peter Saundby has been explaining ways of assessing fitness to fly, in European and world-wide contexts



The 2004 racing season

Jay Rebbeck gives a personal view of what's hot and what's not in this season's comps...

NEWSFLASH: Great Britain is the best competitive gliding nation in the world. Well, that's if the International Ranking system has anything to do with it. In spite of our lukewarm climate, our competitive scene goes from strength to strength whilst France, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic snap at our heels for the top spot. So, with a packed national and international contest calendar ahead of us this summer, we thought we'd check out this year's contenders at home and abroad and delve into some of the burning issues on the racing scene.

The 12th Europeans, Lithuania

With a long list of international success together, and flying in their preferred flatland environment, watch out for Steve Jones and Tim Scott in the 15-Metre Class. Competing for the second time running in the Standard Class, Dave Allison teams up with last year's Standard Nationals winner Leigh Wells. Phil Jones' bronze in last year's World Championships sees him into the 18-Metre Class, and having dominated last season's Open Class Nationals, Russell Cheetham takes his slot in the Open Class. Unusually, these Europeans have been undersubscribed, and so Dave Masson and Jed Edyvean have had late call-ups for places in the 18-Metre and Open Class respectively. For both of them an incredible opportunity beckons. (*www.egc2004.lt*)

The 3rd Club Class Worlds, Norway

For Rich Hood, this time it's personal. With two silver medals in the last two Club Class World Champs, and a machine-like ability to win the Club Class Nationals back home, he's got to be a title contender. Mind you, having won Gold in the first Club Class Worlds in Australia, Pete Masson is no stranger to success either. I'll be slotting into the team for the first time, and at the time of writing we are all looking forward to a week's training in April. We've hired local two-seaters to practise in, with Andy Davis coaching us to help our flying styles gel together. It's a good chance to see exactly how scary those mountains are. Boasting an entry list of 60, with six world champions, the Club Class's relative affordability is fast making it the most popular class on the international circuit. (*www.wgc2004.no*)

This year's UK nationals

Traditionally the most popular nationals, this year's Standard Class is being hosted at Aston Down. Hot from his Junior Worlds success last year, Jez Hood enters armed with an LS8 for the first time. In the mix, we've also got 2002 nationals winner Pete Harvey; and world championship Silver medallist Mike Young will be hard to beat with his depth of international experience.

Lasham will be hosting what is shaping up to be one of the hottest 15-metre contests for years. Knocking Steve Jones and Dave Watt off their top spot will take some serious doing. Rich Hood and Pete Masson are crossing over from the Club Class, and will be keen to make an impact. Enjoying something of a cross-country renaissance, Booker sees Tim Scott and Paul Brice enter the fray, and we'll see if all that practice pays off.

Co-hosted with the 15-Metre Nationals, this year's Junior Nationals is the basis for selection into the 2005 Junior Worlds at the Soaring Centre. With all six members of last year's squad too old to compete again, it's a case of building a team from scratch. Competing in a World Champs in the UK will be the opportunity of a lifetime for six new faces. For the 18-Metre and Open Class, it's a trip to the flatlands of East Anglia, where Tibenham opens its doors to a double dose of Nationals. Last year's 18-Metre Nationals showed that when you get away from the sea air, speeds of 120km/h-plus are there for the taking. Meanwhile, the Club Class fleet migrates north to Pocklington. Becoming a regular host in the comps calendar, Pocklington has a seasoned competition organisation with a knack for getting the most out of its ridge, thermal and wave flying opportunities.

Position	Country	Points (out of 5000)
1	Great Britain	4832
2	France	4804
3	Germany	4791
4	Poland	4684
5	Czech Republic	4616

*GB dominates the International Gliding Commission's ranking list (*http://rankings.fai.org/gliding*) Each pilot is ranked out of 1,000 and the scores of the country's top five pilots are added together. British pilots scored above are: (2) Andy Davis; (4) Steve Jones; (7) Mike Young; (26) Kim Tipple; and (34) Richard Hood*

Getting into the team

Success in UK Nationals is the basis for getting into the Senior British team. For European Championships we have a straight selection process similar to the German system. So, for example, this year's Europeans team was selected from last year's Nationals results. This system has the big advantage of allowing up-and-coming pilots a shot at getting straight into the team. We have a slightly more sophisticated voting system for World Championships, which is voted for by the pilots who fly that class. This seems to produce a consistent team.

Whilst the next Senior Worlds isn't until 2006, the International Gliding Commission announced in January that there will be a Europeans next year in Slovakia. The contest site at Nitra is the same one that Jez Hood



www.whiteplanes.com

stretches ahead of you

and Luke Rebbeck flew from to bring back Gold and Silver medals in last year's Junior World Championships. By all accounts, the mountain flying there is pretty exciting, the organisation slick, and flying conditions world class. So those of you flying the Club Class, Standard Class and 18-Metre Class Nationals will be competing for a ticket to the Europeans – unless our international team members pick up automatic places by winning some medals abroad.

Turning to the Junior British Team, this is a massive year: it's team selection for the 2005 Junior Worlds, hosted in UK for the first time ever. With selection through the Junior Nationals, there will probably be six places, the first three being drawn from this year's results, and the next three being voted by the top Junior pilots. As for the women's team, changes in the selection process mean that female pilots have to come in the top 40 per cent of a UK Nationals to get on to the team. With the 2005 Women's Worlds in Klix, Germany, next year, it's all to play for at this year's Nationals.

Banning team flying

Team flying is probably the most contentious issue in international gliding circles. For the purists, it's a distraction from the challenge between the sole pilot and the elements, but for those who know how to do it, it's an added dimension to contest flying. Like it or not, it's become a major factor in modern contest flying, and no-one would argue against the benefits in terms of efficiency and consistency. At international level nobody knows quite what to do with it. Whilst the Brits, Germans and French have embraced it as an integral part of their training programmes, many smaller and less well-organised nations would like it banned.

Against this backdrop, the BGA's rule-making body, the Competitions Committee, made a surprise move to discourage team flying in UK nationals this season. The infamous "Rule 27" asked pilots to cease team flying as being unsporting and at odds with the ethos of contest flying. When you think about it, you can see what they were trying to achieve. A UK nationals seeks to choose the best individual pilots, not the best teams. You could even argue that a poorer pilot might get selected by teaming up with the right guy.

However, it didn't take long for arguments against this rule to start flooding into the Comps Committee inbox. How would the rule be enforced? Why would we discourage it when Great Britain is so good at it? Surely we need to practise team flying more, not less? And, in any case, with no official penalties, who was going to pay attention?

It became clear that this would be a major headache for both pilots and contest directors. So in the end the Comps Committee sensibly scrapped the rule for this season, in favour of a series of discussions to be held at Competition Forums at this year's nationals. With the UK as one of the most influential countries in the world gliding scene, it will be very interesting to see how this one pans out. It's an argument that will rage for years.

The international vista

World Championships are normally run every two years. However, the last two Worlds came in quick succession, with a winter Worlds in South Africa followed by a summer Worlds in Poland. So, to provide National Aero Clubs with a chance to get their funds together, the IGC is allowing a three-year gap until the next Worlds. 2006 will see two separate World Championships, with France hosting the Club Class and World Class Worlds, and Sweden running the 18-Metre, 15-Metre, Standard and Open Class Worlds.

Disappointingly, the IGC has announced that the PW-5 Class will continue as a World Class event after 2009. Whilst it is difficult to come up with enough adjectives to describe how universally disliked the PW-5 is, it's undoubtedly the biggest *cul de sac* in the evolution of contest gliding. Britain steadfastly refuses to support the World Class, and we can only guess when the IGC will see sense and turn off its life-support machine.

In stark contrast, the IGC has just come up with one of the most exciting ideas in contest gliding. It's a radical departure from the traditional contest format, called the *Grand Prix* – and it's a racing revolution. It was trialled last year in St Auban and seems to be a winner. Directed towards spectator appeal, the *Grand Prix* has a shot gun start and a much simpler scoring system.

It's interesting that whilst gliding nations around the world worry about declining membership of the sport, the demand for places in UK nationals and international competitions seems to grow year on year.

More and more pilots are realising the enormous challenge and exhilaration in racing gliders competitively. With seven packed nationals and strong teams representing UK in Norway and Lithuania it looks set to be an exciting racing season at home and abroad.



Leigh Wells will fly in Europe (www.whiteplanes.com)

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email – rogerhurley@gliderpilot.net





18-year-old Sally Longstaff is looking forward to doing her Silver this year – in a glider that was a gift from a kind donor. One day it might even be yours

ONE morning in January I checked *www.gliderpilot.net* for new postings: "Good home required," said one thread. "Looks interesting," I thought, "wonder what requires a home?" It was a Skylark 2! I had enjoyed flying a Skylark 2 in the past. I read on with increasing interest. The owner of the glider was giving it away! I could hardly believe my eyes.

Quickly I emailed Ged McKnight, who had posted the notice on the owner's behalf. I explained that I'd loved flying a Skylark 2 before and that because of this I knew a little about how to maintain them. I also explained that in a couple of years' time I will have "outgrown" its performance and that then I would like to give the glider away in the same manner as I had received it.

I never thought, though, that I might be lucky enough to own it.

Every morning I checked the website. A week or so later Ged sent me an email asking me to ring up for an interview. After I had introduced myself, he said, quite out of the blue: "Congratulations – the Skylark is yours!" I think if someone had led a herd of elephants through the room, I wouldn't have batted an eyelid. "What about my interview?" I squawked. Ged explained that because I had offered to give the glider away in the same manner when I had finished flying her, Steve Benn (her previous owner) had chosen me as her new owner.

Ged added that The Caroline Trust was interested in encouraging young people and women in gliding, and had contacted him about the Skylark. One of the trustees, Dave Martin, got in touch, and I submitted a formal request for a grant. To my surprise

A glider of my own

Subject: Good Home Required
Thread: Number 1 of 11 in thread
Date/Time: 21:46 25 January 2004
Author: Ged McKnight

>One Skylark 2 in very good
>condition with trailer,
>built in the mid 50s, is
>looking for a new owner...



and pleasure, the Trust gave me a grant for £500 to maintain the glider and encourage young people to fly the Skylark. This paid for the C of A, the insurance, the trailer rent and some maintenance. Without their generous grant I would not have been able to do so much so quickly on the trailer and glider. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Two weeks later, Brian Birlison and I went to pick CCS up from RAF Cranwell. When we arrived, I met Ged and Steve and saw Steve's other two gliders, a K-3 and a K-6E. He has rebuilt all three from write-offs. The woodwork in each is immaculate. Steve is truly proficient and has faithfully restored them to better-than-new condition. Even the Skylark's trailer was designed and made from scratch, meaning that it is easy to rig, derig and store the glider in a purpose-built trailer.

The Skylark was in her trailer so we put her in a workshop and began the C of A. The cockpit is in fantastic condition, constructed of varnished birch ply. The panel is fitted with the usual ASI and altimeter as well as a mechanical vario and a home-built audio vario. The glider has two pitots, as one was used for an instrument that measured the local speed of sound, in order to measure when the air density reduced and increased. This ingenious instrument was supposed to predict thermal activity but unfortunately it didn't work!



On the Sunday the weather took a break from torrential downpours and the sun came out. We finished the C of A and rigged her in the hangar. Towing her across to the launchpoint, she looked fantastic and all the Cranwell pilots queued up to fly her. After an hour-and-a-half's flying we reluctantly had to derig and drive home. Parking the glider later at Aston Down, I still couldn't quite believe it – I had my own glider!

Since that first weekend I have stripped, repainted and rewired the trailer. This would not have been possible without the help of Brian and Frank Birlison (thank you!). The total operation took four weekends, and it looks great. On April 3 I flew CCS for the first time. After a lovely launch I hit lift straight off the top but could only gain 100ft before drifting downwind in the brisk wind. She was beautiful, lovely and smooth to fly with fantastically effective airbrakes. I can't wait until the season really starts – I am planning to get my Silver finished off and do some decent cross-countries.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has helped me. A huge thanks to Steve and Ged for organising the whole idea and to the trustees of the Caroline Trust – Peter Gray, Dave Martin and Pete Roberts – whom I met at the BGA Conference. They are welcome any time to come and see and fly her. I would be honoured if they were to do so. This has been a fantastic opportunity for me and I feel very lucky to have received the Skylark and the grant. Thank you again to everyone and here's to a great new season.

Sally, a member of Cotswold GC, is working as a Year in Industry Student for Martin-Baker Aircraft Co. before a degree in Aeronautical Engineering at Imperial College. She has been gliding for five years and has Bronze and Cross-Country Endorsement



Clockwise from top left: Sally in her Skylark; the posting that Sally saw ; CCS; rewiring the trailer; Sally with Dave Martin and with Steve Benn on his last flight in the glider







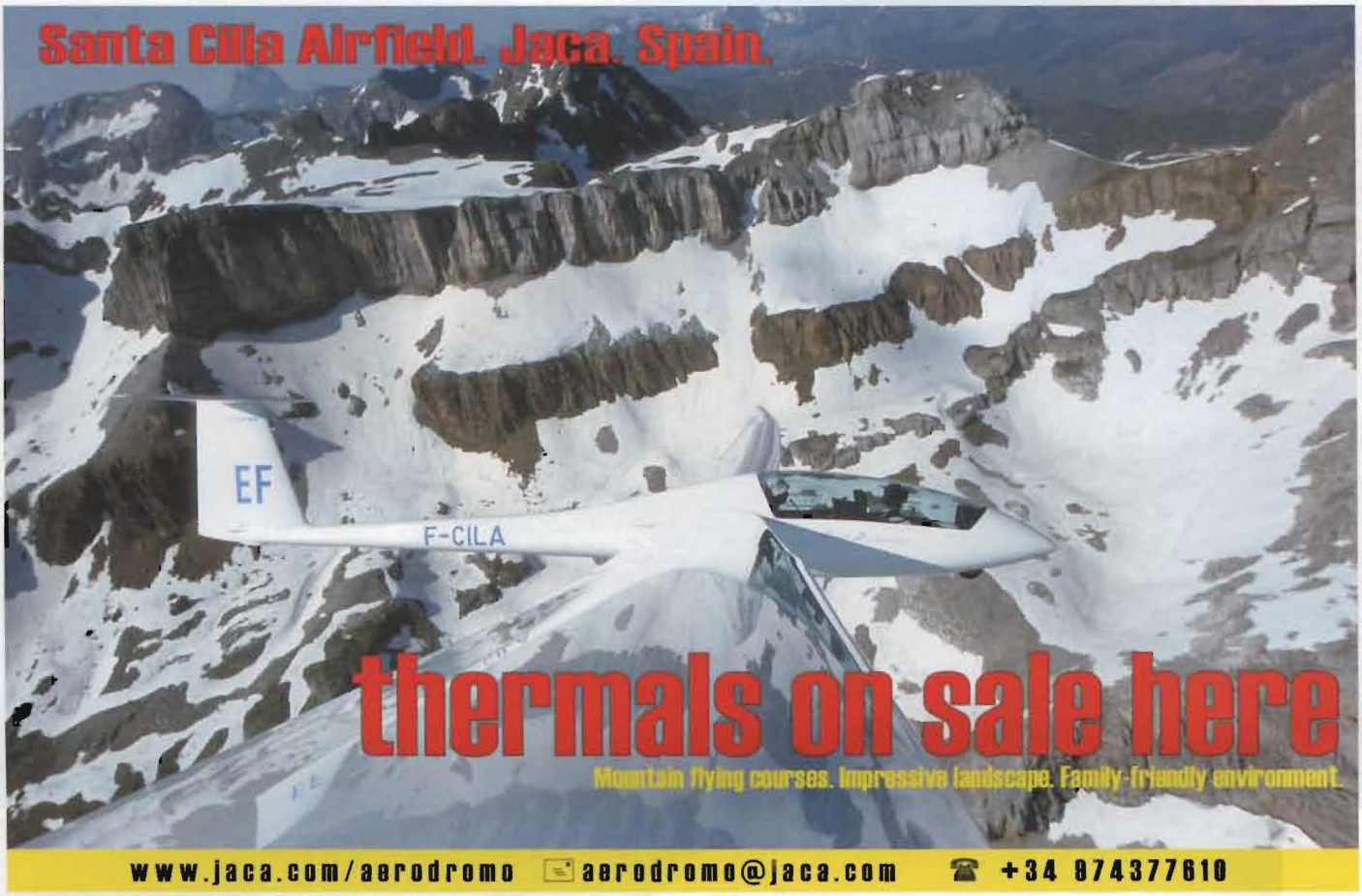
This page: Jamie Allen flying the Swift S-1 at the Yorkshire Airshow, Elvington, last August Bank Holiday. The pictures were taken by PGS Photographic (www.pgsphoto.co.uk)

Above: The glider at the apex of an "avalanche" – a negative flick-roll at the top of a loop. "The minus 3G was too much for one smoke pod, which reacted as you can see," says Jamie "I wondered what the bang was..."

Left: "How did I manage to wrap the smoke around one wing," asks Jamie, "while it trailed normally from the other tip? I can't remember!" Airshow commentators like gliding displays, he adds: the silence means they can get a word in edgeways

Opposite: Carl Peters, in an LS8, took this picture of Pete Stratten, who was in a borrowed Ventus 2CM. They were on a final glide into Darling Downs GC, Australia, during an RAFGSA expedition. Of note, remarks Carl, are those reflections – the area had flooded due to unseasonal heavy rain





NEW DVD EXCLUSIVE TO BGA SHOP

Redline Sky is a new high quality compilation DVD featuring a full two hours of exciting soaring films that all glider enthusiasts will enjoy. This all digital production features professional photography, a superb sound track, and elegant design.

The first film on the DVD is Going the Distance, a documentary on the 2001 Open Class Nationals at Montague, California. You will experience up close the ground and flight action of the gorgeous open class planes as they fly the contest. Filmmaker Paul Naton takes you on a cross country flight in an ASH-25 which soars around fourteen thousand foot high Mount Shasta.

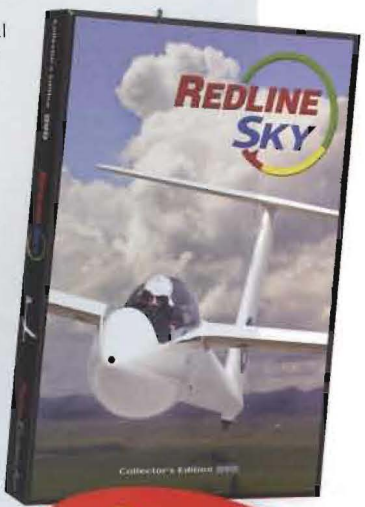
The second film features extreme glider pilot Manfred Radius as he performs his stunning aerobatic routine at the Oregon International Air Show, finishing the flight with his scary inverted low level ribbon cut. He also flies his nighttime pyrotechnic show. This exclusive footage is worth the price of the DVD alone!

Neil Lawson, owner of the White Planes Picture Company, shows off 75 examples of his outstanding glider photography. The high resolution images were motion edited with new music from composer Erik Wollo for a truly beautiful look at the sport of soaring.

Torrey Pines is one of the last coastal ridge soaring sites in the world and you will get to watch some radical flying during some strong spring wind conditions photographed by Jonathan Tappan. Pilots take their machines to just a few feet over the wave tops at close to redline before climbing back into the slope lift. Amazing and beautiful soaring action. Simply cool.

Bonus features on the DVD include a video tour of the National Soaring Museum and flight ops at Harris Hill, Kenny Price's daring low level ASK-21 akro flight, and some nice footage of the 2001 18metre and Sports Class Nationals.

We think this is one of the most entertaining and visually beautiful soaring DVDs available.



Chapters

Going The Distance
A visit to the U.S. Open Class National Championships. Highlights include extreme high cross wind landings and beautiful photography of open class sailplanes. Includes a X-C flight in an ASH-25 over Mt. Shasta California.

This Guy Can Fly
Aerobatic expert Manfred Radius performs his daring inverted high speed ribbon cut and night time pyrotechnic performance at the Oregon International Air Show.

White Planes
World renowned aviation photographer Neil Lawson shares some of his best glider shots in a unique presentation set to music.

Beach Run
High performance cliff soaring at world famous Torrey Pines. Spectaular wave top speed runs with Stemme S-10, Jantar, and I-34.

Extra Features on the DVD

A Day At The Races
Highlights from a race day at the U.S. 18 meter and Sports Class Nationals including Kenny Price's daring low level aerobatics in his ASK-21.

Heritage Tour
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How to enjoy your firs

British Team Coach Andy Davis, above, winner of two Standard Class Gold Medals at World Championships, draws on the successful team training programme and on his own experience for tips to help you

WHEN well prepared and in the right frame of mind I find competition flying really enjoyable. I can hardly wait for the daily briefing to find out what the next challenge will be. It is fantastic fun to race along with your peers on a good day and incredibly satisfying to complete a difficult task on a day when you might normally not even open the trailer doors. It is even more fun if you are performing well.

Yet it can be incredibly frustrating and demoralising if you perform badly, especially if the reasons are within your control.

In this article I intend to focus on the five main areas that experience has shown can and do affect competition performance and therefore the satisfaction you gain from flying in competitions.

These are:

Preparation – of your equipment, making sure you understand the task objectives, how to practise effectively, fitness and logistics;
Expectations and objectives – the psychology stuff, assessing what level you have reached, setting realistic goals and objectives;
Theory (just a little) – what you can easily do to consistently go faster and why;
Practice – how to effectively train for contest flying;
Execution – what to do at the competition, the main dos and don'ts.

Although this guide is intended to help those pilots new to competitive flying with both preparation for and participation in their first competition, experienced racing pilots might also find it useful revision.

Much of the content is drawn from the British Team Coaching Programme.

Preparation

To start with, it goes without saying that your equipment should be in the best possible working order. The time to sort this out is well in advance of the competition.

Wheel brake: sooner or later in a competition you are going to have to make an outlanding and the wheel brake on your glider *must* be well adjusted and effective. Nothing is going to distract you from the primary task of soaring more than worrying about its effectiveness, and how you are going to stop the glider if you land in one of those small fields below!

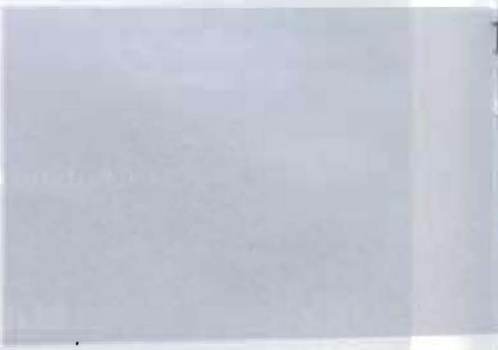
Drinking water: your cockpit should be comfortable and have provision for carrying a reasonable quantity of drinking water. Dehydration really affects performance, especially in a long competition, and is potentially a killer. If you regularly get headaches after flying you almost certainly don't drink enough.

How much should you drink? As a guide, in hot weather I often drink two litres of water before flying, three litres of water on a five-hour flight and then another litre after landing.

Relief system (pee tube for us boys!): if you are drinking enough water you will eventually need to urinate. Your glider should have an easy-to-use relief system (I personally don't find plastic bags easy to use – nor does Jay Rebbeck... but that's another story). I know that it's not quite so easy for you girls, but there are answers: ask other female pilots. (Geralyn Macfadyen has a system that works well.) *Restricting fluid intake is not an option.*

Wing leading edge: most performance loss comes from damage and chips to the leading edge: fill any chips or dents with filler or gel coat and rub smooth. Then keep the wing clean throughout the competition. Consider fitting bug wipers. Used regularly in buggy weather they really do prevent a large amount of performance loss.

Instruments: having the latest gadget in the cockpit is much less important than ensuring that what you have is reliable and that you know how it works. Too many gadgets increase your workload and keep your attention inside the cockpit when you should be looking outside. The most capable computer in the cockpit is the pilot's brain and the best source of information is the pilot's eyes. A good total energy audio variometer is crucially important so that you can keep your eyes outside when joining and climbing in thermals. Your GPS



Top: Andy in Discus 2a 80, in which he won the 2003 Worlds.



st gliding competition

and logger system should have the latest turning point database, and if using an electronic airspace map make sure you use the same database as the competition scorer.

Trailer: don't forget to check your trailer to make sure it is up to the job of retrieving. Lights, brakes and tyres should all be serviceable and the trailer should hold your precious glider securely.

Understand the task objectives

The next step in preparation is to *understand the task objectives.* Read the latest edition of the competition rules (the British Gliding Association's *Competitions Handbook* is issued annually and can be downloaded from *www.gliding.co.uk*) so that you understand how to make a valid start, turning point and finish. More importantly, understand the objectives of the two types of task:

Fixed-course task: this is the classic race around turning points set by the task setter. The pilot who finishes in the shortest time wins and the others receive a proportion of the winner's points, depending on their relative speed. *You must aim to finish* because there are very few points for outlanding unless a lot of other pilots also fail to finish.

Assigned Area Task (AAT): arguably the most misunderstood task by competitors and task-setters alike. The task-setter defines the assigned areas and assigned time for the task. The pilot then chooses his own turning point in each of the assigned areas (in the right order) with the objective of going as fast as possible and finishing *after* the assigned time has elapsed. There is no penalty for flying after the assigned task time; indeed, if conditions are improving it might pay to fly further and increase your average speed. It is important to plan to go far enough so that you don't finish inside the assigned time. Your actual turning point doesn't have to be a defined point; the scoring system works out the point in space that gives the best geometry to maximise your distance. It is also important to remember that meandering around inside the assigned areas in an unplanned way isn't adding to your distance and hence speed. A good way to keep focused on racing is to choose a "target TP" inside the assigned area, set it in your GPS and race towards it.

When flying an AAT your priorities, in order, should be:

1. *You must finish.* The task is a race and outlanders don't receive many points.
2. *You should not finish early.* Only consider finishing early if by doing so you can avoid almost certain outlanding. You should go far enough in each assigned area to make sure you don't finish early. This is because your finishing speed is calculated by dividing your marking distance by your actual task time or the assigned time – *whichever is greater.*

Although most points are lost by outlanding, the next best way to lose points is by finishing early.

As an example, on a 4-hour AAT, pilot A flies 300km and finishes in 4 hours. His finishing speed is 75km/h. Pilot B is much faster and flies 300km in 3 hours 45 minutes. His actual speed is 80km/h, but because he finished in less than 4 hours his finishing speed for scoring purposes is his marking distance, 300km, divided by the task time, 4 hours. This also comes out at 75km/h, so he receives the same points as the slower pilot, A. If he had just flown a bit further in any of the sectors in order to make sure he finished after 4 hours he would have scored nearly 20 per cent more speed points than pilot A.

A good rule of thumb is to plan to be starting final glide as the assigned time elapses.



ds. Above: ensure your kit works before the comp – you don't want leaking dump valves on the day! (www.whiteplanes.com)

How to practise effectively

Even when your equipment is in order and you know what you'll be trying to achieve, you still need to practise effectively. Every flight you make should be like a competitive flight. Set a task, make a start, fly the task if at all possible and make a finish.

Simply flying cross-country by following good patches of weather around is not good practice for competition.

If possible, use the glider and equipment you intend to use for the competition.

Physical fitness

Physical fitness is another key element of preparation. Gliding competitions are very demanding, both mentally and physically. Many hours of task flying over several days require high levels of stamina. It is impossible to remain mentally alert for long periods without first attaining a reasonable level of physical fitness. Anything you can do to improve your physical fitness will improve your performance and enjoyment. *(See below for psychological preparation.)*

Logistics

You also need to sort out logistics well in advance. Once you have identified your crew and made sure they know the dates they are needed, agree defined roles and responsibilities for yourself and for them. Will you trust the crew to rig the glider? Connect the controls? Fill up with water-ballast? Clear logger memories? Load the tasks into the GPS? Clearly there are no hard and fast rules, but what is important is that you define what you expect the crew to do and what you will do.

I personally always take responsibility for items that have critical safety implications or flight recording function. I always rig the wings, tailplane, connect the controls and DI the glider, clear logger memories, install the loggers and load tasks into the GPS.

Try to get everything (glider, caravan, tent, crew) to the competition site early so that you can check in with the organisation in good time. Settle yourself in and establish a daily routine that allows you to relax.

Expectations and objectives

Only after honestly appraising your level of progress can you establish some realistic expectations for the competition.

Assess your own abilities: try to consider objectively what level your flying has reached. How experienced are you? How have your skills developed? What have you achieved so far: Silver, Gold, 300km, 500km? Do you have any other competition experience, task weeks or Inter-club League? How did you perform relative to the other pilots? Are you able to compare your flying with that of other experienced competition pilots? How well has your practice for the competition been going?

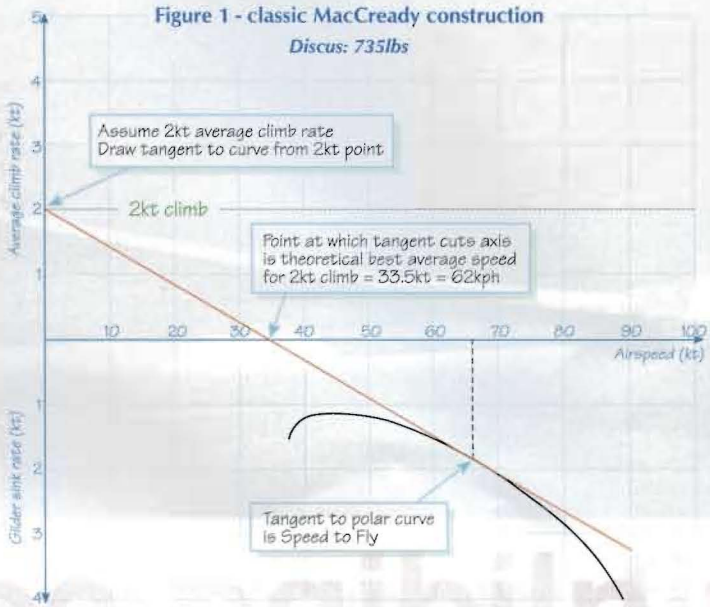
Realistic expectations: you should try to establish some realistic expectations and objectives prior to entering the competition. For example, if you have previously flown a 300km flight, a realistic expectation is to successfully fly a 300km task with the objective of going faster than you have previously achieved, or perhaps completing a 500km task if the weather is good.

It is important to note that the emphasis is on flying objectives and not on the result. One of the ways to very effectively inhibit your performance is to set unrealistic objectives that focus on the result.

For example, if your objective is to place in the top five, failure to achieve that result destroys your enjoyment of the competition and the resulting stress will further affect your performance.

Figure 1, right, illustrates the polar curve for an unballasted Discus with the construction for 2kt average climb rate.

By repeating this construction for various climb rates using your own glider's polar curve, it is possible for you to draw up a table of average climb rate versus theoretical average cross-country speed, as in Table 1 (opposite)



(Steve Longland)

The psychology of competing

Flying a glider cross-country requires complex mental processing of vast amounts of information.

We **see**, **hear**, and **feel** information, which we need to be able to **observe**, **process**, and **compare** with our database (our mental library of our experience), **decide** what to do, **instruct** our hands and feet on the controls and **review** our decision to see if it was correct, while at the same time continuing to observe and process new information as it comes in.

The pilot is best able to carry out these complex mental processes when relaxed. As stress levels rise, the individual's capacity to carry out these complex processes is greatly reduced. Decisions start to become irrational rather than instinctive.

The perfect state of mind is relaxed and alert with decisions being made almost instinctively.

All sorts of mental **baggage** can raise your stress levels, and – by cutting across your ability to process information – this can significantly lower your performance levels.

There isn't a lot we can do about some of the baggage we carry around such as our jobs, relationships, financial worries, and so on, although we can help by not starting any new projects just before the competition begins. There is, however, a huge amount we can do about gliding and competition-related baggage.

Start by preparing properly for the contest so that you are content with your equipment and training. Establish realistic expectations and objectives for the competition.

Many pilots find a regular daily routine at the competition helps them to relax.

Use other competitors for information, but don't allow yourself to worry about what they are doing or have done. If somebody has caught you up having started later, it's just history, there's nothing you can do to change that history.

Most definitely don't try to do something different to get away from them, it's a certain a recipe for disaster.

Don't waste time and energy complaining that the task is too difficult/easy/set in the wrong direction (delete as appropriate). It's the same task for everybody.

It's noticeable that those pilots who spend most time complaining often do the worst in competitions; they are just stressing themselves into performing badly.

If you get low, lose time or suffer any other disappointment, you can force yourself to relax by concentrating on soaring aspects of the flight, for example, where you will find the next good climb, which street to follow and so forth.

Focusing on the result is bad for your mental health. Emphasise flying objectives and ambitions. Try to relax and to fly instinctively whilst avoiding irrational decisions. Above all else **aim to have fun**.

A little theory

This section will give guidance on how fast to fly and explains how you might consistently go a little faster by flying a little slower. By giving an appreciation of achievable average speeds, it will also help to guide you on what your task start time should be.

Table 1

Theoretical average cross country speed Discus, 735lbs

Average climb rate (kts)	Best Speed to Fly (kts)	Theoretical average XC speed (km/h)
0	52 (best L/D speed)	0
1	56	44
2	67	62
3	75	77
4	80	87
5	81	94
6	82	101

MacCready Theory

The classic MacCready construction is used with the glider's polar curve to determine the theoretical optimum speed to fly and average cross-country speed for a range of climb rates *(see* Figure 1, *left)*.

Tangents to the polar curve are drawn from average climb rate values on the vertical axis. The point at which the tangent touches the curve is the theoretical optimum speed to fly, and the point at which the tangent cuts the horizontal axis is the theoretical average speed for that climb rate.

Figure 1 illustrates the polar curve for an unballasted Discus with the construction for 2kt average climb rate. By repeating this construction for various climb rates using your own glider's polar curve, it is possible to draw up a table of average climb rate versus theoretical average cross-country speed, as in Table 1, above (again, the example is for an unballasted Discus).

Electronic flight computers basically do the same sum when computing the speed to fly and in still air would direct the pilot to fly at the quoted best speed for any given MacCready setting. Increasing the wing-loading by the addition of waterballast has the effect of increasing the speeds by approximately the square root of the weight increase, so adding 200lbs of water to the Discus increases quoted speeds by about 10 per cent (it's interesting to note that with the Discus at plausible UK climb rates it's almost never worth flying faster than 80kt unballasted). Classic MacCready theory demands that the MacCready is set to the anticipated average climb rate in the next thermal to give the optimum speed to fly towards that thermal. There are also several practical considerations to bear in mind when setting the MacCready.

How fast to fly

A common mistake amongst inexperienced competition pilots is to fly too fast by setting too high a MacCready setting. One reason is over-estimating climb rates.

Consider a typical British day, on which our pilot arrives under a promising-looking cloud, feels a good surge of lift and spends 3 turns, say 1 minute, getting centred and climbing 100ft in the process. Once centred, he climbs for 2 minutes at a settled average of 4kt, 800ft. His total climb so far is 900ft in 3 minutes. The lift then dies off as he approaches cloudbase. He spends another 3 turns (1 minute) climbing a further 100ft trying to recentre the lift before deciding that he has wasted enough time and leaves the thermal. Total height gain is 1,000ft in 4 minutes, so ***the actual average climb rate from entering to leaving the lift is only 2.5kt even though the averager settled at 4kt.***

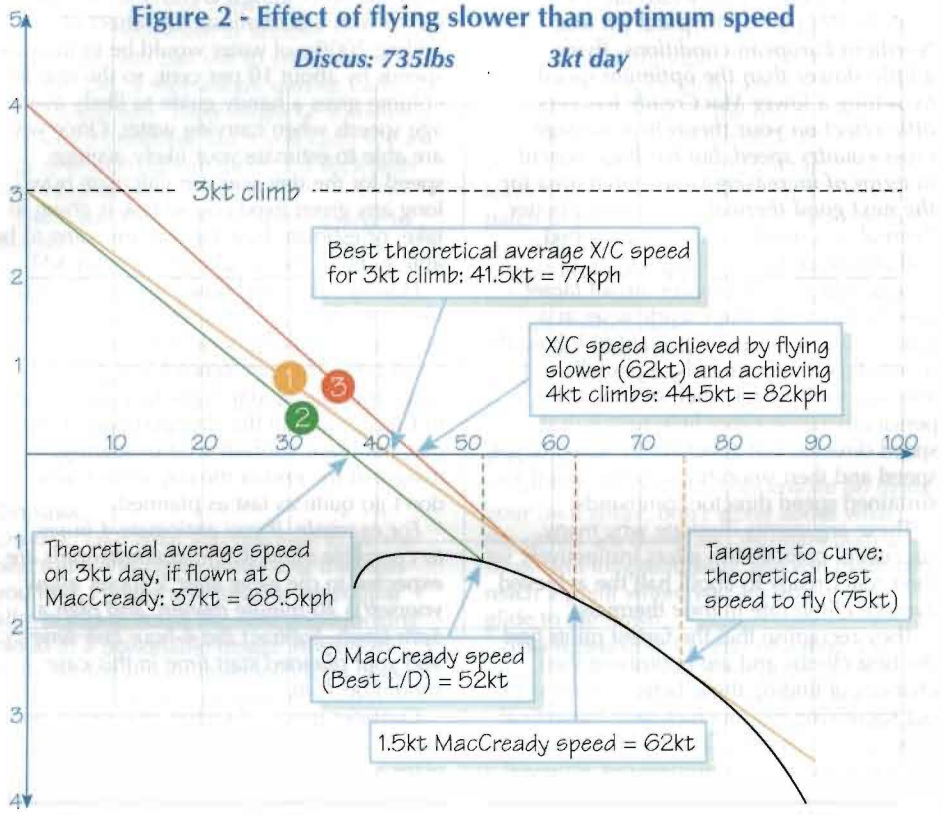


Figure 2: in typical UK conditions, flying a little slower by setting a lower MacCready has little effect on theoretical average cross-country speed but it does increase your search area for the next good thermal (Steve Longland)

The achieved climb rate from entering to leaving the thermal will depend very much on how quickly the pilot centres, how decisive he is about leaving as the thermal dies at the top and how deep the operating depth is, but the important point to note is that the actual average climb rate will always be rather less than that indicated by the typical 20-30 second averager found in most variometer systems. It is very easy to over-estimate the average climb rate.

Now consider the effect of flying a little slower than the optimum speed between thermals.

Figure 2 *(above)* illustrates the effect of flying between thermals on an average British 3kt thermal day at best L/D speed instead of the theoretical optimum inter-thermal speed. Theoretical optimum is shown by yellow line 1, tangent to the polar curve from the 3kt point. However, if the glider is flown between thermals at the zero MacCready speed (best L/D) of 52kt, the theoretical cross-country speed in this case is the point where the green line 2 from the 3kt climb point to the polar curve at 52kt crosses the horizontal axis. Incredibly, the theoretical cross-country speed is only 8.5km/h less, a reduction from optimum of just 11 per cent, but with the advantage of achieving a glide angle of 43:1 instead of the 32:1 achieved at 75kt – a 34 per cent improvement in glide angle and therefore search area for the next thermal.

Not only does flying slower significantly reduce your chances of an outlanding or time-consuming low scrape, but by increasing your search area significantly, also increases your chances of finding a better-than-average thermal.

Clearly as speed flown between thermals moves closer to the theoretical optimum, the average speed increases until there comes a point where there is very little difference in average speed, but still remains a significant improvement in glide angle. The theoretical optimum inter-thermal speed for a 1.5kt MacCready setting is 62kt, giving a glide angle of 39:1. If this 1.5kt MacCready speed of 62kt is flown on a 3kt day, the actual average speed will be 74km/h. This is just four per cent less than the optimum, but with 22 per cent better glide angle and search area.

If this 22 per cent better search area yields a thermal just 1kt stronger at 4kt, the average cross-country speed will now increase to 82km/h, as illustrated by the red line 3. This is six per cent quicker than that achieved by flying strictly at theoretical optimum cross-country speed and climbing at 3kt. This assumes that the pilot actually does find a stronger climb as a result of flying a bit slower with a much bigger

search area, but it nicely illustrates a fundamental point. ***In typical UK and Northern European conditions, flying a little slower than the optimum speed by setting a lower MacCready has very little effect on your theoretical average cross-country speed, but has huge benefit in terms of increasing your search area for the next good thermal.*** If you find a better thermal as a result, your average speed will almost certainly be higher.

Note that these examples are all *target* speeds. Once the MacCready is set at a given value, it is very important to follow the speed director commands, especially if it tells you to fly faster when in sink. I don't personally chase every little twitch of the speed director, but generally fly at the target speed and then smoothly vary the speed for sustained speed director commands.

These arguments illustrate why many successful competition pilots instinctively set their MacCready to about half the achieved average climb rate in their thermals.

They recognise that the fastest pilots find the best climbs and are optimising their chances of finding those better climbs without sacrificing too much of their theoretical cross-country speed. Combine this with the tendency to over-estimate our achieved average climb rate, and the argument to fly a little slower becomes even more compelling. Furthermore, since a low scrape can be very time consuming and a premature outlanding a total points disaster, there is a major tactical imperative to fly a little slower to improve our search area and avoid getting low.

When should I start?

First you have to know how fast you are likely to go. Once again we go back to basic MacCready theory. Using the construction shown in figure 1 draw up a table of optimum cross-country speeds for various climb rates and then reduce the values by say 10 per cent to allow for route deviations, navigational errors, etc, as illustrated by Table 2 *(below)* for an unballasted Discus.

This table now becomes your reference against which you can estimate your likely average speed for the day, having received the daily met briefing with its forecast of predicted thermal strengths. As mentioned previously, cross-country speeds will approximately increase by the square root of any weight increase (not exactly, because amongst other things, climb rates will be worse with waterballast). The effect of adding 200lbs of water would be to increase speeds by about 10 per cent, so the middle column gives a handy guide to likely average speeds when carrying water. Once you are able to estimate your likely average speed for the day, you can calculate how long any given fixed course task is going to take, or estimate how far you are going to be able to fly in the assigned time in an AAT.

Table 2

Likely average cross country speed Discus, 735lbs

Average climb rate (kts)	Theoretical average XC speed (kts)	Likely average XC speed (km/h)
0	0	0
1	44	40
2	62	56
3	77	70
4	87	78
5	94	84
6	101	91

Having calculated how long your task is likely to take you, consider your start time options by working back from the desired finish time. The met forecast will give a clue when the soaring day is going to fade. Plan to fly your task in the strongest part of the day, but leave yourself a bit of soaring margin at the end of the day in case you don't go quite as fast as planned.

For example, if you anticipate 4 hours to complete the task and good thermals are expected to die away after 5.30pm, allow yourself a 30-minute margin, and plan a 5pm finish. Subtract the 4-hour task time and your planned start time in this case should be 1pm.

Consider practical factors that might affect your planned start time and adjust your plans accordingly. If significant shower activity is forecast, consider starting as early as possible to complete the task before showers become widespread. If there is likely to be a large amount of spreadout, consider if this might slow you down and adjust your start time to suit. In blue weather, thermals often peak later in the afternoon than when clouds are present and it is often beneficial to start a bit later (additionally, if you start early, you have no other gliders ahead to mark thermals and later starters are going to use you as their thermal marker). Some sites may have particular local factors that influence your decision – for example incoming sea air in the late afternoon, which makes an early finish advisable.

The aim is to always take off with an optimum start time for the day in mind.

Practice

The skills, judgment and stamina required to participate successfully in a competition cannot be gained without practice or training. Every flight you make should, if possible, simulate a competition flight.

Fly cross-country at every opportunity

Fly cross-country tasks as much as possible, ideally in the glider you will use for the competition. If the weather is soarable but will not allow you to fly cross-country, practise important flight activities, for example, thermal location and centring by climbing a bit, airbrake down, centre again. Practise choosing fields and later visit them on the ground to give yourself feedback and build confidence in your judgment.

Set yourself tasks

Try to set yourself a task every time you fly. Following patches of good weather around the countryside at random will not train you to fly a competition task in which you are required to fly to given turning points or assigned areas. If possible, also practise flying AATs.



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Fly cross-country tasks at every opportunity...

If your glider carries water and you intend to use it in the competition, fly with water, building up the weight over a series of flights so you learn what is a comfortable weight for given conditions.

Set yourself a task before take-off, plan it properly and work out a start time.

Use the time between take-off and your start to relax, practise thermal location and centring (note where the thermals lie in relation to the clouds).

Starting efficiently is quite an art, so make a proper start from a BGA start sector and then, weather permitting, make a determined effort to complete the whole task as set.

Don't give up unless the task clearly becomes impossible. It is very important to learn to stay airborne and keep going in difficult weather. In this way, build up your stamina and develop mental toughness.

Make a proper finish across a finish line or ring to gain familiarity with your final glide computer and to learn the planning and safety issues involved in low-energy arrivals before your first competition day.

Analyse each flight

Look back on each flight. If any other pilots flew the same task, discuss the flight with them. Ask yourself a series of questions:

- Was the start time right?
- What went well?
- Why did it go well?
- What went badly?
- Could it have been avoided and how?
- Did I follow the best route?
- Was I ruthless about the climb rates?
- Too much, too little, about right?
- Did I find the best lift?
- Did I identify the right clouds?
- Where was the best lift in relation to them?
- Could I have centred quicker?
- Was my final glide about right?
- Was it too fast, too low?

Be honest with yourself, but don't worry about errors and mistakes you couldn't possibly have anticipated in advance.

If you identify any particular weaknesses in your flying, then concentrate on those weaknesses in your future practice.

Execution

At the competition it is essential to stay relaxed, focused and avoid distractions. Don't increase your mental baggage by complaining about the task-setting or by worrying about what the other competitors have done or are doing – it's all just history.

You can't change history but you can influence your future.

Remain focused by following your daily routine and concentrating on soaring aspects of your own flight such as where the next climb is, which cloud street to follow and so on.

Think ahead, run and review two plans simultaneously in your head: a short-term and a long-term plan.

The short-term plan might be to find and centre a climb under the next cloud. The long-term plan might be to consider options after you have climbed, what it looks like ahead, which way to route and how high to climb to reach the next good weather.

Obviously, one plan takes priority over the other from time to time. They are both interdependent and constantly changing – there is no point in having a long-term plan to glide 20km across to the next cloud street if the short-term plan can't get you high enough to get there!

Remain flexible throughout the flight. Be ready to change your plans if required. Look well ahead to see if there are any weather developments that might affect your planned route. Be prepared to slow down to conserve your height at the first sign of a major problem. Conversely, be ready to speed up again as soon as you can see good weather within range ahead.

Starting

Prior to your start, watch on track to see if there is any sign of weather deterioration. Look well upwind to see if there is any sign of high cirrus rushing in that could dilute the sun and weaken thermals. Unexpected spreadout, showers, high cloud or blue conditions are all good reasons to adjust your planned start time.

Don't worry about what other competitors are doing – treat them as another source of information you can use to your advantage. For example, if they are all starting early, ask yourself why. There might be something you haven't noticed, but if you can't see a logical reason, ignore them and stick with your original plan.

Resist the almost overwhelming urge to set off the very moment the start opens. Try to relax and focus on soaring issues. Sample as many clouds as possible to learn where the lift lies in relation to the clouds.

If conditions are reliable, move a little distance away from the start area, where there are fewer gaggles and gliders to worry about. I find that munching on a sandwich helps me to relax.

On task

On task, take what you perceive to be the best route and climb in the best thermals you find. Fly at a comfortable speed that allows you to reach the next good-looking cloud at a reasonable height. Always try to fly so that if your intended cloud doesn't work you have enough height to reach another cloud high enough to give you a good chance of climbing away.

Don't be tempted to fly fast just because the others are. The actual speed you fly at doesn't matter very much; the fastest pilots use the strongest climbs and centre quickest. Again, don't worry about what the other competitors are doing, but use them to your advantage. If they are climbing ahead on your route, sample their thermal and make your own mind up. If it's good, climb, but if it's not, leave it. If you hit a good climb on the way to the gaggle, stop and climb in it.

Similarly with route: it's very easy to blindly follow other gliders. If they are going your chosen way, follow them. If not, ask yourself why and if you can see no good reason, go your own way.

Remain alert for weather changes ahead. If it is deteriorating or you cannot see sun ahead, slow down to best glide speed immediately. If you do then happen to find a good climb this precaution won't affect your average speed very much. Conserve your altitude so that when you do eventually break out of the poor weather and see good conditions, you have enough height to reach them.

If conditions become really bad, do be prepared to do anything necessary to stay in the air. Turn 90° to track, or in extreme situations turn through 180° back to your last climb. If you cannot see any prospect of another climb, stop in the first weak lift you find while still at a reasonable altitude rather than continuing onwards to scratch at low level. The reason for this is that if a soarable patch of sky opens up a short distance away you will have the height to reach it.

If all else fails, look on your map for a ridge facing into wind and consider ridge-soaring there to wait for an improvement.

Equally, when you suddenly break out into good weather, force yourself to increase speed again.

Final glide

If you remain focused, concentrate on flying your own glider, don't worry about what the others are doing and maintain both a short- and long-term plan, you will eventually reach a point where you are able to final glide to the finish.

This is probably the end of a long and tiring flight and there is no point at all in making it more stressful than necessary.

If you have a height margin, try to conserve it until you are close to the finish rather than burning it off early and finding you have no margin at all for the last few kilometres. Overall, it costs almost no time to climb a bit higher in the last thermal and then regain most of the time spent climbing by converting the extra height into speed as you approach the finish.

To land out just short of the finish is very costly in points, and a hasty field selection at low level is very dangerous. Think well ahead and plan your arrival long before crossing the finish. Decide if your energy will allow you to fly a circuit or if you must land ahead.

Keep monitoring your height and speed as you close on the finish and decide if you need to change your plan. If in doubt, the safest option is always to cross the finish, open the brakes and land straight ahead.

I hope you find this guide to surviving your first competition useful, and if you are a more experienced competition pilot, perhaps it served as a useful revision. Good luck, relax, enjoy it and remember that at the end of the day it is only a game, so aim to **have fun**.



Keep monitoring speed and height on final glide; if in doubt, the safest option is always to cross the finish, open the brakes and land straight ahead (www.whiteplanes.com)



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A world record goal flight

Early UK gliding was inspired by events abroad, including, in 1935, the first declared goal flights. In August that year, Erwin Kraft took the world record – 206 miles – in a Rhönsperber in Germany. We reprint his story, below, while, opposite, Jochen Ewald describes what the "Sperber" is like to fly

THE CHOICE of Cologne for my goal flight was determined by the fact that long cross-country flights of over 180 miles are only possible from the Hornberg in three directions, if one does not want to land in a foreign country, ie, the courses indicated by a south-east, and the south-west wind.

As the thermal conditions had greatly improved in the third week in August, it was only a question of taking advantage of a day with a relatively favourable wind.

On the morning of 29 August 1935, the sky was clear with a steady east wind of 18mph and at 1000hrs it was already obvious that excellent thermal conditions would obtain. Between 1030 and 1100hrs the first typical lift clouds could be seen forming and I went to report my intention of making a goal-flight to Cologne with a Rhönsperber. My proposal met with a great deal of scepticism, as the wind conditions could certainly have been better. For the greater part of the way I would be flying with a crosswind, which would undoubtedly impede the success of my goal flight, if not frustrate it altogether. But I had certainly planned the flight and was determined to attempt it. In the meantime the clouds had become well developed and the sky was covered with the most promising-looking cumuli.

At 1145hrs I was towed up to 650ft, where I released and rose with a very slight lift to 1,000ft. However, losing this, I soon found myself forced to search for upcurrents, which I found after losing a little height in very turbulent air conditions on the lee-side of the Hornberg. Circling steadily, the Sperber now rose to 3,000ft above the Hornberg, and the moment came to set off cross-country. Flying in a north-westerly direction, I pushed the stick slightly forward till the ASI registered 60mph and the variometer indicated a fall of 7-8ft/sec.

After flying straight for about six miles, the variometer again moved towards 'rise'. I at once began circling while the needle of my variometer rose to +10ft/sec and I soon found myself at cloudbase, which lay at 7,000ft above sea level. In order to gain as much height as possible I allowed myself to be drawn into the cloud at the rate of 8-9ft/sec. After eight minutes blind-flying, the light filtered through above and soon the cloud lay in gleaming white below. Through the cockpit cover could be seen the blue of the heavens; but I had no time to enjoy the splendour of the scene. My altimeter registered 8,000ft above sea-level and it was now a matter of converting this height into distance. So once more on a north-westerly course, I pushed the stick forward and speedily covered ground, for as I had only six hours in hand and a crosswind with which to contend, it was necessary for me to maintain a high ground speed.

After three-quarters of an hour, I found myself over Heilbronn, where a strong lift again brought me to the cloud-base. As before, I rose rapidly by flying blind inside the cloud, and reached my greatest height of 8,600ft above sea level, ie 5,200ft above releasing point. Once again I flew along at high speed, while below me the River Neckar wound its way through the countryside, and Heidelburg came into view. In order not to waste time, I flew straight through small belts of up-currents. At 1300hrs I caught my first glimpse of the Rhine and at 1320hrs flew over Mannheim. Up till now my average speed had been highly satisfactory, for in one-and-a-half hours I had covered 80 miles.

While flying high over the Rhine in the direction of Worms, I saw ahead of me a towering cumulus, which appeared a likely source of lift. But I was to be disappointed,

'At last the vario moved up to zero, hesitated, and – Great Scott! – fell back to minus 3! In my despair, I could do nothing but gaze at the dial hopefully'

for when the Sperber arrived beneath it, it was in process of dissolution and I found myself in a belt of strong down-currents.

So once again I slowly lost the height which I had struggled so hard to gain; but in the meantime I had crossed the Rhine and the country over which I was now flying was unknown to me. My altimeter registered 3,000ft above sea level, and for the first time I began to doubt whether I should make Cologne. It was certainly a blow to see the last cloud dissolve before my eyes. I seemed to be in a wide belt of down-currents; and the chances of finding further thermals were growing very thin. I kept glancing hopefully at the variometer, but it remained maliciously below zero, until the altimeter registered 2,300ft. Suddenly the air became turbulent; the needle of the variometer quivered a few times, then slowly crept up to zero. I drew a deep breath for I knew that for the moment I was safe. Very cautiously I began circling, while the needle of the variometer slowly moved to +3ft/sec. The strain of the last quarter of an hour was over, and once again I felt that everything might turn out well after all. In spite of the cloudless blue sky, my altimeter soon registered as much as 6,500ft, and as soon as the lift ceased I stopped circling and set off cross-country again. I had now become more cautious than before, and endeavoured to draw lift from every possible source.

At 1515hrs I once more looked down upon the deeply incised valley of the Rhine, and neither to the right nor the left was there a landing ground to be seen! In view of the high landing speed of my plane, conditions were somewhat dangerous, and I knew that if I should be forced to land, no amount of skill would prevent me from crashing. In order to reach Cologne, a certain amount of risk would have to be taken, even though the prospects of finding lift continued to grow more remote. Latterly my cruising speed had deteriorated, for in the last two hours I had covered only 45 miles and a good 80 miles still lay ahead of me. Without heeding the country below, I flew on, losing height steadily, but right over the Rhine a fresh belt of up-currents came to my rescue and drew me upwards at the rate of 6ft/sec. However, the terrors of a forced landing on the declivitous slopes of the Rhine Valley were again impressed upon me, as I once more lost the height, which I had only recently gained after a fierce struggle. The variometer recorded a fall of 10ft/sec. Boppard, a small town on the Rhine, drew closer, and in despair I realised that I was only 1,500ft above the Rhine and still falling at the rate of 13ft/sec. A landing at this juncture would mean either coming down on the waters of the Rhine or landing in the vineyards on its banks.

Behind Boppard the Rhine curves sharply to the right. With the wind blowing as it was, it should be possible to find slope up-current at the corner. It looked like my last chance, and I was only 650ft up when I made towards it in a desperate attempt not to be forced down. Suddenly it became extraordinarily turbulent, and I was thrown about violently, the wings shuddering under the vicious bumps. At last, the variometer again moved up to zero, hesitated, and – Great Scott! – fell back to -3! In my despair, I could do nothing but gaze at the dial hopefully. Another bump! The needle flickered, then travelled surely and steadily to +3! I at once began circling to the left, my Sperber dancing about madly; but after gaining 1,300ft my variometer registered a lift of 6ft/sec, and I could once more breathe freely. The last quarter of an hour had been a terrible nervous strain. In the meantime I had again reached 6,500ft and once more



set off across country. It was already 1615hrs, and it was debatable, to say the least of it, whether I should have time to reach Cologne. I had passed Koblenz and could see Bonn in the distance.

The up-currents now became more frequent and several times I was able to climb to 6,000ft above sea level, eventually leaving Bonn behind me at a height of 4,000ft.

Only 20 miles to go! But I was gradually losing all my height. On the dusky horizon I could see the rooftops of Cologne; but I was lower than ever! Should I be forced down so near to my goal? But luck was with me, and there was still a slight ascent of warm air.

In despair I made use of even the weakest lift, and by dint of struggle for every inch of height once more rose to 3,000ft. But then it was all over!

In a long glide, my Sperber carried me to Cologne, and I soon fell to 1,300ft. In wide circles, I searched for the aerodrome, but could not find it anywhere. The situation was becoming critical and I was only 700ft above the rooftops, when literally at the last moment a power plane came to my rescue. As it was climbing towards me still at a very low altitude, it could not have taken off so very long ago. So, pushing the stick forward, I flew rapidly in the direction from which it had come. At last the aerodrome appeared in sight, and clearing the last obstacles with 6ft to spare I landed right in front of the hangars at 1735hrs completely exhausted after a six-hour flight. I was almost too tired to climb out of the cockpit; but I was in high spirits, for I had flown 206 miles: the longest goal-flight ever made in a glider.

Reprinted from The Art of Soaring Flight (Die Hohe Schule des Segelfluges) *by Wolf Hirth, translated by Naomi Heron-Maxwell, Stuttgart, 1938*

Flying the Sperber

IN 1934, the famous DFS engineer, Hans Jacobs, designed the Rhönsperber, and it soon became one of the best loved and most successful gliders in the world. This was because its predecessors were either (like the famous Rhönadler) rather unwieldy high-performance gliders with large wingspans, or (like the Rhönbussard) came with less performance, open cockpits, only a small windscreen and quite a limited view for the pilot, seated under the wing.

With this new project, Hans Jacobs met the wishes of the pilots of the day, and designed a manoeuvrable high-performance glider with a closed canopy that gave an all-round view.

The great success of his new design led also, one year later, to the bigger Kranich II, which was the very first high-performance two-seat trainer, built in great numbers until after WW2.

Only a few Rhönsperbers survived the war, and all of them seem to have ended their active life during the 1950s. They could be seen only in museums, or were kept in private non-flying collections. This changed when the late Rodi Morgan from Tangmere airfield, a very enthusiastic British member of the Vintage Glider Club, presented his beautifully restored Rhönsperber in 1980 at the VGC Rendez Vous Rally at Lasham after an eight-year restoration.

This Rhönsperber had originally been delivered to Great Britain in 1936, and Kit Nicholson won the 1937 British Gliding Championships in it. In 1940, after the outbreak of war, this glider was confiscated by the government to support military pilot training, like nearly all civil aircraft in Great Britain. But somehow the Rhönsperber never went into use for this purpose. Instead, it was forgotten after being stored somewhere in humid conditions – a fatal thing for casein-glued aircraft. When Rodi found it in the early 1970s, it was in an extremely bad state, with the right wing completely rotten and several parts missing.

Normally, this wreck would have had to be considered as not even suitable for restoration for static display. But, because there was no other airworthy Rhönsperber anywhere in the world, Rodi decided to restore it to flying condition with the help of his friend Fred Stickland, with whom he already restored several gliders and aircraft.

Original drawings and plans were not available, so the restoration was done by taking the remaining wing to pieces, mirror-copying the parts to build the other one, and then gluing everything together again. The original tailplane with rounded corners was completely missing, but fortunately Rodi still owned a spare Rhönbussard tailplane (which has sharp edges instead of the Sperber's rounded ones). This could be fitted to the Sperber's fuselage without difficulty.

When this original Rhönsperber had been delivered from Germany in 1936, it was painted completely creamy-white. By 1937 it had been given a beautiful blue-and-white advertising colour scheme, in which it has been painted again for its second life.

After Rodi Morgan died, VGC member Francis "Lofty" Russell from Dunstable took the glider over and again brought it to many VGC meetings and rallies in Great Britain and abroad. In 1994, during the Dunstable Rendez Vous, I got the opportunity to fly this ➢





Main picture, previous page: Lofty Russell landing his blue-and-white original Rhönsperber at Dunstable
Left: Otto Grau's flying replica Rhönsperber
Above: Otto's replica was certified by the German CAA, the LBA; this pilot works for the authority and was more than happy to try the type out
Right: three-view of the Rhönsperber, which had its maiden flight in 1935 (diagram: Steve Longland)

unique glider, probably the oldest "original" in my logbook. At about this time Otto Grau, who already had built a wonderful flying replica of Wolf Hirth's Gö-1 Wolf, started work building a flying replica of the Sperber at his home. Because a complete set of plans was still not available, he first had to redesign it using all available drawing fragments. Re-stressing it according to post-war airworthiness requirements was another necessity, so that it could be certified via the OUV (Oskar Ursinus Vereinigung, the German Homebuilders' Association).

In 1998, after thousands of hours of work, this perfect replica, finished in brown and clear varnish, had its maiden flight and is now also a most welcome visitor at VGC rallies. Because the drawings used to build this Rhönsperber were of a later version than the British one, it has slightly more dihedral. (During the late 1930s, some gliders – and that includes the Minimoa – were given increased dihedral to make them more stable, because cloud flying on primitive instruments was common at this time.)

Another change to the original design (which, like the British one, was usually only equipped with very small spoilers) are the Schempp-Hirth airbrakes that Otto installed. They were not in general use before 1938, but they serve to fulfil today's certification requirements.

In 2003, Otto offered me his Rhönsperber for a flight at his home base of Aalen-Elchingen in Southern Germany – a great chance to compare it with the original one.

Getting into the narrow cockpit with its high sidewalls requires an effort, especially in Lofty's British one, where the instrument panel is fixed to the sidewalls and does not swing open with the canopy, as Otto's does. On the other hand, at 1.8m tall, I only just fit into Otto's cockpit, while I find more space in the original one. Here I even need a cushion underneath me in order to get a satisfactory field of view. But this is only because Lofty has modified the seatpan – under which in earlier days the thick parachute pack used to be stowed – to get his 2m-long body into the cockpit.

The small streamlined canopy shuts neatly around my shoulders and head, offering me a good – almost 360° – field of vision. But my eyes are not far above the canopy frame, obstructing my view downwards. During the restoration, Rodi built a canopy "replica" using steel tubes and fewer struts than the original Rhönsperber had, resulting in improved view, while Otto built his canopy in accordance with the original plans, which had a wooden framework.

'the complicated copying and restoration work made the right wing a bit heavier than the left, and there was a crosswind blowing from my right...'

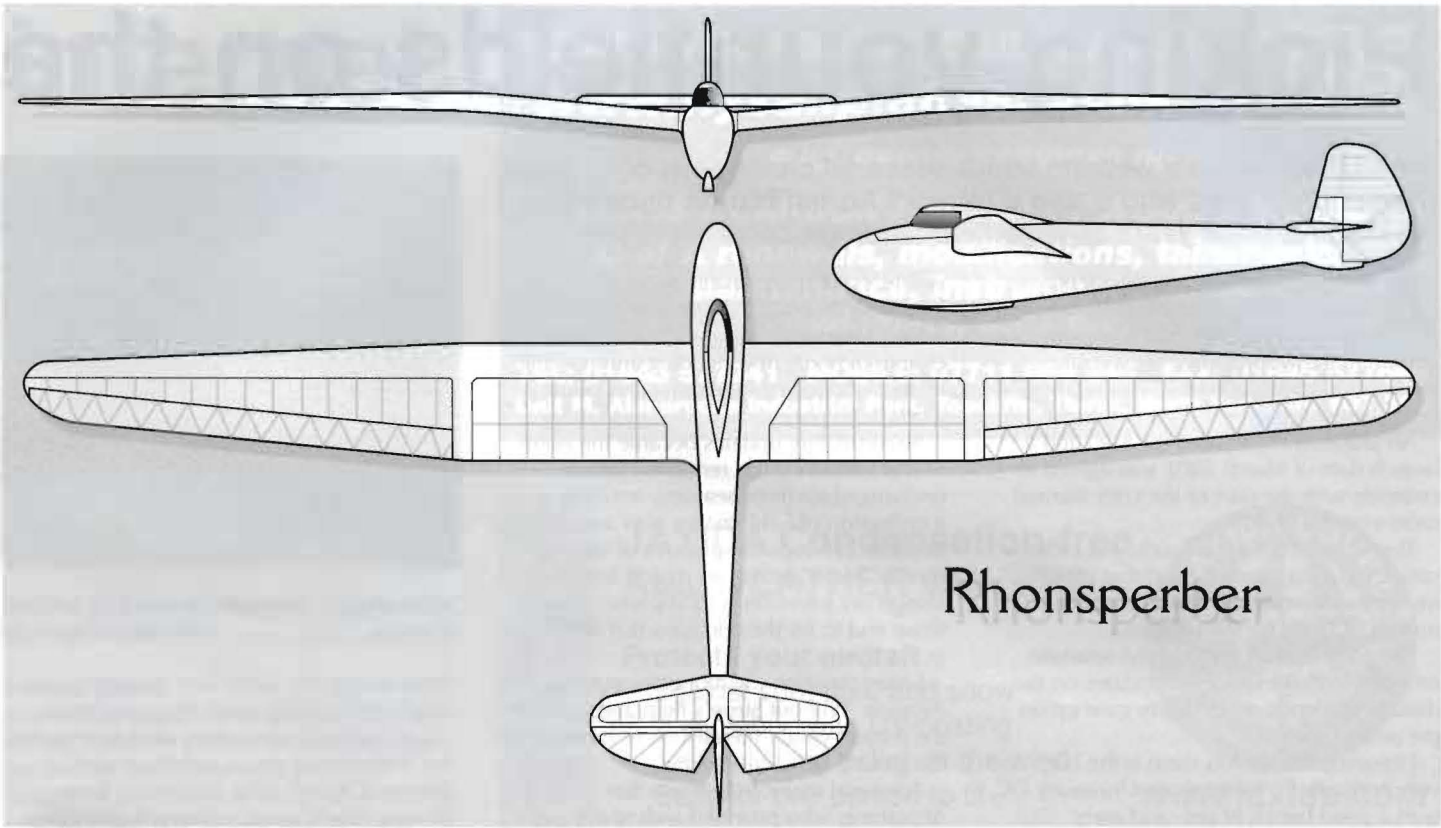
As in many vintage gliders, the towhook position is not ideal: it's a bit too far forward for optimal winching, and a bit too far to the left and low down for easy aerotowing – especially given the skid, which serves as a primitive brake on landing. A two-wheeled undercarriage, dropped after take-off, was sometimes used in the early years, but nowadays this serves only for ground transport, because there is a risk that it could bounce back and damage the fuselage if dropped too soon or at too high a speed. It also increases the angle of attack on the ground, upping your chances of stalling and dropping a wing during the initial ground run.

For my flights in both gliders, I chose to aerotow behind a slow, but powerful tug, which can easily overcome the ground friction of the skid. The complicated copying and restoration work made the old Sperber's right wing a bit heavier than the left one, and, as always happens if you're flying something a bit asymmetric, there was a crosswind blowing from my right.

So all possible factors were present to make the original Sperber turn right and drop its right wing on launch – and the tip, with the lesser dihedral, is not very high above the ground. Having seen abandoned launches before, I decided to begin the launch with nearly full left rudder, asked the wingrunner to hold the left wing back in the initial phase, kept my hand close to the cable release knob and applied only a little bit of left aileron. (More would have caused more drag on the right wing, and also increased the risk of stalling it, resulting in an immediate wingdrop.)

Thus prepared, the launch went well, but I have to admit that taking off is much easier in the replica, which also has more wingtip ground clearance.

Once off the ground, both gliders are quite easy to fly as long as the aileron, which produces a lot of adverse drag, is used sparingly and the rudder extensively. The control forces are comfortably low



compared to other gliders of this period (this is a typical feature of Hans Jacobs' designs), but the towing speed should not be too high, otherwise the stick gets close to the front stop.

In free flight, both Rhönsperbers behave well and demonstrate their good qualities, which made them successful world record breakers and championship winners as well as much-loved club high-performance gliders during the 1930s. By designing them with a 15.3-metre wingspan, Hans Jacobs almost anticipated today's Standard Class specification, which has given us the manoeuvrable club and competition gliders that many pilots still prefer today.

The lower dihedral gives the old Sperber a little bit more agility, while the new one has better stability. During thermalling, the big ailerons cause a lot of drag (which may also be used for fast, narrow thermal centring by using a short opposite stick movement), but the rudder is effective enough to compensate this.

Approaching minimum speed, Otto's Sperber stalls gently in a straight line, while the original, with its heavier right wing although it otherwise flies straight when hands-off) tends to turn right and finally drop that wing, but gently, when flown too slowly.

Although the canopy has several small window frames, the pilot's eyes are so close to them that they hardly obstruct his view, and if you turn your head a bit you even can see the tips of your tailplane!

The instrument panel is a bit buried away underneath the wooden cover in front of the canopy, but it gets some light through a Plexiglas strip in the cover above; and that makes it possible to read the instruments.

With its relatively good performance (best glide is 20:1), the Rhönsperber challenges its pilots to go cross-country – the light control forces aren't tiring, even during long flights. When it thermals with plastic gliders, the "modern pilots" are quite impressed by how fast the Rhönsperber outclimbs them all, circling in the centre of the thermal in narrow circles at extremely slow speed, but safely.

Many of them just decide to accompany you a bit when you advance to the next

'the narrow wooden skin in which I am sitting, with its fine smell of wood and glue, entices me to stay a little longer in the world of 1930s gliding'

thermal, with, of course, a much worse glide angle than they have, and enjoy the feeling of travelling into a time nearly 70 years ago, when gliders still had beautiful gull wings and came in colourful designs.

After two wonderful flights, one above Dunstable – one of the British birthplaces of gliding with its famous ridge – and the other above the German Alb region, I fly back to the airfield for landing. Effective sideslips are possible if the speed is kept slow enough. The spoilers of the original Rhönsperber offer little more than a psychological grip for the left hand during sideslipping, though they do stabilise the sideslip a bit.

Despite the replica's very effective Schempp-Hirth airbrakes, I decide not to use them during the approach, but only at the end of the flare to spot-land it precisely where its owner waits for me with the wheels. This sideslipping approach gives the landing the most realistic feeling and view – just how it was done 70 years ago!

Fully held off, the Rhönsperber touches the ground gently, both skids together, and comes to a hold after an extremely short ground "run". I'd like modern gliders to have these short landing characteristics – it really reduces the risk of damage.

After the landing, I feel absolutely no urge to leave these gliders – the narrow wooden skin in which I am sitting, with its fine smell of wood and glue, entices me to remain a short while longer in the gliding world of the 1930s.

These two gliders – the only airworthy Rhönsperbers in the world – are wonderful examples of the aims of the Vintage Glider Club. One of them is an unique original glider, beautifully restored to flying condition after having been found in a hopeless state; the other one is a perfectly crafted replica, re-stressed and internally slightly modified to fulfil today's certification requirements. So both of them give the pilots of today the opportunity to experience a bygone era, and spectators a realistic impression of how the skies looked all those years ago.

Many members of the VGC – and of other organisations that seek to preserve aviation history – are also aeromodellers. And such people even manage to bring to life aircraft of which nothing more than a few photos and sketches remain. In doing so, they all keep gliding history alive.

Photos and text: Jochen Ewald

Picking your fields on the

Who better to run a website about seasonal changes in crop fields than a glider pilot who's also a farmer? Adrian Hatton updates us on the first three years of *www.field-landings.co.uk*

AFTER several long months of playing around with digital imaging, learning how to drive Netscape Composer and finding a willing host, my website – www.field-landings.co.uk – was ready for its launch.

An article was prepared for *S&G* and a launch date of March 2001 was agreed to coincide with the start of the UK's thermal cross-country season.

Then came Foot-and-Mouth. All cross-country gliding ceased – and that included my motorglider flying, required to obtain images of fields for the website.

The *S&G* feature was (rightly) severely cropped to make space for updates on the disease epidemic and I nearly gave up on the project there and then.

However, at my club there is the large and very enthusiastic Nottingham University GC, with a good bunch of pre- and early post-solo pilots. They just would not give up without a fight and coerced me into giving impromptu (theoretical) lectures on field selection ready for the lifting of cross-country flying restrictions.

Of course, later in the year these were put to excellent use by many of them, who flew a good number of Silver distances – well done, guys!

The method

Initially, I had thought that updates to *www.field-landings.co.uk* would need to be spaced at intervals of about seven to 10 days during the main crop-growing season of March to August. But it rapidly became apparent that the amount of work involved would make it impossible to hit that frequency. A single update would take at least 30 minutes' flying and then up to a couple of hours downloading and resizing images – followed by writing and posting a new web page.

So fortnightly updates became the norm.

This frequency has remained largely unchanged for three seasons, resulting in a collection of field images now amounting to some 250 separate pictures of varying quality. Some are not very good and this season my intention is to improve upon those and to fill the odd gaps that still exist in the library.

I must mention my monetary sponsor, Hill Aviation. Without Steve's help and support the project would literally never have got off the ground.

A second major helper was Sue Armstrong, who provided web space and much-needed technical support.

Plus points about the website

Doing the website has driven me to undertake much more training for younger pilots by flying the motorglider on some gorgeous summer evenings (as well as some downright iffy ones) to combine taking pictures with field landing training for lots of students. Thank you to everyone who has kindly put up with my taking photographs at your expense during field landing checks!

I have enjoyed the feedback from some interesting people from as far away as Australia and the eastern USA. Nearly all have asked sensible questions. Even the Environment Agency has requested use of some images for water flow modelling in a simulated flooding prediction programme.



Not the nicest of pasture fields to land in, for a number of reasons (www.field-landings.co.uk)

Getting to fly some great aeroplanes when our Venture was out of action courtesy of Soaring (Oxford) Ltd – the best of those being a Pitts S2a and a Harvard. (Bit tricky holding the camera still whilst aerobatting the Pitts though!) The Harvard with rear cockpit open is a fabulous photo ship but with a fuel burn of over 20 gallons/hr it's a bit beyond budget.

Minus points

The frustration at not having been able to fly for a few weeks for disease or serviceability or weather reasons and being nagged by feedback that the website was out of date and what was I going to do about it...?

Working late into the night trying to defeat my blasted PC into allowing me to post an update. The latest was 02.00hrs, which I suppose should be taken as a "feature" of working with Information Technology.

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A field of potatoes in May with, in the foreground, oil seed rape in flower (www.field-landings.co.uk)

Future plans

In the 2004 season there is a change to the update system in that the website has largely become an interactive archive of crop images for pilots themselves to search for the crop type and time of year that they are interested in. New images will be posted periodically but the layout will not be changed unless there is some feedback that would suggest worthwhile improvements.

The inevitable request

If anyone would like to see changes to the website – it is not a profit-making venture – then I will ask for volunteers to help with the work involved. Sadly, I simply have neither the time nor the technical expertise to develop it beyond its present form...

Adrian, a BGA Regional Examiner, flies from Four Counties GC at Barkston Heath. He would welcome your feedback either via www.field-landings.co.uk *or at* adrian.hatton1@btinternet.com

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Before you take to the skies

Abby Nishio takes a light-hearted look at the first ritual you learn in gliding – the pre-flight checks

YOU'VE had an introductory flight or two, decided you want to learn to fly – and finally this is it. After waiting around for hours, at last it's your turn for the glider. You get in, put your feet on the rudder pedals... climb out, reset the rudder pedals, clamber in again and do up your straps. (Next time you'll remember to adjust the rudder pedals before you get in.)

So now you're sitting comfortably. Ready to fly? Tough. You still have to do your pre-flight checks. The reason is simple: to make sure that everything still works after the last student – sorry, *"ab initio"* – flew the glider.

This is also your chance to impress the instructor. The spiel that accompanies these checks can be memorised beforehand. Together with a vague knowledge of which levers to pull and when, it can be chanted at the instructor and, before you know it, they'll believe you can fly. Belief is the first hurdle.

All instructors undergo a frontal lobotomy during training, so a simple mnemonic is used to help them remember the checks. Learn the same one, and everyone will be happy. It is **CB SIFT CB E**, best remembered as **Cute Babes Sit In Front To Create Beautiful Exposures** or (if you're female) **Cocky B*stards Sit In Front To Control Browsing Eyes**. According to our governing body, the British Gliding Association, these letters actually stand for **Controls, Brakes, Straps, Instruments, Flaps, Trim, Canopy, Brakes and Eventualities**. As a student you are expected to keep to this at all costs. Do.

Instructors of course, are experienced enough to alter things when certain critical conditions apply. Critical – here – relates to bodily comfort. You can capitalise on the instructor's need for comfort and so gain an easier ride. On a cold, windy day the instructor will want the canopy down as quickly as possible, to keep wind out and body heat in. So as soon as you and the instructor are in safely announce that you are going to shut the canopy. Turn round to double-check that the instructor is sitting down. If the canopy hits the instructor on the head, at best you will have an unhappy instructor with a sore head (even an empty skull contains pain cells) and at worst you will have an angry instructor who has to get back out into the cold to arrange the repair of the cracked canopy and to find a different glider – assuming that your club is big enough to have a second two-seater. Once sure that the instructor is in his seat close and securely fasten the canopy – in case someone forgets later. Of course, the reverse is true on a hot sunny day, when the canopy makes the cockpit more like a greenhouse. On such days, say: "Canopy, I'll leave that until the end to keep us cool." Simple.

Having made the instructor happy, don't undo the good work by beginning the pre-flight checks before he's settled in. The first is **Controls** – which means checking that the stick between your legs moves "fully and freely", that is, as far as possible in every direction – including towards you. Every movement you carry out is duplicated by the stick between the instructor's legs. Moving it backwards too quickly can cause serious damage. You will know if you have made this mistake by the sound of high-pitched curses. The instructor will not be happy.

So before starting, double-check that the instructor is properly in his seat. Then begin that chant: *"C – controls, full and free movement."* Move the stick between your legs in a square or rectangle as far out as it will go. If at any time there is a bump, try a second time and if the bump is repeated, suck up to the instructor by saying: "This feels odd, what do you think?" Chances are it's the aileron hitting the ground, or the instructor's leg in the way, but let the instructor find this out. It makes him feel useful, distracts him from reading the lies written in your logbook by the last instructor, and stops him planning what airborne surprises to throw at you.

Under Controls, also check the rudder pedals. Make sure that each can extend to the full length and that you can reach them comfortably. If they feel heavy the chances are that the instructor is resting his feet on them. A polite: "Are your feet on the pedals?" will show that you have noticed a difference in the weight. If he isn't and they feel heavy, ask if he thinks they are OK. Now it is his responsibility and if anything goes wrong he gets to fill in the paperwork. Next move both the rudder pedals and stick together. Again, if they don't move smoothly tell the instructor. Despite all indications to the contrary, he does know more than you do. Not much. But a bit.

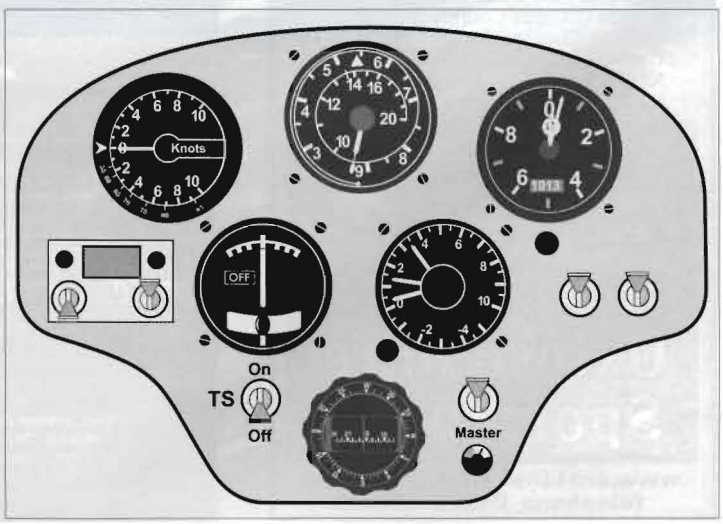
Don't forget the point of your control checks – to make sure that that the elevator, rudder and ailerons move in the correct direction for the input you're making. If you can't see the control surfaces yourself, get someone who knows what they're doing to confirm what's happening.

Next comes **Ballast**. For reasons of safety and aerodynamics there is a maximum and minimum weight that a glider can carry. If you are too heavy, you might be able to fly with a light instructor or in a different type of glider. If you are still too heavy, then I'm afraid losing weight is the only solution.

If you're too light, you either have a good excuse for that extra chocolate bar or you need lead weights added to the glider – and attached immovably in place – before you can fly. These are heavy and need to be shifted from storage. If you're light enough to need lead, you're probably not that strong. As a man, tough luck – your muscles will soon develop. Women, simply flash your eyelashes at the nearest male. On second thoughts, given the typical male glider pilot, you may want to take up bodybuilding.

To check the amount of ballast in the glider you need to know the weight of yourself and the instructor. Unless you are a man flying with a female instructor (see below), call out: *"Ballast – how much do you weigh?"* Then you check the weights against the allowable limits on the placard usually to be found by your side in the cockpit. These placards can vary in layout so get a briefing from someone who understands them. Remember weights are in pounds, and there are 14lbs to the stone. Trying to convert your weight in stones to pounds as you sit in a cockpit is not easy. Work it out earlier.

Allow plenty of error in the instructor's declared weight. If in doubt, say: "We're close to the limit, I'm such and such. What



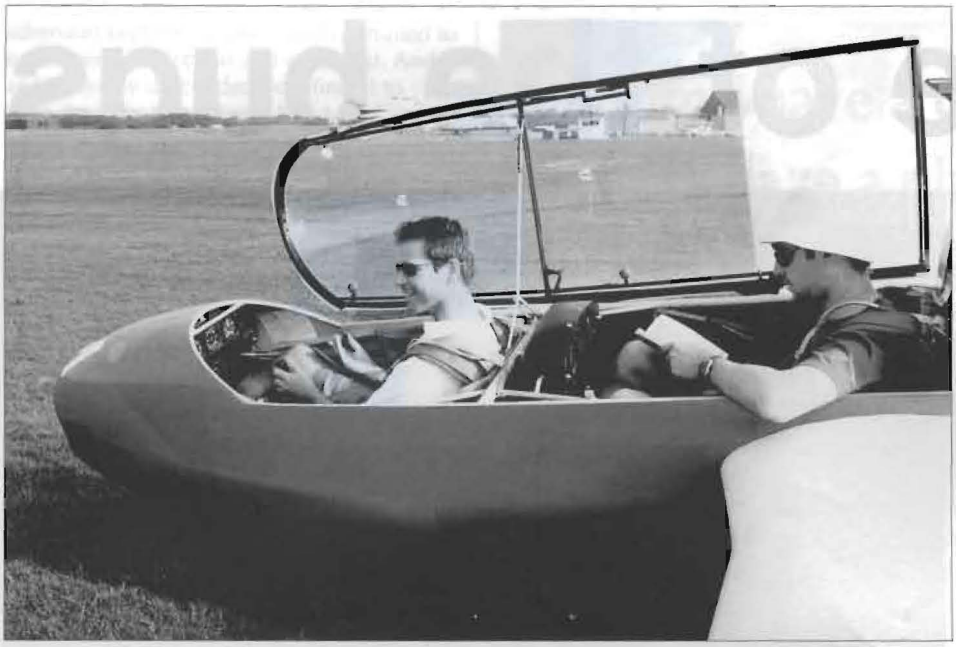
A typical cockpit layout

Top row from left:
variometer ("vario");
air speed indicator ("ASI");
altimeter

Middle row, from left:
Radio
Turn-and-slip
Accelerometer ("G-meter")
Electrical switches

Bottom row, from left:
Switch for turn-and-slip
Compass
Electrical master switch

(Steve Longland)



Getting your checks right is an early opportunity to impress your instructor... (www.whiteplanes.com)

do you think?" Then they can check the placard with their "real" weight and the responsibility is again theirs. If you are male and flying with a female instructor, then unless you really want to risk offending her call out: "Ballast, I weigh XX pounds. Are we OK?" Then she can check the placard without having to reveal her own weight. More kudos for you.

There's a lot more information on cockpit placards that you can use if you really want to impress the instructor – try reading aloud the maximum speed for your launch type (winch or aerotow) to give the impression that you are a keen and informed student pilot. Beware, though, of getting too clever: if on your very early flights you dwell upon the limits for Max(imum) Rough Air speed and VNE (velocity never exceed), your instructor may begin to wonder exactly what you're planning to do...

Straps. Check that your straps are on, secure, fastened to the glider, and that you can't move too much. (Make sure you know how their quick-release works, too.) You also need to ask the instructor if his straps are *"on and secure"*. Inevitably, he will say: "almost". Make sure you wait to confirm that they are. The last thing you need is a loose instructor flying forward and hitting you on the head. Remember all those TV adverts aimed at getting children in the back seats of cars to wear seatbelts so that they do not fly forwards and kill Mum in the front seat? An instructor is far heavier...

A word of warning: if at any time an instructor asks if your straps are *really* secure either (1) get out or (2) make sure they are. At the least he wants to try spins or maybe something even more stomach-wrenching.

I is for **Instruments**. The check is: *"Instruments, all zeroed and working. No obvious broken glass."* Take a moment to look at the panel and work out which is which. This is essential: the layout varies from glider to glider. Be sure you know where they are, or you may find yourself mistaking 100ft on the altimeter for 100kts on the air speed indicator.

Turn the little knob on the altimeter so that it reads zero. As your training advances, instructors will look for ways to assess whether you are carrying out the checks properly. One popular method is to reset the altimeter so that it does not read correctly. If you don't check it, the instructor will be quite happy to let you discover the mistake later. Generally it will be as you come in to land and realise the altimeter is lying; this can be disconcerting. Then look at the other instruments, if they have hands and no broken glass they should be OK. Then ask the instructor if their instruments are OK.

F is for **Flaps**. I learned to fly in a K-13, which has no flaps. So I simply chanted: *"Flaps, not fitted"*. This is so that if I ever fly a glider with flaps, I will remember to check them. If your glider has flaps, tough, try reading something else. I can thoroughly recommend *(Ed – please insert here the name of the book by the author prepared to pay me the largest bribe)*. Or I suppose you could always ask your instructor.

T is for **Trim**, a labour-saving device. If a glider is trimmed properly it will fly at the correct attitude to give you the speed you want. To check it, call out: *"Trim, check for full and free movement"*. At the same time move the green lever all the way forward, then all the way back, then set it in the correct position. For winch launching, this is the landing speed for that day. (If something goes wrong on a launch, you will have enough to think about – "Where am I?" "Do I have enough height and speed?" "Where am I going to land?" – without worrying about the trim as well.) Ask your instructor where to set it, and what his reasoning is.

C is for **Canopy**. If you decide to close the canopy now, bring it down and check it is secure by gently pushing up on any cross bar or the canopy edge (not on the Perspex). Also check the securing bolt is fastened. Nothing is guaranteed to make your day worse than a canopy coming off mid-flight and at worst even taking the tailplane with it. Sure, open cockpit flying is great fun. But only planned in advance on a nice warm day with eye protection and hair tied back.

B is for **airBrakes** (no-one said instructors could spell). Pull the blue lever all the way open. Then turn and look along one wing. There should be a rectangular blade sticking up from the centre of the wing and – depending on the glider – maybe another blade below it sticking down. Now look at the other wing. There should be an identical blade doing the same thing. (If not, get help.) Then shut the blue lever by half. Look out along one wing: the airbrake should now only be partially visible. Look at the other wing: the airbrake should be the same. (If not, get help.)

Assuming all is OK, push the blue lever as far forward as it will go. On most gliders there will be definite feedback as the air-brakes lock shut. Finally, just look along the wing and confirm you cannot see the brakes. Launches with the airbrakes open lose lift and hence tend to go wrong. If it is your fault that the instructor is going to have to deal with a failed launch, you will not be popular and the first rule of gliding is... Keep the instructor happy.

Finally, **E**, which in full British Gliding Association parlance stands for **Eventualities**. What you will ultimately be expected to do here is to explain what you will do if things go wrong on the launch. One day, they will – and not just because the instructor is deliberately destroys the launch to see if you can cope. What to do in eventuality depends on airfield shape and size, wind direction, wind speed, type of launch, position of launchpoint, etc. You'll be trained to make the right decisions and you'll have to show you can get it right before you're allowed off on your own.

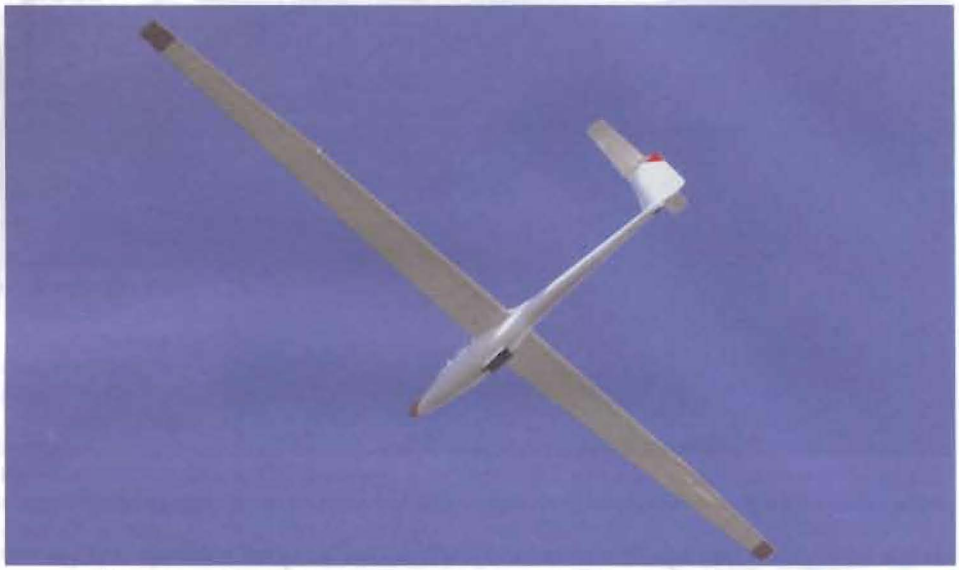
There are several ways to deal with the problem of what to say for Eventualities in the pre-flight checks. The difficult way is to work it out for yourself. This will, of course, help you progress towards solo. There are, however, easier ways. The most obvious is to be helpful around the glider as other people go through their pre-flight checks. Listen very carefully when they reach eventualities, then repeat the correct bits the instructor says. If you are up to it, comments such as: "I agree with what you told Paul, that if the launch fails at 400ft we should..." go down well. Flattery WILL get you everywhere. An alternative is to ask an experienced pilot whose judgment you trust. The only problem will be shutting him up. Cut out nine-tenths of what he said and repeat the rest. Easy.

Finally, when all is ready, remember to shut the canopy.

Enjoy your flight!

Beware of the bugs

Degrade your polar, suggests our anonymous author, before it degrades you...



"At least I knew there was a field before the airfield boundary..." (www.whiteplanes.com)

CONSIDERING the combination of initial height and distance, this final glide should have been in the bag. Yet here I was, admittedly at 120kts, but at less than 10ft with a field, a motorway embankment and then another field to go before the airfield boundary. It was most certainly not in the bag. In fact, this final glide was in trouble – big time!

A final glide should be a joyous affair. It is a deserved reward for the hard-earned kilometres of work and the anxieties that inevitably accompany the difficult moments on a long cross-country flight. At the start of a final glide, one suddenly realises that a transition has taken place but without knowing when precisely the change occurred. Rather, the flight has metamorphosed as the kilometres have clicked away to the point where the decision can be made that no more circling is necessary, and from there on one can really enjoy the view. It then becomes a wholly different form of flying.

Firstly, there is the psychological relief that the task has been accomplished. Secondly, the workload is reduced. Height bands, thermal centring, turning points, navigation, and low points no longer impinge on enjoyment. All these changes combine to produce a fundamental shift in the nature of the flight with an attendant feeling of elation. At such moments I feel entirely relaxed. I sit back and twiddle occasionally with the JSW calculator, simply playing height, speed and distance against each other. The protracted period of straight flight is a welcome relief from the endless circling. I feast on the panoramic view of fields sliding beneath and behind. I have more time to enjoy myself. And I suspect that a concomitant complacency creeps in.

It was after such a complacent moment on this long-ago competition flight that the first intimation of departure from the norm insinuated itself into my awareness. After a position check and a quick fiddle with the calculator I noticed there had been some degradation in the anticipated performance; my height was less than it should have been. Perhaps that last little bit of sink had been a little worse than I had imagined. Perhaps I should have flown the speed ring more accurately. "Ah, well. No matter," I thought to myself. "A reduction in airspeed should sort that out." But, inexplicably, it did not.

A few kilometres further and my safety margin had reduced to such an extent that I was concerned enough to be thinking about changing to maximum glide speed. My mind began to race. How had this happened? My hard-won candy of an enjoyable final glide was being taken away from me and I was perplexed and angry. The cross-country cloak of apprehension that I had shed was now wrapped more firmly around me. Perhaps I was in a subtle but prolonged sink-street? The wind was behind me. I angled off the heading slightly.

As I scanned, in desperation, around the sky for other gliders my eyes fell upon the starboard wing, and there they stayed for a disproportionate time, as the enormity of what I was looking at sank in. The leading edge had harvested the largest amount of impacted insects that I had ever seen. It was the year of the greenfly! It was a moment of truth. At that precise moment my clean-wing polar curve was truly demolished, as if someone had pressed the delete key and the subsequent blank screen denied all hope of retrieval. Why, oh why had I not allowed for the bug factor?

The psychology of stress is interesting. People react to it in different ways. Some say that fear, in particular, can make you stupid. The mind goes blank. For a few vital seconds I just sat there, both hands fixed on the stick, barely breathing lest unnecessary control deflections disturb what meagre glide angle performance was left, willing my machine onward at best glide speed. At last, I began to marshal my thoughts. Through positive thinking in the face of adversity I have discovered that problems in life assume lesser proportions and, once free of the armlock of anxiety, a self-stoking cycle of optimism can ensue, engendering rational thought and analysis. I had a number of options before me.

I could turn back. Those who have done a final glide from the north-west into Booker airfield will know that the last five miles are not good for landouts. The fields are very small, sloped and there are plenty of forested patches. However, I felt a deep resentment at this option after having come so far.

I could stop the glide and start a thermal search pattern, choosing any direction. But that really would be burning my boats. I was now well below my operating height band; contacting lift was not an assured outcome and the ground beneath was not inviting.

I could continue the glide with the newly inserted bug factor, a 10kt tailwind (I had conservatively set zero wind) and a tiny calculated safety margin of height at max glide speed. At least I knew there was a field before the airfield boundary. My calculator, now with the bug effect offset by the added tailwind, said the plan was possible with 800ft to spare. How much more of that spare height would my bugs chew up?

So, a final glide it was, then.

I identified myself on the radio, "Booker finish line, final glide – marginal." It was to be a nail-biting experience.

In the normal course of events, when the final glide is progressing as expected, pilots tend not to take much notice of the ground directly below. The eyes pay predatory attention to the airfield, assimilating information about anticipated circuit direction, landing area and conflicting traffic. However, I could not stop stealing glances at the ground directly below, which now looked uncomfortably close, very real and hard, the trees unyielding, the slopes impossibly steep, and the surrounding area disappointingly devoid of open space. Yet despite such intimidation, mounting

adrenalin kept me focused, highly attuned to each needle deflection and each gust. And as I gradually descended I continued to analyse my options. Being low and slow was not an option. But low and fast could work.

The airfield now looked absurdly high in the canopy. By converting to fast flight I knew I would achieve at least the last field before the boundary. But I would need to pull up over the motorway embankment before that field. If it went better than expected I could plop in over the boundary fence, this side of the runway finish line. I don't remember what triggered my decision, what prompted me to shove the nose down and get rid of flaps. But I do remember that once I had executed the manoeuvre, I became calm, as one does when the rope tightens and the glider begins to move on takeoff. It felt right. I was now doing something instead of just sitting there and waiting it out. I was going to take full advantage of ground effect.

At the airfield someone shouted: "There he is!"

"No, that's not him," my wife replied. "He never flies that low."

After a few moments, with no other gliders in sight, it became patently obvious to her that it probably was me after all.

Someone else said: "They're about to launch."

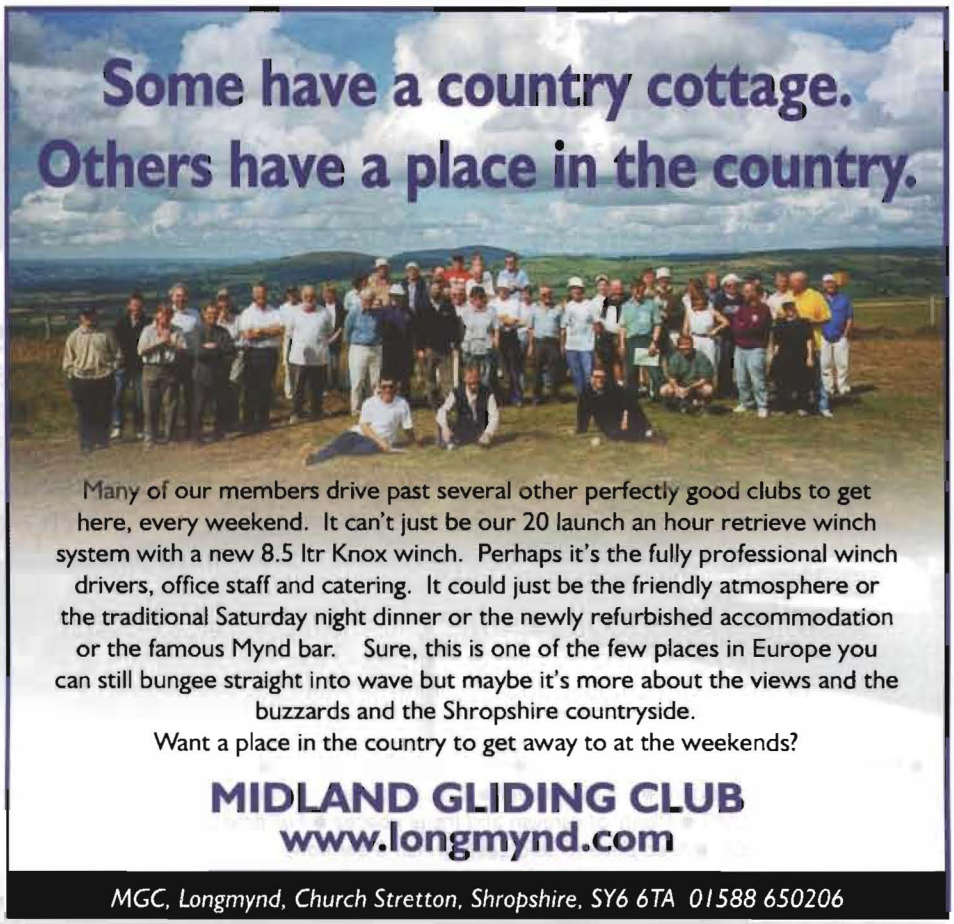
"Oh no they're *bl**dy well not*!" she retorted, and raced off to stop the launch. My brother had never heard her swear before; it was out of character and a good measure of her intent.

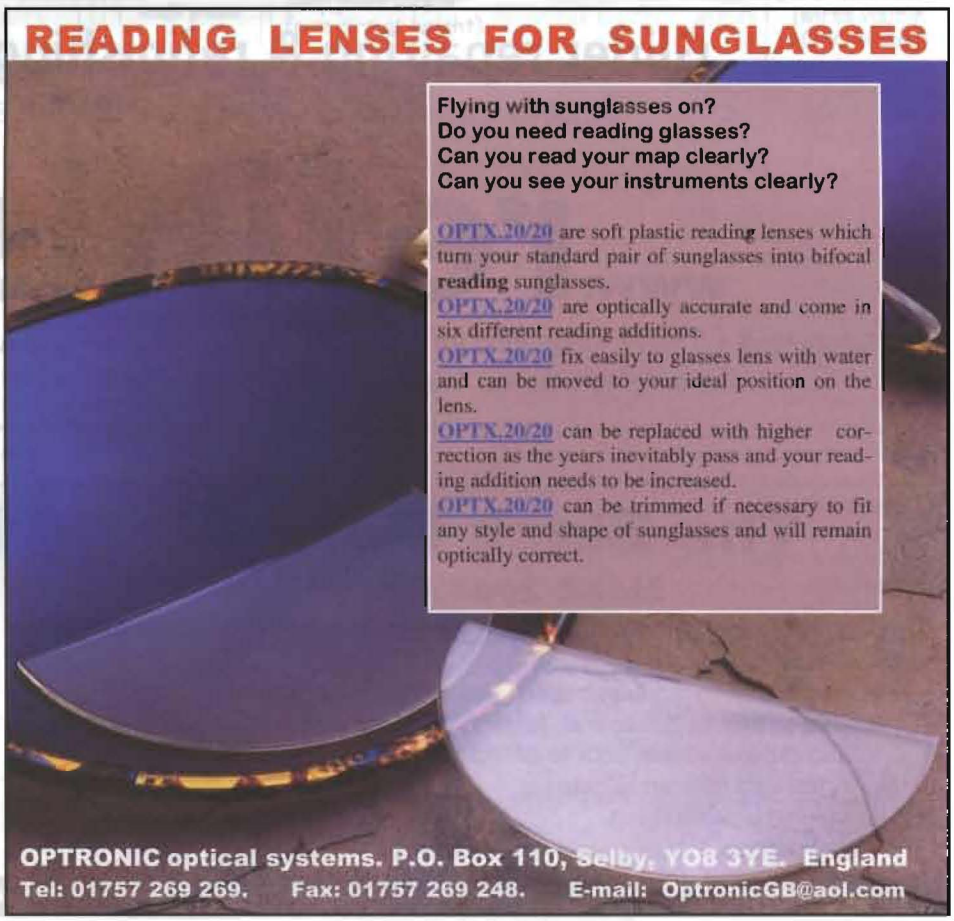
I stalked the ground and levelled out at about 5ft. A quick glance at the ASI – 120kt. Motorway embankment looming up rapidly. Pull up, glance at the traffic, push over for next field, eyes outside, listening to airflow. Level out. Glance at ASI again – 100kts. Long field now. Fence approaching. 90kts. Airfield and runway ahead look clear. Slight rise over the fence and down again. 85kts. Ground effect working. I can clear the runway finish line and turn back to land into wind. Pulling up. Rising and still rising. Level at 50kts. Undercarriage down. Zero cruise flap. First stage landing flap. (Two flap levers in the Kestrel.) Well banked and balanced final turn over the bus, but embarrassingly low. Faces looking up at me. Landing ahead. Phew!

I got out, knees shaking, mouth dry. My wife said: "Why were you so low?" I simply replied "Flies" and remained rather quiet.

Instead of enjoying the customary post-flight chit-chat with passers-by and other competitors, I was keen to scuttle off with my tail between my legs, lest anyone question me about my embarrassing misdemeanour. We towed off the airfield as quickly as possible.

I often think about that long-ago flight and use it as an example to encourage new cross-country pilots to think about wing performance. Don't do as I did. Factor your bugs in! Degrade your polar before your polar degrades you...





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The wires you don't see...

This anonymous contributor thought he knew just where the wires were as he approached his chosen outlanding field...

WITH more than 200 field landings behind me, in the UK, Australia, and various countries in between, I thought I had outlandings taped.

Until July the 4th last year.

Although there were no classic wave clouds to be seen from Sutton Bank that morning, the cumulus were lined up across wind in places, and there were telltale curly tendrils on some of their upwind edges. I reckoned an out and return to Hexham was possible. A high tow to just above the 4,000ft cloudbase near Thirsk established me in 4kt, which gave a climb to 7,000ft.

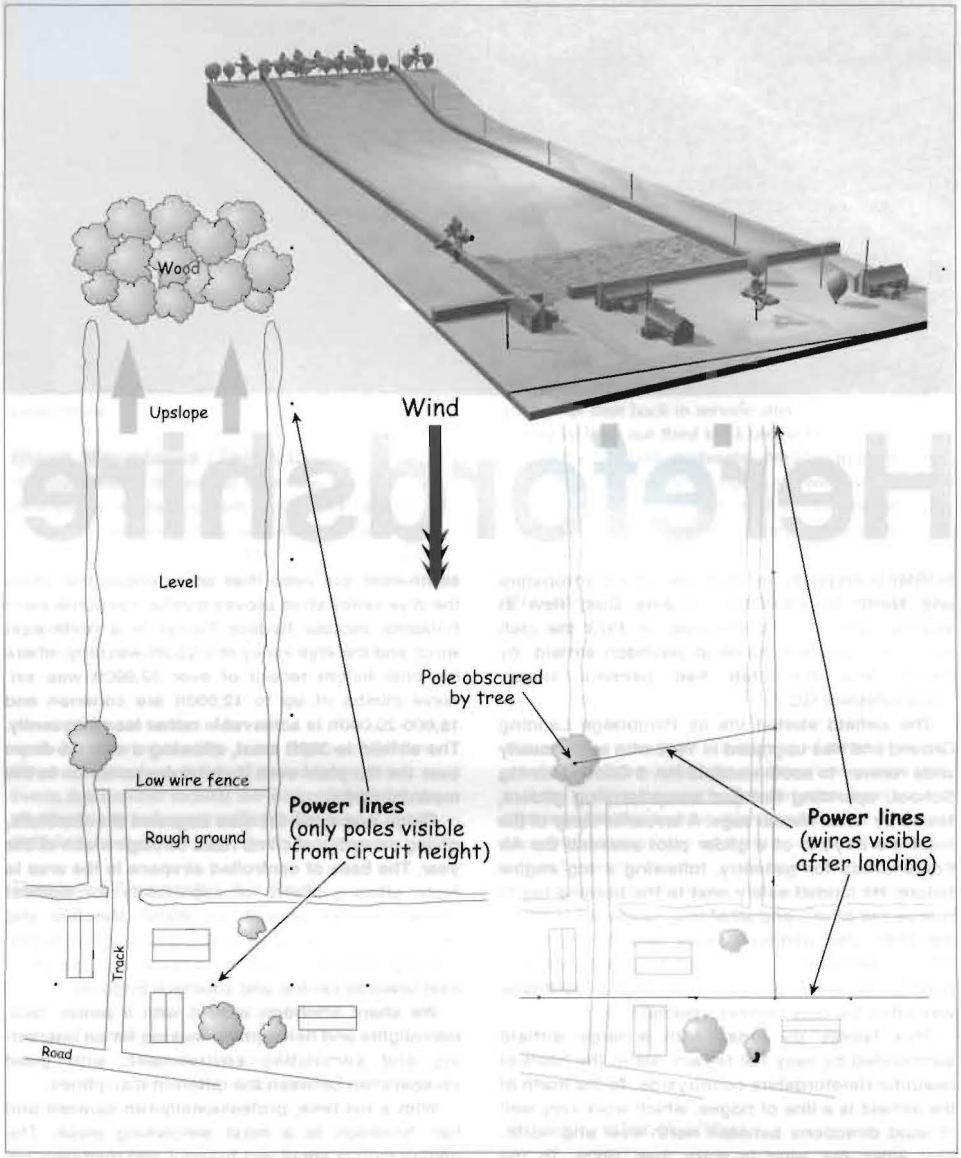
From above, the wave pattern was more obvious, and I moved off towards Leeming, where another steep upwind slope of cloud indicated there should be a stronger and hopefully higher wave. I was disappointed to find no more than a couple of knots, which petered out only 500ft higher. There was more cloud, around seven-eighths, to the north, but there were reasonable looking wave gaps and the cloud shapes showed that the wave should still work. I pushed on past Barnard Castle, but found no strong lift, and gradually sank towards the cloud tops.

It soon became clear that the wave was dying, and a retreat was necessary. Back at Barnard Castle I was unable to stay above cloud, and descended through a hole.

There were thermals below cloudbase, but the first few were very broken by the wave influence that was left and I was soon in circuit for a field. A very strong surge of lift on the downwind leg built up into a 4kt climb to cloudbase but I couldn't get back into the wave. There was more sunlight on the ground now and I began to hope for a thermal return to Sutton Bank.

A few miles further on I was again down to 1,200ft and circling in scrappy lift and sink. There were not many suitable-looking fields around, but one below me appeared satisfactory and I thought it wisest to stay within reach of it. I had plenty of time to check it over while climbing 100ft or so, and more while trying to make another nearby thermal work.

One picture is worth a thousand words, they say. The three-dimensional view at the top of the diagram on the right – and the plan view on its bottom left – shows what I saw... or what I perceived. The upslope at the upwind end of the field made it almost impossible to over-run after landing, the surface was short grass, and the village and trees I had to approach over were well short of the field itself. Although the power lines



Steve Longland

themselves were not visible, the run of the supporting poles was obvious and the field was wide enough for me to be well clear of the line along the right-hand hedge.

Safely over the village and when I was

'Out of the cockpit, I looked back and shuddered to think that if I'd made a conventional approach it would most likely have taken my tailplane off'

sure of reaching the field I broke the normal rules of aiming well into it and opened the airbrakes more, intending to just skim the low fence and end the ground roll as close to the gate as possible. Not recommended procedure, but it probably saved my life.

In the landing flare 50 yards or so into the field, something flashed over my head. I was on the ground before I realised that it had to be a power cable. Out of the cockpit, I looked back and shuddered to think that if I'd made a conventional approach it would most likely have taken my tailplane off.

So how had I missed seeing that it would be there? The diagram on the bottom right of the illustration shows what I hadn't seen from overhead. A single pole on the left, obscured by a tree, supported the electrical supply from underground diagonally across the field to the right-hand power line.

What can be learnt from this incident? Never land within a cable span of any power line? That would rule out many perfectly useable fields. Perhaps one could say: "a power line across the approach should be no problem, either fly over the top of it or touch down before it, but keep well clear of power lines parallel to the landing direction".



Herefordshire

FORMED originally in 1930, the South Shropshire and North Herefordshire Gliding Club flew at various sites around the area. In 1973 the club found a permanent home at Shobdon airfield, by which time the club had become simply "Herefordshire GC."

The airfield started life as Pembridge Landing Ground and was upgraded in 1942 with an unusually wide runway to accommodate No. 5 Glider Training School, operating Hotspur troop-carrying gliders, towed by Miles Master tugs. A favourite story of the local old boys is of a glider pilot awarded the Air Force Cross for gallantry, following a tug engine failure. He landed safely next to the burning tug to rescue the pilot – and all of this happened at night! By 1945, the gliding school had flown nearly 100,000 launches – an astonishing achievement, particularly when you consider that a carthorse was often the only retrieve vehicle!

This leaves us today with a large airfield surrounded by easy flat terrain, set in the heart of beautiful Herefordshire countryside. To the north of the airfield is a line of ridges, which work very well in wind directions between north-west and north-east when the wind is more than 10kts. To the south-west of the airfield, a north-west facing ridge extends from Hay Bluff to Talgarth, and a north-east facing ridge leads towards Usk.

Wave is encountered close to the airfield in most wind directions, with the possible exception of south-east, but even then an extended tow down the Wye valley often proves fruitful. Favourite wave hotspots include Radnor Forest in a north-west wind, and the Wye valley in a south-westerly, where the club height record of over 32,000ft was set. Wave climbs of up to 12,000ft are common and 15,000-20,000ft is achievable rather less frequently. The airfield is 328ft amsl, allowing a safe let-down over the flat plain even if cloud descends on to the mountain tops.

Ridge and wave lift also augment the thermals, giving exceptional climb rates through much of the year. The base of controlled airspace in the area is high, offering plenty of opportunity for thermal cross-countries around the Welsh Marches and into Wales. However, if you prefer flatter country and big fields, it is only necessary to fly south or east towards central and southern England.

We share Shobdon airfield with a power club, microlights and helicopters, making for an interesting and stimulating environment, with good co-operation between the different disciplines.

With a full-time, professionally-run canteen and bar, Shobdon is a most welcoming place. The gliding club is small and friendly, and members are always happy to help you to rig and launch. It attracts members from a large radius, although most members live closer than the record distance travelled by Dennis Johnson, who continued to fly at Shobdon even when he lived at Portmoak! We operate at weekends and Bank Holidays, and there are usually at least two task/course weeks, in summer and autumn, together with annual visits from other clubs. It is also common for our retired members to get together at short notice for midweek flying if the weather looks good. For more information, have a look at our website, call Les Kaye or just drop in.

Mike Hayes

At a glance

Full membership cost: £250 pa
(£125 if under 25 or pre solo
£60 if under 25 and pre solo)

Launch type and cost:
Aerotow £21.50/2,000ft

Club fleet: Blanik, Twin Astir, Junior, Rallye

Private gliders: 12

Instructors/flying members: 4/25

Types of lift: ridge, wave, thermal

Accommodation:
01568 708783

Operates:
Weekends and Bank Holidays
Occasional task/course weeks

Contact:
Clubhouse – 01568 708908
Leslie Kaye – 02476 402449
Mike Dodd (CFI) – 01531 890807

Airfield office – 01568 708369

www.shobdon.com

52° 14.50 N 00° 52.88 W

Radio frequency: 123.5
An information service operates at weekends and the tower appreciates a downwind call before landing

Circuits and landing
All glider circuits are to the north of the airfield, with landings on the grass strip on the north side of the Tarmac runway. **Beware** the fence across the runway, which separates the disused section at the west end from the active airfield

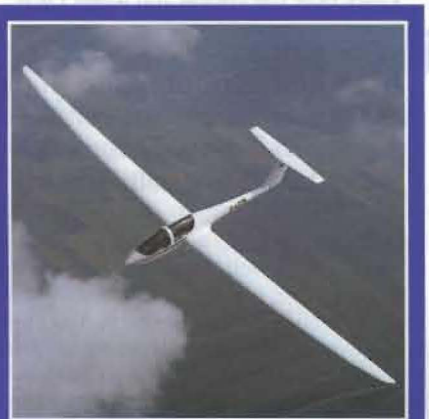
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GROB





Launching the Blanik at Shobdon

Club news

Andreas (Isle of Man)

FOLLOWING excellent local publicity, we received five applications for RAeS Scholarships. To our surprise and delight three were successful – training has already commenced. Congratulations to John Richman on the first leg of his Bronze. After resoloing at Cotswolds GC last year Robin Davenport has now soloed at Andreas. Following last year's devastating six-month grounding, when our only two-seater required some major surgery, we are in negotiations for another. By the time this is published we will have had an "executive visit" from Diana King and Keith Mansell as part of the BGA's improved communication initiative. We are in no doubt that both sides will have found it interesting, particularly the issues that affect EASA since the Isle of Man is not part of the UK or EU, which leads us on to another annual relocation issue – despite the annual efforts of the S&G club map to move us we still remain happily in the middle of the Irish Sea outside England!

Brian Goodspeed & Bob Fennell

Aquila (Hinton-in-the-Hedges)

AT last some soaring weather after poor weather since Christmas, with the members venturing off for the first tasks of the year. The Pawnee's refurbishment is now well under way with its return expected at the end of April. We must also welcome new members Steve Brooker, Hugh Ginty and Lesley Williams, who have all recently joined on our 'Learn to Fly' Package.

Barry Woodman

Bath, Wilts & North Dorset (The Park)

WE had our first good soaring day of the year on Good Friday, when many members put in hours of soaring. The whole club fleet was in action apart from our new (second-hand) Puchacz, which is just having the finishing touches done to its winter refurbishment. Our Pawnee and Venture motorglider both look very smart in new fabric and paint. We are very grateful to Mike Jenks for representing our interests in discussions over the proposed airspace changes around Bristol. Congratulations to Vic Turner on going solo. We have six young bursary members, three boys and three girls.

Joy Lynch

Bidford (Bidford)

After a disappointing March, we recorded our lowest launch rate for six years. However, with the first signs of spring, many private gliders have emerged from their trailers and are now living rigged outside under their covers and have already completed a number of cross-countries. We now have a new toy to play with, in the shape of a John Deere tractor. We have also splashed out on a new windsock, which nearly got blown away in the gales earlier in the year, but is now safely back on its pole after being retrieved from the trailer park! We welcome for the new season the three Johns: John Coultard, who is taking over from Alan full time in the office; John Selman from Ireland as our course tuggy; and the returning John Dean as instructor. For the latest on our renamed Bidford Regionals and Turbo comp check out at *www.bidfordgliding.co.uk*

James Ward



Former Harrier test pilot John Farley spoke at ***Booker***

Black Mountains (Talgarth)

THE Tony Burton Trophy has been won by Mike Rossiter for a gain of height of 9,350ft on October 18, 2003. Created in memory of Tony, who died last year, the trophy is awarded annually in his memory for the best gain of height out of Talgarth. Creditable as Mike's flight was, he still has some way to go to match Tony's 31,500ft on January 1, 2002. The spring weather has not been as good as previous years but we did see Snoopy, our open cockpit T-21, airborne at the end of January with a two-hour ridge soaring flight above the snowy Black Mountains. Don Puttock is back in charge again this summer to allow seven days a week operation so we are always pleased to welcome visitors. Events this summer include the Rockpolishers on May 29-30 and our task week at the end of August.

Robbie Robertson

Booker (Wycombe Air Park)

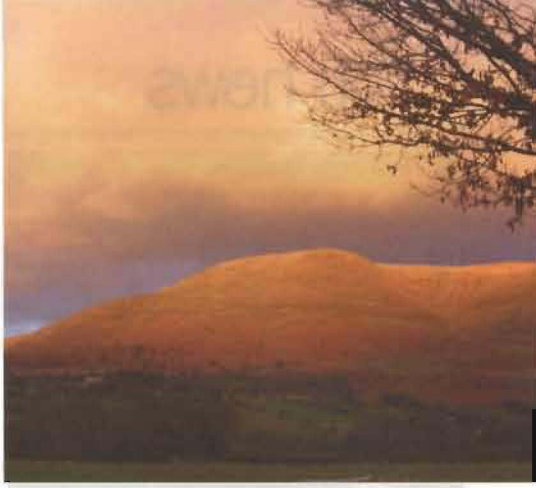
AS you read this there may just be one or two slots left for our very own "No entry fee" Booker Regionals (all welcome to the party on the 19th – let us know). Members are about to leave for expeditions to Shobdon and Serres in the Alps. We've got three new Assistant Instructors: Michael Collett, Martin Ffoulkes (BBC), and Gary Nuttall. Altogether 18 members have either become instructors or are being upgraded. We even welcome Dave Watt back to the ranks of instructor, having renewed his Full Rating. Jeremy Gilbey has soloed. Chris Ryan has returned for another season as a tuggy, joined by Dominic Marsh. The first refurbished Robin is ready to return from France and re-enter service; the second is back on site and about to be reassembled. Congratulations to Matt Cook on being confirmed at the AGM as our CFI. This was presumably in part at least attributable to his performance at our hugely successful dinner-dance, when he acted as MC to 120 guests.

Roger Neal

Borders (Milfield)

ALTHOUGH we don't have a "season" as such (we fly all year) things are starting to pick up in terms of visiting clubs. Easter weekend saw an expedition from Bowland Forest and visitors from Pocklington and Camphill take advantage of longer days and local hills. We have started our Friday flying and will continue throughout the summer. Congratulations to soloists Helen Barlow and Colin Neil and to Bob Thompson (resolo). Helen was the first to solo following our ladies week last year and a BBC crew spent a day at the club re-creating her first solo. Stardom hasn't gone to her head although she is demanding her own caravan at the launchpoint! The programme is to be shown in the near future.

Andy Henderson



The ridge at ***Black Mountains GC*** *(Robbie Robertson)*

Bowland Forest (Chipping)

MEMBERS have been saddened by the recent loss of Dick Darbyshire and Jadge Singh (see obituaries, p61). We are looking forward to the soaring season having got all our fleet back in service after Cs of A. We are hoping to have our third K-13 online by now, after an overhaul and refurbishment. We plan to participate in National Gliding Week, but as yet we have made no firm decisions on how to mark it. Our annual dawn-till-dusk day should fit in very satisfactorily!

Eileen Littler

Bristol & Gloucestershire (Nympsfield)

DAY one of a new launchpoint organiser system saw the first volunteer, World Champion Andy Davis, climbing a 100ft tree to retrieve a winch cable after a spectacular winch flywheel oil plug "explosion". The previous evening, club members had voted for a rota of launchpoint organisers to include all pilots of Silver standard and above. All solo pilots will be encouraged to learn to drive the winch. The year started with several trips round Wales in wave. Our Scout tug has damaged (wooden) wing spars so new metal wings have been ordered. And the Pawnee needs an engine rebuild. What bad luck for the team who worked so hard on club kit this winter. An excellent dinner-dance was held at a new venue, the Agricultural College in Cirencester. Cups were awarded to Jon Meyer, Tim Macfadyen, Trevor Stuart, Derek Vennard, Sid Smith, Nick Wall, Lemmy Tanner, Pete Bagnall, Nigel Smith and yours truly. The Rolex Western Regionals will be held from August 7-15.

Bernard Smyth

Buckminster (Saltby)

BUCKMINSTER was fully operational seven days a week last winter (as usual) thanks to our hard runways and the tireless efforts of our professional CFI, Les Merritt, his wife/assistant Jane Merritt and volunteers. The end of February produced some unexpectedly good soaring days. New member Dave Prosolek, who



Bernard Smyth (left) gets a cup from chairman Steve Parker for services to ***BGGC****. S&G readers owe him thanks, too, for his services as a voluntary proofreader. Any mistakes remaining are the editor's responsibility...*

Please send news to *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or Helen Evans, 7 Ollney Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud GL6 9BX to arrive by **June 15** for the next issue (August 10 for the October-November issue)

Club news

completed a 133km task with a height gain of 3,000ft, won our new winter wave trophy. A successful series of Bronze lectures culminated in five out of five passes. Neil Rathbone recently stood down as chairman, replaced on a short-term basis by Cathy Lawrance and on a more permanent basis by Paul Rodwell. Readers who knew Ray Tomlinson will be saddened to hear of his recent death. We are hoping to develop NPPL training, which we are able to offer, and our M3 maintenance facility. Danny Goldsworthy has been taken on as a summer instructor. We have acquired the use of two extra grass areas: one will lengthen our winch run and on the other we are hoping to build a new club hangar. Activities planned include the National Aerobatics Championship (June 3-6); Vintage GC weekend (July 3-4), Open Aerobatics Competition (September 11-12) and task 'weeks' (provisionally May 15-23 and August 16-20). Visitors welcome. On Friday, September 3 we shall repeat our very successful 1940s Big Band night – all welcome. Contact us for tickets 01476 860385, *office@buckminstergc.co.uk* or *www.buckminstergc.co.uk*

Martin Hands

Cairngorm (Feshiebridge)

WE are now fully operational, and our beautiful runway looks more befitting a croquet club. Thanks are due to our tireless inspectors for beavering away through the winter nights keeping our club fleet and tug in A1 order and in this matter we also extend our gratitude to Alan Middleton at Aboyne for his help. CFI Andy Carter ran another well attended *ab initio* course, which included three successful Royal Aeronautical Society Scholarship students. We welcome back the "Walking on air" K-21 along with all their attendant instructors and helpers for the first week of our Mayfest, which is already now over-subscribed. We also look forward to welcoming back many of our friends from Portmoak. It's never too early to mention our Octoberfest, which this year runs from September 25 to October 10. Bookings must be made to *Chris@capercaillie.flyer.co.uk* or at 01540 673231. No booking fee, but it will be strictly first-come, first-served. Check out *www.gliding.org* for more details. Looking forward to seeing you all at Feshie, the friendly club.

Chris Fiorentini

Cambridge (Gransden Lodge)

THE AGM happened in March. Most of the discussion centred around two perennial issues: membership fees and member retention. The committee has been charged with looking into an alternative fees plan, perhaps taking account of volunteer effort by members. Retention is a problem for many clubs. Peter Warner is now leading an effort to try and curtail our churn rate. A small change in this can make a big difference. There has also been a bit of a shuffle in the club management. Alan Denison is now the Manager and Rod Ward has taken over from Kevin Moloney as CFI. Kevin continues as summer course instructor. We are back on a summer timetable, operating every day. The Easter weekend saw the first flights entered on the club ladder. The soaring season for us flatlanders has finally arrived. Well done to everyone who passed the Bronze exams earlier in the year after Neil Goudie's lecture course. Now it's time to put it all into practice. As part of the BGA's National Gliding Week in June we will be racing two-seaters around the Cathedrals of East Anglia – exactly which ones will depend on the weather! Some P2 seats are being offered to secondary school and college students. Hopefully this will generate local interest and get one or two people hooked on the sport.

Gavin Deane

Chilterns (RAF Halton)

THIS is the last entry for Royal Air Force Gliding and Soaring Association (RAFGSA) Chilterns Gliding Club, but all is not lost, as there should be a replacement



***Borders GC's** Helen Barlow (left) after her recent solo, which was re-created for a BBC television programme*

entry in the next *S&G* for the RAFGSA Chilterns Gliding Centre. We very much hope that the club ethos will continue and pervade the non-public flying operations, though we are also looking forward to the possibilities afforded by a seven day a week operation starting from mid-June. This is just another significant change in Chilterns' history and its operation; the last involved the move of the club from RAF Weston-on-the-Green to RAF Halton some 24 years ago. However, gliding here benefits significantly from the local ridges which enable year-round soaring (sometimes in all sorts of strange wind directions) with many a five-hour duration flight, as well as connection to the, albeit infrequent, wave. Anyway, the club is happy to welcome back Myke Falvey on his return from a posting away in Sierra Leone. Meanwhile the stalwarts have been at it C of A-ing aircraft and refurbishing the ground (MT) fleet, which is mainly bright yellow now – though mention must be made of our Strange Rover with Mick's noteworthy cable release mechanisms, which are operated from the heated interior. Otherwise, all is relatively peaceful with members enjoying the spring thermals and looking forward to the summer. Will all likely visiting pilots please be aware that we still have tall leafless (in other words, difficult to see) trees on the undershoot/approach to 20 (two-zero) – beware!

Andy Hyslop

Clevelands (Dishforth)

OUR AGM took place on March 13. The cross-country trophy went to Dick Cole for an excellent 660km flight. Emma Salisbury was awarded the 'most improved' trophy, and Jim McLean was a surprise recipient of the c**k-up of the year trophy, breaking Paul Whitehead's almost unbeaten record. The CFI's trophy, for Best Club Member, is traditionally the most difficult to award, as so many of our members contribute greatly to the smooth running of the club. This year, Mike Langton was the worthy recipient. His sterling efforts in strengthening the bar floor meant that we were all able to enjoy this splendid social occasion without fear of falling though it! Dave Campbell and Dick Cole were jointly awarded the 'Hog Of The Year' trophy for 97 hours instructing, 13 hours solo, or maybe the other way around. They promise to swap roles next year. We took part in the Inter-Club League at Pocklington over the Easter weekend. Team leader Alan Fox is delighted to report that Clevelands is currently lying second.

Polly Whitehead

Cotswold (Aston Down)

PREPARATIONS continue for the hosting of both Competition Enterprise and the Standard Nationals at Aston Down this summer. Don't forget that during Enterprise the club will celebrate its 40th anniversary and that everyone is invited to the celebrations!

Howard Johns, a member for many years and previous CFI, returned to the club in March to celebrate the diamond anniversary of his first flight with a dual flight in "his" K-21. In February our oldest flying member, Alf Blacklin, celebrated his birthday with an excellent soaring flight of nearly an hour. This was followed by an informal presentation of a bottle of champagne. We wish him many more happy birthdays. Chandra Fernando has completed his Silver. Our new Skylaunch winch has arrived and our current one will shortly return to the factory for refurbishment and will be our reserve. Our winter lectures have ended – a big thank you to all the presenters who all gave excellent talks. Robin Birch has obtained a T-31 for renovation and we look forward to seeing it in the air later in the year.

Frank Birlison

Dartmoor Gliding Society (Brentor)

WE have had an encouraging start to the year, with progress being made. In the air Bob Jones has gained his Bronze, Gavin Short his Basic Instructor's qualification, Nigel Williamson and John Hinton both made their first solos on April 10 and, two days later, Trevor Taylor managed 227km of a declared 500km yo-yo Diamond distance, landing out just north of Dorchester. On the ground, we have a modern software accounting system installed in the clubhouse, enabling members to see how far their account is – in credit! At our AGM Dave Hooper was elected as our new chairman – our thanks go to John Bolt for five years spent in this difficult and thankless post (John remains our Site Manager). In the Awards Section the CFI judged Mark Gatehouse to be a worthy winner of the wooden spoon for locking himself in his glider, whilst in his garage, and having to phone first his wife and then the CFI to release himself. We are grateful to the Caroline Trust for a flying bursary for Katherine Healey to progress to solo and beyond.

Martin Cropper

Denbigh (Denbigh)

AFTER a series of great and well-attended lectures, given by the small but dedicated team of instructors, a total of eight members passed the Bronze exams. They all start the soaring season with Cross-Country Endorsements in mind and future Silvers, well done guys! Congratulations also to Rod Witter on winning the Frank Foster trophy for the fastest 500km of 2003. It would be good to see other members following his lead during our task week at the end of July. We have decided that Wednesday will be the mid-week club day for those who have time to fly in the week. However, if you "throw a sicky" on a perfect soaring day, make sure you don't get caught out! The first public event of the year will be the open weekend on April 24-25, which we hope along with other initiatives will raise our profile and the sport in general in the local community. The club is also planning a dawn-till-dusk day on June 19, which will need "all hands to the pumps". As always we extend a warm welcome to visitors. We are looking for instructors: contact *office@denbighgliding.co.uk* or 01745 813774 (9-10am) and leave a message.

Ian Walton

Derby & Lancs (Camphill)

IT seems that the Poles have caught the British disease, our new Puchacz, due in early spring, is not coming until July. Not much has happened in the air due to seemingly incessant low cloud and/or rain and/or howling gales. There are, however, signs that it may be getting a little better, and many pilots enjoyed a day of wave (only to 3,500ft) and sunshine on Good Friday. Jeff Daniel has finally managed to convert to the K-8 after having to wait about three months from solo. The first of the safety workshops was well attended, and with two more to go, all club members should have taken part in one. Members are looking forward to the task week in May, and an expedition is planned to the Long Mynd. Rumours abound that the excavations opposite the



*Bob Thompson, who has re-soloed at **Borders GC** after a 10-year absence from gliding*



*Graham French of **Fenland** won several trophies last year – but couldn't collect them in person at the AGM...*

hangar are a new swimming pool, but in fact they are to be a T-hangar for Tony Leigh's Ximango.
Dave Salmon

Devon & Somerset (North Hill)

THE committee has recently instigated a club newsletter considerably easing my task at least twice a year. We are continuing to expand our fleet of gliders with another refurbished Junior, which should have been collected from Poland by the time you read this. The club has also acquired Joe Watt's K-6CR as a stopgap single-seater for those who enjoy the delights of this classic glider. Sadly, Joe died in March whilst holidaying in Spain, and the club will miss his cheerful "bullying" at the launchpoint. The club is making a concerted effort to improve launch rates and there is a refreshing abundance of initiatives to improve the club's facilities and performance. Not the least is an attempt to revive the early morning and evening *ab initio* training. Not directly connected, but good news nevertheless, Hal Newbury succeeded in his ambition to go solo on his 16th birthday. In addition a number of instructors led by Robin Willis-Fleming ran a very successful course week for Exeter University students, with Laura Taylor re-soloing and Nick Taylor soloing in the K-21 and Junior. The next target for field levelling is the aerotow strip at the western end of the field. The club plans another Open Day on August 22.
Phil Morrison

Dorset (Eyres Field)

FEBRUARY and March were not the best of months, with plenty of high winds, over convection, and rain. Like everyone else, we are looking forward to spring, with (hopefully) high cloudbase and good thermals. We are doing our best to encourage new members, although the location of our site means that half of our catchment area is covered by the sea, and the other half is not exactly over-populated. Our March AGM saw most of the old committee stand for re-election, with the exception of John Halford, our chairman, who we thank for all his efforts. Our new chairman is Doug Every. On March 3 we did a sponsored glide, organised by Nathan Hanney, for Children in Need, flying six people from Bournemouth University. We have plans on the way to build a new clubhouse (subject to planning permission) and hope it will be finished by March 2005. We have some new pictures on our website: *www.dorsetglidingclub.freeserve.co.uk*
Colin Weyman

Dukeries (Gamston)

OUR new clubroom is with us and we are taking the opportunity to reorganise the surrounding grounds and trailer park. Our thanks to all involved in this work and to Mike Flanagan for the heavy plant support. We have purchased the K-7 that was loaned to us from Burn, taking our club fleet to five aircraft, of which three are two-seaters. With our small(ish) membership we can promise any new members plenty of flying. John Swannack, Mike DeTorre and Glen Barratt are taking the opportunity to carry out fairly major restoration on the wings of our original K-7. Congratulations to Lance Swannack and Doug Wass, who have completed their Basic Instructors course.
Mike Terry

East Sussex (Ringmer)

WORK continues apace levelling the field, although it is very wet. The CFI now has an instructors' rating for motorgliders, so we can now do the NPPL for motorgliders, many thanks to Tapo for his guidance and support. The clubhouse exterior has been refurbished, many thanks to our handy chairman (he only lives round the corner), Tony Kerwin-Nye and Roland Ogden. We welcome new member Derek Wilson and thank Messrs Dixon, Poundsbury and Etbridge from Parham for assisting with our Wednesday instructing. The fuel farm is almost finished and should be commissioned very soon. This will bring an end to the hour-long excursions to Spilsbury for refuelling.
Adrian W Lyth

Essex (North Weald/Ridgewell)

HEARTIEST congratulations to our President John Fricker, who, under the Royal Aeronautical Society's Aerospace Journalist of the year 2003 award, has been presented with the Boeing Decade of Excellence Award. Congratulations also to Ian Barnes our technical officer on being presented with a BGA Diploma at the association's recent AGM and Conference. At our own AGM in March, much to her astonishment, Vee Harrington was presented with the Chairman's Merit Cup for her sheer enthusiasm and get-up-and-go attitude, not only as Course Secretary but in everything she does in the club. Well done. Vee with her assistants, Tom Fowles and Peter Perry, has also taken on the job of Membership Secretary from Bob Cassels; our thanks go to Bob for all his hard work over many years. Bob, who has gained his BI rating, will be a more than welcome relief to our instructor team. Phil Talbot has taken over from Tony Hampshire as Building Manager. We wish him well and thank Tony for all his hard work. Ralph Hawtree has worked very hard in producing detailed tasks from Ridgewell from 39km mini-triangles to Silver, Gold and Diamond distances in an endeavour to encourage more members to experience the joys of cross-country flying. Both Ralph and Tony Brook are planning to attempt a big task this season. Watch this space! Work at Ridgewell has continued and members will see more car parking space, the addition of another T-hangar, a second winch, fresh fencing, and extra areas for gliding use. Our thanks to all whose hard work made this possible. This year we will be flying at Ridgewell on Wednesdays as well as weekends from May 25 to August 25 inclusive. Visiting glider pilots will be more than welcome.
Peter Perry

Fenland (RAF Marham)

AGM time again, and guess where I was? Again? Attempts to listen in by telephone from the desert fell at the first hurdle due to the phone not being able to reach! Anyway, on to the CFI's speech and awards: Del Ley enters his fifth year as CFI and celebrates another accident-free year, so congrats to all there. The star of this year was undoubtedly Graham French – what a shame I wasn't there – winner of the Speed, Longest Cross-country, and Ladder Trophies (the latter by amassing 18,947 points, from Silver to one step short of Diamond in one year). Oh yes, and the Faux Pas of the Year Trophy for quite an impressive, or unimpressive, list of c**k-ups. The Efficiency Trophy was awarded to Steve Saunders for all his maintenance work. The Aux Vaches Trophy for the retrieve from hell went to Pete Harris and Tracey (Wordy) Smith. The Al Raffan Trophy went to Sid and Mitch, again, for all their Full Cat promises. The pinnacle, the CFI's trophy, went to that (quiet, unassuming introvert) Sid Wright, for all his work, but especially as the mainstay of Saturday flying.
Graham French

Four Counties (Barkston Heath)

FOUR Counties have now moved to Barkston Heath where the facilities are brilliant. We have been made very welcome and our members are embracing the new challenges that come with the move. Any possible move to RAF Wittering has now been postponed until at least the end of 2005 so we are looking forward to some great flying from Barkston Heath for the foreseeable future. The recent expedition by the university members went well although the journey to and from

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Club news

Portmoak was eventful for some! The farewell to Syerston party was a great success with attendance by several ex-members and our thanks go to all who worked so hard to organise the event.
Sue Armstrong

Glasgow Caledonian Uni (Portmoak)

THE club has not been so active over the winter but we are back and more students have been experiencing first flights. A trip to Feshie this year is on the cards. Three students have received a BAE Systems bursary. As we have permission to accept external students based in Glasgow we are hoping that will get around and other University and even College students will come and join us. Lastly, we are interested in acquiring a cheaper (but in flying condition) two-seater for training purposes so if anyone has one to sell very cheaply please do get in touch with us via the website, *http://caleyglide.sarmed.com*. While you are there, enjoy the latest photos.
Sarmed Mirza

Highland (Easterton)

SPRING thermals have arrived at last. I personally had 7.1 on the averager and the days are drawing out! Fulmar's tug is at Aboyne for its annual service and our C of A season is well under way. Thanks to Jerry Robson for filling the gap left by Steve Young, who retired to France. Our AGM was held at our local inn with Robert Tait standing down as CFI and Geddes Chalmers taking over this position. We thank Robert for all his hard work over the last three years as well as the work he put in to make sure we had a smooth join when Fulmar and Highland club started operating out of the same site. I have not reported progress on our new clubhouse for some time as it has taken longer than expected; it will, however, be worth the wait. We now have power, floors going down and hope to finish it by midsummer.
Roy Scothern

Imperial College (Lasham)

C OF A work has now been completed on our Discus (296) and ASW 24 (96) and our thanks go to Keith Green and Afandi Darlington for overseeing the work and also to all the students who helped. We held our traditional Easter course at the end of March with 22 students attending in total. The weather was a mixed blessing but mainly flyable, allowing trainees to work towards solo, Bronze and convert to new aircraft. Congratulations to Michael Mortimore for going solo and then converting to the K-23 almost instantly. Discus B then spent Easter weekend at Long Mynd with a few members of the club, allowing them to experience ridge soaring.
Luke Cooper-Berry

Kent (Challock)

OUR Open Weekend is coming together nicely under the directorship of Terry Webster. It coincides with the BGA National Gliding Week and we are involving local TV and radio. Seven-day-a-week flying is under way and we have been enjoying thermals as well as wave and ridge. We recently made complete fools of ourselves at a quiz night, followed closely by a "Dining Out" for Chris Luton, who is transferring his attributes and experiences (both flying and otherwise) to Hus Bos. Those who remember the evening recall a great time (and thankfully, gale force winds the next day!) – except the latest group of Bronze theory candidates whose course straddled the weekend. It poured with rain and the winds blew but everyone passed.
Caroline Whitbread

Lakes (Walney Island)

AT long last our landlord has allowed us to fly again, although it looks as if we will be getting plenty of practice in crosswinds as we are presently confined to one runway. Walney's unique geography does have its drawbacks as we are very firmly sea-breezed but the recent run of strong westerlies has enabled us to ridge soar to 4000ft in clear air when anything more than a couple of miles inland was subject to downpours. The gliders, tug and equipment were serviced during the enforced break. The IS28 promises to be immaculate when it emerges from its bare-metal strip down and re-spray and thanks are due to the few stalwarts who have stripped and sanded the considerable surface area.
Neil Braithwaite

Lasham Gliding Society (Lasham)

WE congratulate Charlie Kovak on his election as an Honorary Life Member. As well as being a volunteer instructor for 30 years, specialising in teaching spin recovery, Charlie is a judge for the British Orchid Society. We welcome Crown Services GC. We thank Judy Mitchell and Clive Davis for their service on the Committee of Management. Colin Watt has joined our CFI Gordon MacDonald as Senior Staff Instructor. Our summer seasonal instructors will be Darcy Hogan from Australia, Bob Bickers, John Simmons and Jim Duthie. Office Manager Joan Carey and her team have worked hard to set up our new computer system. Last year 44 flights of more than 500km and 215 flights of more than 300km were made from Lasham. The Hangar Sub-Committee is looking into plans for new hangars on the south of the airfield. The medium and short runways have been scraped, swept and weedkilled. Together with removal of buildings inside the peritrack on the south side, the useable landing area of the airfield as been increased. We sadly report the loss of former chairman Tony Mattin and send our sympathy to his beloved wife Pat (see obituaries, p61).
Tony Segal

Lincolnshire (Strubby)

WE have acquired an immaculate K-13 from Norway to replace the departed Blanik and supplement the over-worked K-7. Congratulations to Dave Ryder on going solo. The annual prizegiving was a great success with trophies for Richard Colema, Alex Brown, John Brookes, and Bert Barker, At the AGM Dave Ryder took over as secretary from Jim Mclaren, Eddie Richards replaced Phil Niner as treasurer and Richard Coleman was voted on to the Committee as a members' representative. To all the outgoing officers many thanks for all your efforts
Dick Skerry

London (Dunstable)

TED Hull was invited by BBC Three Counties Radio on to a programme Dunstable in Time of War to give an account of LGC in its former years and as a prisoner of war camp during the 1940s. A former German inmate who was then a cook in the prison and decided to stay in Dunstable after the war also took part to make a fascinating historical story. Any old photos from that period would be welcomed. A large group of members journeyed to Cerdanya, where wave was found together with Spanish cooking and wine. Our caravan site is undergoing a spring-clean under the watchful eye of Duggie and helpers as a result of statutory orders received from the local council. Some of our single-seaters are being refurbished in Poland in time for the new soaring season. Our new tug, Robin G-LCGA, is getting us up there quicker with its three-bladed constant-speed prop. The weekend cross-country grids with task and briefing have appeared since early April with many pilots achieving good flights. Our participation in the BGA Gliding Week will start on June 19 with a grand Garden Party open to all-comers – details from the club office. We welcome back Mike Till, our summer course instructor, from over-wintering flying activities in New Zealand. Our condolences go to the family of Tim Godfrey, who died recently and will be remembered as a member for many years with a pipe and his Slingsby Capstan two-seater.
Geoff Moore

Mendip (Halesland)

THIS year has seen a bout of five-hour fever started by young James Turner, who succeeded even though he has yet to complete Bronze. A few weeks later in marginal conditions Dave Bassett got washed out of the sky and landed his Astir in the valley while Lynda Thomson called it a day after three hours when the K-18 seemed determined to take her into a cloud in spite of full airbrake. Mat James (not him *again*!) got his five hours in his Skylark 4 but star of the day was the indomitable Clive Brain, whose five hours completed Silver, all flown in a K-8. Clive pressed on through showers, sink, a "temporarily unsure of position" and a period looking up at the site. It was with some relief that he eventually produced one of the stylish landings for which he is famous (well, he is at our club!). After a protracted overhaul, our second K-13 should be in the air in time for Trial Lesson Evenings. Since last August we have been soldiering on with a solitary two-seater while our airworthy Bocian is still confined to the hangar. Once again John Whitehead has come up trumps and provided the club with another four-wheel-drive vehicle, which can share cable retrieve duties with our Land Rover.
Keith Simmons

Midland (The Long Mynd)

There's a flurry of big happenings this summer. It is 70 years since this site was found and the club started in its present form. Throughout the soaring season there will be events including another, even grander hangar party and a dawn-to-dusk flying day, which we will incorporate into National Gliding Week. Also, we hope, an out-and-return to the Isle of Wight. During the second weekend we will be giving simulator rides in the BGA Cyberglide simulator to disabled youngsters as part of our work with the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign. Mile-high flights will be included as part our fundraising for that very worthy charity. Simon Adlard finally got married to Liz. There are a number of very welcome new members and, finally the REAL news. Our distinguished President and BGA stalwart Keith Mansell, shares his 70th birthday with the club; in fact it's in National Gliding Week. We frown upon the young member who asks wasn't that Captain Mainwaring when first introduced to quiche?
Roland Bailey

Newark & Notts (Winthorpe)

FLYING activities continue after our annual shutdown for maintenance. The weather has unfortunately kept launches low in number and flight times short but this has not disheartened the members. Much liquid camaraderie was shared at the BGA AGM, when a record number of club members attended and stayed over. Congratulations to Eric Boyle, who received a lifetime award for his services to gliding. Our own AGM is due, at which we will be able to show a profit for 2003, hopefully aided this year as we apply for Community Amateur Sports Club status and our 80 per cent non-domestic rates relief. One of the club 13s and the private Janus have been entered at Pocklington later in the year and a large contingent has booked two local holiday cottages for the week.
Noel Kerr

Norfolk (Tibenham)

THE "weekend micro-climate" has ensured that those of us who work 9 to 5 spent February and March averting our eyes from the magnificent weekday skies that separated scrubbed weekends. John Kinley, however, has organised another of his famous work weekends and the airfield is looking good for the season ahead. This year we are hosting the 18-Metre Nationals, the Open Class Nationals and the Eastern Regionals. Woody and his magnificent comps team are really going to have their work cut out. The annual dinner, organised by Bonnie Wade, was once again a huge

success. Achievements were celebrated as follows: Whiskey Cup, Norfolk Trophy and President's Triangle to Bob Grieve; Freddie Wiseman Cup and Alf Warminger Picture to Roy (Woody) Woodhouse; Chairman's Cup to Tim Davies; Club Ladder, CFI's Cup and youngest solo to Tom Smith; Two-Seater Cup to Martin Aldridge and Tom Smith; Agip Trophy to Martin Aldridge; Oldest Solo to Berkeley Pittaway; Regionals Cup to Ray Hart and Candlesticks to Ed Weaver. NGC Racing had its first task on April 11, thoroughly enjoyed by all, and now has a rota for task-setters as well as web pages. It will run every weekend until the end of September.
Ray Hart

North Devon (Eaglescott)

"HAPPY Birthday, 21 today", was the toast at Eaglescott in March. Members celebrated the commencement of gliding and power flying at North Devon's Community Airfield, established in 1983 by Barry Pearson. The North Devon GC, which Barry started at RAF Chivenor in 1977, had previously operated from various sites. Eaglescott is a 50-acre Airsports Centre, operated as a 'not for profit' organisation, with Devon's only grass CAA-licensed runway (600m, but nearly 1000m overall). Facilities include two hangars with large engineering workshop (available for an engineering business), a new fuel installation being commissioned this spring and what must be the best clubroom in the South West. Club aircraft include Bergfalke and Blanik two-seaters and a fleet of powered training planes. It has approximately 60 members – an equal mix of glider pilots, power pilots, microlight pilots and model flyers – and is operated on a voluntary basis by them. We will celebrate its birthdays, "officially" and "royally" with an Open Weekend over the May Bank Holiday (Saturday 29 to Monday 31).
Barry Pearson

Northumbria (Currock Hill)

EVENING flying has been introduced to give working members the chance to fly midweek. Apart from at weekends, regular flying has only been on Wednesdays – and then usually only until early evening. But now a second Wednesday session is starting in the late afternoon, continuing until sunset whenever possible. An intensive flying course has been held at the club – the first time for years – because several newish members realised they needed more concentrated flying if they were to make the progress they wanted. They learned with instructors they knew, in gliders they knew, and at an airfield they knew - and they kept their money in their own club rather than giving it to someone else's. The club has been helping cadet Emily Charlton-Gooch, 17, who will be leaving in August for a year teaching at a Moroccan school. Emily, who went solo in June 2003, is one of a team of volunteers from Project Trust, an educational charity. The club has helped her raise the necessary money by hosting a quiz night, and donating £1 for every flight launched at a Glidathon at Easter.
Richard Harris

Nottingham Uni (Barkston Heath)

WE have just returned from our Inter-University Easter Week at Portmoak. Despite the mixed weather, there was still plenty of flying. Congratulations to Vicki Grainger on converting to the Acro and the Astir on consecutive days! We are now settling in to Barkston Heath after the move from Syerston with Four Counties at the end of March. Congratulations to Chris Emerson on his Bronze and to Huw Williams on his Basic Instructor rating. Our recent karting event was enjoyed by all. Our AGM is fast approaching and we hope for a keen new committee to carry on the good work.
Rachel Hine

Oxford (RAF Weston on the Green)

WELL, not a lot has happened except Mike Gale went solo, Lisa and Becky got their Bronzes, and maybe



*No moos is news at **Shenington**, where dairying has ended and Mary Meagher came up with photo and pun*

Gina too, and Stuart Otterburn won the Dan Smith Memorial Trophy aerobatics thing. Congratulations everybody, you've all done terribly well.
Steve McCurdy

Portsmouth Naval (Lee on Solent)

OUR AGM reported a healthy picture for last year and looked forward to the new soaring season with plans for dual cross-country training using our new K-21s. This programme has already begun with a series of mid-week evening lectures combined with navigation and field landing training in motorgliders. Fran Aitken, whose first solo we reported in the last issue, has already completed both Bronze legs and new member Nick Lambert has completed one. Our Southampton University members held their annual winch course, which was unfortunately dogged by poor weather. Judging by the beer consumed, they still managed to enjoy it. Roy Gaunt from Upavon ran an instructors' course at Lee, converting Richard Croker, Tom Edwards, Gerry Holden and Peter Waugh to Full Ratings and Paula Aitken, Roy Hewitt, Mark Holden and Steve Morgan to Assistant Ratings. Congratulations to them all and special thanks to Roy for all his hard work.
Steve Morgan

Rattlesden (Rattlesden)

WEATHER may have stopped play recently, but there are some achievements to note. At our last AGM Martin Raper, after many years of excellent service, stepped down from the role of treasurer. Our thanks to him and to Paul Steggles, who has taken on the job. Keeping it in the family, Keith Goldsmith has completed his Cross-Country Endorsement, while daughter Dawn has passed her Bronze paper. Tony 'Bod' Blanchard has joined us as an instructor and Paul Cox has returned to gliding after a short break.
Cathy Page

Scottish (Portmoak)

ALMOST 50 members attended our 66th AGM in March. Brian Cole-Hamilton stood down as chairman, was thanked for his efforts in office, and was presented with an aerial photo of our site (so he will recognise it when he comes back from his cross-country jaunts). Chris Robinson, Joe Fisher, Kevin Hook, Bruce Marshall, Doug Tait, John Williams (first year on the board) and yours truly were appointed to the board. John has since been unanimously voted in as chairman – well done, John, and good luck. The steelwork and cladding are being put together to form our new hangar and we are planning various events on July 10-11 for the official opening. See *www.scottishglidingcentre.co.uk* for more details. Recent achievements include: Neil Irving, Full Instructor rating, M. Cartney, Silver height; B. Duncan, Silver; Gary Scott, Cross-Country Endorsement and Silver height; John Guy, Cross-Country Endorsement, P. Morrison, Bronze + Cross-Country Endorsement; J. Dunnington and E Clark, solo; Matt Strickland, Bronze; and Bill Jones, R/T Licence.
Ian Easson

Shalbourne Soaring Society (Rivar Hill)

SERGEY Zagrebnev, one of Shalbourne's juniors, has been awarded an RAeS Scholarship. And we have received a generous cheque from Kerridge, a local company, towards the hand-rudder modifications on our K-13. A big thank you to Colin Baines and Bruce Forbes for running the R/T course, and to Chris Maron from Upavon for conducting the examinations. A 100 per cent pass rate was achieved. Jerry Pack organised an interesting visit to ATC at RAF Lyneham, "owners" of the local Class D airspace. At the end of February we welcomed Andy Davis and heard 'how he does it' in competitions. And finally, the new launchpoint caravan was, well, launched. Lots of members contributed both time and materials, especially Mike Truelove, Trevor Greenwood, Jim Thomson, Clive Harder, Matt Carter, Alan Sparrow and Martin Hoskins. Now all we have to decide is what to do with its recently retired, and much-maligned, predecessor.
Liz Seaman

Shenington (Shenington)

WITH mixed feelings, we announce the end of an era at Shenington. After 20 years of its operating as a gliding club and dairy farm, with adjacent caravan store and go-kart track, farmer Paul Gibbs can no longer afford to keep cows. While 20 years ago he received 25-30p a litre he now gets 15p; the last straw was a penalty charge from Brussels for producing too much milk. Your local dairy is trucking in milk from Poland. The herd of 120 cows has been put up for sale. No longer the morning roundup. No longer the pleasant afternoon pause, waving to Paul's Dad, as he brought them in for the afternoon milking at 3.30 precisely. Remembering the time when a visiting tug didn't notice the black and white procession and landed surrounded on all sides. Those nice bits of timing – can we get one more launch airborne before the cows turn the corner and start cantering? But we won't miss washing off the muck! Other news. We've got a new chairman: Mick Furseden. Thanks to John Vella-Grech for his years of leadership. Jane Jervis is back from Oz. And Mark Stevens, our new CFI, is making his intentions clear.
Mary Meagher

Shropshire Soaring Group (Sleap)

DESPITE the rubbish weather that seems to come around most weekends we have had many flights of over an hour in wave and unseasonable February thermal. Two members had a successful expedition to Denbigh with exciting flights combining thermal and hill soaring lift, and plans are afoot for a number of expeditions to France and Spain in the next few months. The Twin Astir is being used extensively and we are actively looking for a single-seat glider to be made available for the new solo pilots. Easter weekend gave us a chance to compete with Shropshire Aero Club in a flour-bombing competition. The extra speed a glider needs to bomb and then pull up for a circuit made difficult conditions but two of our gliders put up creditable performances. Nick Peatfield, who has been one of our tug pilots for a number of years, has decided to rejoin the ranks of glider pilots by joining the two-seater syndicate. Most of us have now experienced the pleasure of power flying in Dave Triplett's Arrow when gliding has been unavailable.
Keith Field

South Wales (Usk)

OUR annual dinner was once again a great success with members old and new attending. Trophies were awarded to Simon France, Andrew James and Graham

Club news

Evans for their achievements. Our first barbecue of the season was also a success. At last we have acquired a new engine in our Pawnee tug, which has provided us with a much quicker turnaround on tows – hopefully it will see us through a few more years! Guy Freeman, Mark Thomas and Ashad Rashid have soloed – well done to them. James Collins has been awarded a grant from The Caroline Trust. Many members are looking forward to task week, which Enzo is busy organising – date to be confirmed.
Janice Phillips

Southdown (Parham)

SPRING provided a bumper crop of northerly winds, and the cross-country squad took full advantage of the strong conditions. Several 300km flights were recorded, and visitors were delighted with the hill soaring conditions. Les Blows gave a talk on cross-country training at the beginning of the thermalling season, and it filled the clubhouse to capacity. There is an ongoing debate at Southdown as to whether cross-country pilots are born, or whether they are made. Either way, if any club has an advanced two-seater for sale, we would like to hear from you. John Cook has retired as membership secretary, and is transferring his considerable skills to the glider maintenance squad. We are continuing our bursary scheme for young people and Jesse Hiles has soloed this spring. Our news is overshadowed by the tragic death of our secretary Derek Sephton, who was killed on Sunday February 29, 2004, whilst flying a Pawnee *(see obituary, opposite)*. Bill Ettridge has volunteered to take over secretarial responsibilities and all correspondence should now be addressed to him.
Peter J Holloway

Staffordshire (Seighford)

IT is with regret that we report the loss of two long-standing members, John Abbott and George Glass *(see obituary, opposite)*. Our condolences go to their families and friends. Congratulations to Tony Moore and Simon Plant for first solos. Congratulations to Rangi de Abaffy for claiming the Early Bird Trophy for the first 100km flight of the year (110km, LS4). Thanks to instructors and general membership, we are coming close to having a seven-day operation. Congratulations to Graham Bowes, who now has a Full Rating, and to James Fisher, who has now secured a position with Flybe as a First Officer. Following a course by Kevin Edmunds (ATC Manchester), a number of members now have their R/T Licence (thanks to Andy Oultram for arranging it). Following hard work by Louise O'Grady and Glyn Yates, the members enjoyed a superb annual dinner in early February. The next main events are the Open Day and Hangar Dance on July 3; the latter will have a 1940s theme, and will include military aircraft and vehicles – anyone is welcome, more details at *www.staffordshiregliding.co.uk*
Paul (Barney) Crump

South London (Kenley)

THE IDYLL of springtime in the Surrey Hills was interrupted in March by a loud thump when our landlords, Defence Estates, gave us one week's notice that our licence fee to operate at RAF Kenley was to be increased by a whopping 1,000 per cent. Fortunately they have accepted a lower offer on a "without prejudice" basis and we have until May 31 to sort the matter out. Launch figures are going up and we should soon have a full fleet with current Cs of A. At our pre-season social evening and prize giving in March, cousins Steven and Philip Skinner shared the cross-country award, Ingram Gavan scored as best newcomer and Eric Short got the club award for his all-round contribution. Tim Barr-Smith received the Golden Brick award for an act of indiscretion best not mentioned here. Our Charity Day this year was due on May 3 in support of NCH – formerly National Children's Homes.
Peter Bolton



*Members and guests at **Ulster GC** to mark the commissioning of a seat in honour of the late Ron Lapsley, treasurer and director of the club up until his untimely death in July last year*

The Soaring Centre (Hus Bos)

CONGRATULATIONS to Brian Scaysbrook and Dave Booth on the first 100km and 300km of the season respectively, and to Alistair Bridges and Andy Boulter, now solo. The club Discus, HB2, has been refinished by a group of members headed by Russell Cheetham. It looks "just like new". Thanks to all concerned. Our new K-21 is expected in May. We also have a brand new engine in the motorglider. We have four new BIs: Peter Chapman, Bill Childs, David Hodgson, and Robert Leacroft, and nine new Duty Marshals. We welcome our course tug pilot, Tom Pembrey. The combined Midland Regionals and Junior Worlds Training Week will be from July 31-August 8. Last year members did 58 flights of 300km or more, 13 of 500km or more, with a longest flight of 610km. Dave Booth won the club open ladder, and Malc Guard the club weekend ladder. Well done everyone. The single-seat hangar door is back in use. The clubhouse, bunkrooms and office have all been redecorated, the function room soundproofed and new notice boards in place. Thanks to all the members who helped. We have a "new members liaison group", of Derek Abbey, Richard Large and Chris Lee, to help new members find their feet, and provide advice and guidance to existing members if required. Our Puchacz, FWT, has been refurbished and re-lifed in Poland. A full programme of social events is being organised for this year by the Hus Bos "S" team. BGA operations and our weekday flying courses started in April. Claude Woodhouse celebrated 60 years of flying with an appearance on Central TV. It is with sadness that we report the death of Peter Avery, a life member of the club, who died in February.
Siobhan Crabb

Trent Valley (Kirton in Lindsey)

A SUCCESSFUL dinner dance was enjoyed at Brigate Lodge, with John Margrave, Bob Shaw and Dick Baston showing younger members how to dance the night away! Many cups were presented, not only to John Williams. Two messages: firstly, in response to the challenge from Lincolnshire GC, we thank you for looking after our rose bowl and hope it's polished before we retrieve it. Secondly, for Saltby GC from Rasher, who is being held to ransom and hopes you're planning a rescue mission soon! A special thank you to Andy Cunningham and Jamie Allen for bringing their Fox. Members had a fantastic time experiencing advanced aerobatics and are hoping it will return. Sadly, Ted Crooks has resigned as chairman after five years. Thank you, Ted, for your hard work. We are looking forward to Vin Marchant taking over as chairman as the club faces new challenges.
Janet Nicholson

Ulster (Bellarena)

EASTER Saturday saw a large gathering of members, friends and visitors from the Dublin club to witness Lynne Lapsley dedicate to the club a specially commissioned Canadian pine summer seat in honour of her late husband Ron, who had been treasurer and director up to his untimely passing in July 2003. While Easter soaring generally fell victim to the weather our barbecue on Easter Monday signalled a successful start to the social calendar. The class of 2004 continue to progress towards their goal of Bronze by early June thanks to the combined commitment, availability and encouragement of CFI, instructors and tuggies. Committee plans to promote our sport are being finalised in advance of participation in the Portrush Airshow in early June as well as the national gliding week later the same month. The new brochure should hit the streets in time for our promotion initiatives designed to attract new members. Congratulations to Charles Hill on going solo.
Seamus Doran

Vale of White Horse (Sandhill Farm)

DESPITE rather unhelpful weather a number of members have recently enjoyed a week's expedition to Denbigh. We are now looking forward to improving conditions as spring moves into summer, particularly hoping that the weather will be fine for our club open week at the beginning of May and the competition we are running at the very end of May through into early June.
Graham Turner

Vintage Glider Club

AT Lasham, much effort has been done to give the MG-19a even more of a C of A. At Booker, work has continued to fabric the Lunak. We are looking forward to our two International Rallies in Poland in August. Our Rendez Vous will start on July 31 at Jezow, at the same time as the international Grunau Baby Rally. More than 80 entries have been received for our International Rally at Gliwice and still more are expected. Last year's excitement in Germany was the finishing and test flying of Werner Kaluza's Hutter 12-metre H.28-2; he built it from our 1936 drawings donated by our late Norwegian member, Bjarne Reier. A 13.5-metre H.28.3 was built by the Hutter Brothers at Stuttgart University and brought to the Wasserkuppe during the 1939 Rhon Contest. In 1945, it was taken, we have heard, by the French but they have no record of its fate. In England, Earl Duffin built a stretched H.28-2 in three years. He left it to his inspector, Doug Jones, after having proved that it flew very well. Another H.28-2 is being built by Paul Deane in Milton Keynes. Yet another is being built by Gunter Broedersen in Hamburg. Werner Kaluza is overwhelmed by the excellence of his little Hutter H.28, which apparently outclimbed all other sailplanes in thermals. It has been entered in our International Rally at Gliwice.
Chris Wills

Welland (Lyveden)

SOME pilots have maintained currency over the winter at Sutton Bank – including Peter Heywood's additional field landing practice. We again lost the cup we have

never so far had, bowling against Upwood's team. After the winter wetness this Easter saw us flying again over the long weekend and the Wednesday group are more hopeful. We are trying a Wilga tug with consideration of a potential private/club partnership. Steve Algeo is busy reconditioning our K-7 while everybody else is getting current. All three cadet applications for RAeS Scholarships have been awarded to Alex Franklin, Charlotte King and David Jeavons so we should be seeing even more of our novice youngsters in the air over the forthcoming year. It looks like we have a team for the East Anglian Inter-Club League this year. Our Open Weekend has been moved to the end of National Gliding Week (June 26-27).
Strzeb

Wyvern (Upavon)

AT the chairman's behest we have embarked on fleet and ground equipment improvement programmes. The Mk 5 Regent double-decker bus, a mobile control tower since 1980, has been replaced by a larger, newer bus (previously a New Forest play bus). Thanks to the many members who helped install gas, electricity and water, seats and shelving, hob, fridge and oven, radios, signal lights and all the equipment needed. The MT fleet has also been upgraded, making the hangar look like a 4x4 dealer's showroom at times, and the Bedford four-ton truck that carries the Tost winch is undergoing repairs. The much-loved LS4, JLH, with us since 1983, has been replaced by a late model LS8-s, now our "top ship". The deposit has been placed on a new DG-1000, possibly Turbo, which will, in early 2005, replace the K-13 that has been with us since 1975. No fewer than seven club gliders have been C of A'd, and many thanks are due to the, regrettably, quite few members who have worked hard at this throughout the winter. At the AGM, Gerry Sturgess was deservedly awarded Life Membership for his services as an instructor and aerobatics display pilot. Pete Brennen announced he was to stand down as membership secretary after more than 17 years service, for which chairman David Ockleton proposed special thanks. The annual dinner in Trenchard Lines mess was enjoyed by more than 50 members and partners.
Andy Gibson

York Gliding Centre (Rufforth)

THE clubhouse is developing well, with a floor area of 30 x 10 metres and new toilets. Annual awards were presented at a special ceremony in the absence of an annual dinner. Richard Kalin took the longest cross-country distance with 503km, and Tom Stoker the Senior Ladder as well as the height gain award. The Rasmden Award, giving a one-week cross-country course, went to Pam Shuttleworth, and the Anthony Foster Memorial Award for the most promising young pilot to Andrew Batty. Geoff Harris was presented with the Bill Tyers Trophy for services on Wednesdays. The Chairman's Shield was awarded to Les Hey. Finally the Spanner, presented for the most memorable laugh of the year, goes to an unnamed instructor who managed to land out less than a mile from the airfield on a solo check flight. No doubt P2 learned a great deal! (There is past form here in that P1 had landed out as an early P2 some years ago at Linton-on-Ouse after a wave flight to 11,000ft in a K-13 with an erroneous compass with a P1 who is currently CFI, but that is another story!).
Mike Cohler

Yorkshire (Sutton Bank)

CONGRATULATIONS must go to Chris Day for getting a trophy all his own at the dinner dance: the Chairman's Award for an outstanding contribution around the club. The club has been busy recently with a mass visit from Dunstable, who enjoyed trying out the DG-1000. Best wishes to Phil Lazenby, who became ill on holiday and is now recovering in the UK, much to the relief of all the membership.
Alex May

Harry Candow – Doncaster, Burn

HARRY (1922-2004) died in April after almost 40 years as a member of Doncaster and then Burn clubs. He did not set out to achieve gliding fame; he just wanted to enjoy flying and help everyone around him do the same. He would take a winch launch on a poor day, disappear for a couple of hours and come back with a bit of friendly advice for those wishing to emulate him. His winch driving was superb. A training as a mechanic equipped him well for his wartime work as an RAF engine and airframe fitter, in which he took great pride. In the 1960s he started gliding and was the kind of member that quietly enhanced the club; now we shall all miss him. Our sympathy goes to his partner, Joan, his son and daughter and many grandchildren.
John Stirk

Dick Darbyshire – Bowland Forest

DICK (1920-2004) joined BFGC in 1960. He was a very keen member, always willing to help. His enjoyment of flying came from local soaring and he was a syndicate member of a T-21 and an EoN Baby. Dick had helped restore the Eon Baby that won the best rebuild trophy at the 2nd vintage rally, at Dunstable. He travelled to many vintage rallies all over Europe and usually managed to get a flight in something. We remember him as a kind and gentle man, and he will be sadly missed by us all.
Eileen Littler

Jerzy (George) Glass – Staffordshire

GEORGE (1918-2004) joined us at 77 after his wife Ewa died. Cautioned about beginning at that age he simply said: "I will do it". He did, progressing through solo to Bronze and working towards Silver. He flew also at Husbands Bosworth, in Australia, and in Poland, and saw the Himalayas from the back of a microlight. Only when a fall left him unable to sit in a cockpit without pain did he reluctantly stop. As a pre-war schoolboy in Warsaw, George had flown a Primary and a Komar at Bezmiechowa. Eminent designers such as Grzeszczyk, Czerwinski and Kocjan, visiting the club, influenced him to study engineering, hoping to become an aircraft designer. When war came, he and Ewa were deported to Siberia but came to the UK for war service once Stalin changed sides. After the war George joined English Electric as a mathematician, and travelled widely, but his interest in gliding lay dormant until 1995. Last summer's discovery that he had lung cancer didn't stop him visiting Poland and Zanzibar, but (with no family in England) he died alone at home in February. The strength of character that had brought him through all difficulties shone through everything he did.
Alan Self

Tony Mattin – Lasham

TONY, who died suddenly on December 30, 2003, had a life-long love of aviation. He did his PPL in 1968 and flew all over the UK, becoming the best navigator I have ever known. He started gliding in 1971 at Compton Abbas and joined Lasham in 1977, where he became a tug pilot and an instructor. He achieved two Diamonds, but try as he might the height eluded him. His greatest achievement, however, was as chairman (1984-1991). His leadership helped to make Lasham the world's most successful gliding club and his legacy remains today. He nurtured the vision, held by several senior members of the Society with great passion, to purchase the airfield from the Ministry of Defence. To this end, he persuaded the membership at an AGM to put much of the Society's surpluses into a Special Fund for this purpose. It started in 1984, at £10,000 pa. Thanks to this, we now own our airfield. Other major achievements included buying an extra new glider nearly every year and overseeing the completion of a grass levelling programme; while the number of launches – 42,000 – in his last two years has never again been approached. Despite a quadruple heart by-pass, he continued gliding until 1999 and never ever lost his enthusiasm for flying and for Lasham, visiting the club four or five times a week right up to his death. Tony was a man of foresight, intelligence and honesty; a prolific reader, a planner and a thinker, and a valued and interesting friend. He was also a family man, an affectionate man, who cared about the people around him. To Pat, his wife of 52 years, their son Graham, and daughter Elaine, and to all Tony's family, we give our heartfelt sympathy. Our dear friend, Tony, we say goodbye – and fly high!
Phil Phillips

Tony Pentelow – Bristol & Glos

IT is with deep regret that we report the sudden death of Tony Pentelow (1932-2004). Tony joined the Bristol GC in 1955 after Cambridge, where he achieved a first class honours degree in aeronautical engineering. It soon became apparent that he had a natural flair for soaring flight. He, Doug Jones and Tony Saint built a Skylark 3f from a Slingsby kit in 1959-1961, in which he gained his Gold; it led to his becoming a senior BGA inspector. In 1959, he left the Bristol Aeroplane Company to become course instructor at Nympsfield for three years, making a significant contribution to our development both then and during a second period as CFI/manager during the 1970s. In 1967 he applied his skills to the building of the South Hangar at Nympsfield – a revolutionary design, unique for its time, that allowed accommodation for some dozen gliders, each accessible without moving any other. (It is interesting that other clubs in the UK and abroad are following this concept.) With the advent of composite sailplane design, he and Doug Jones built a Kestrel 19 from a kit, having persuaded Slingsby's they were capable of doing so. In it, Tony was one of the club's first pilots to obtain all three Diamonds. His great passion for wave soaring meant he enjoyed many visits to Portmoak, latterly with the Nimbus that he and Doug rebuilt from wreckage. Tony was quite shy and reserved, carrying out many tasks in the background. However, he was always ready to help anyone with his expert knowledge and practical skill, having that rare combination: academic brilliance and practical ability. He will be sorely missed.
Doug Jones & Ken Brown

Derek Sephton – Southdown

DEREK (1932-2004) was an exuberant, cheerful and thoroughly nice man, who used his professional and practical skills unsparingly for the benefit of the club. After National Service in the RAF at Odiham and Hornchurch, he developed a passion for aviation and on his return to civilian life gained a commercial licence. He flew Aztecs and Chieftains for Ministry of Defence contractors. Part of his work involved the calibration of ILS systems; when he retired, he became a tug pilot at Southdown. This did not prevent him from flying gliders whenever possible and his chief joy was to fly dual cross-country. He insisted that some experiences were much better shared, and clearly for him, going cross-country was one of them. His management and computer skills made him the obvious choice for club secretary. He took on this responsibility in 1998 until his tragic and untimely death on Sunday, February 29, 2004. He will be sorely missed as a member of the management team, as a colleague and as a friend. His wife Ann and daughter Jayne survive him, and the whole of the Southdown GC extend our deepest sympathies.
Peter J Holloway

Jadge Singh – Bowland Forest

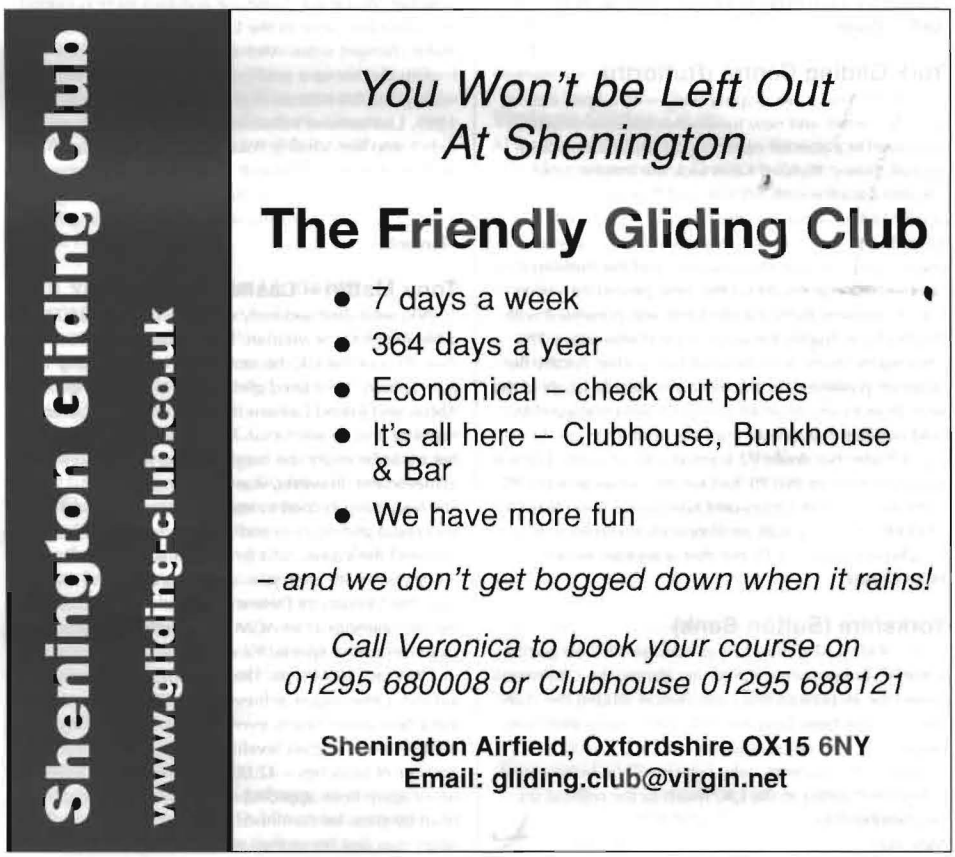
JADGE (1950-2004) joined our club in 2000, having previously been a solo pilot, and it was not long before he resoloed. He was always a keen and enthusiastic club member with a penchant for driving tractors. We often had to prise him away from the cable tractor in order to take his turn in a glider. He was unexpectedly taken ill last summer and died in January. Our deepest sympathies go his family.
Eileen Littler

BGA Badges

	No	Pilot	Club (place of flight)	Date
DIAMOND	670	Anthony Baker	Lasham (Tocumwal)	18/1/04
	671	Colin Hunt	Lasham (Omarama)	6/2/04
distance	1-982	Michael Skinner	VWHGC (Tocumwal)	8/12/03
	1-983	Anthony Baker	Lasham (Tocumwal)	18/1/04
goal	2-3011	Michael Skinner	VWHGC (Tocumwal)	8/12/03
	2-3012	Kenneth Singer	DLGC (Benalla)	5/2/04
height	3-1624	Nicholas Smith	Cranwell (Minden)	7/1/04
	3-1625	Colin Hunt	Lasham (Omarama)	6/2/04
	3-1626	Roy Mitchison	Four Counties (Omarama)	7/1/04
GOLD	2323	Colin Hunt	Lasham (Omarama)	6/2/04
distance	Michael Skinner		VWHGC (Tocumwal)	8/12/03
	Kenneth Singer		DLGC (Benalla)	5/2/04
height	Colin Hunt		Lasham (Omarama)	6/2/04
SILVER	11364	Keith Nash	Heron	10/7/03
	11365	Philip Skinner	Surrey Hills	20/8/03
	11366	Chandra Fernando	Cotswold	28/6/03
	11367	Matthew Robain	London	8/2/04
	11368	Clive Brain	Mendip	13/3/04
100km	Pt1	Thomas Seddon	Midland	20/8/03
	Pts1&2	Stewart Renfrew	Bannerdown	27/7/03
	Pt1	Patrick Musto	The Soaring Centre	16/8/03
AERO	Robin Willgoss		Standard Known	13/4/04
	David Paffett		Standard Known	25/4/04
	Keith Grant		Standard Known	8/4/04
	Michael Cooper		Standard Known	20/4/04









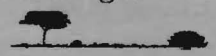
The Country: South Africa
Same time zone as central Europe
Convenient overnight flights
Unique add on holidays

Our Sites:
Bloemfontein and
Magaliesburg
Friendly Club Atmosphere
Good airfield facilities
Club house with refreshments and swimming pool
Wide choice of hotels and guesthouses
World Class shops and medical facilities

The Gliding
Comprehensive fleet of well equipped gliders
Daily Met Briefings
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Accident/incident summaries by Dave Wright

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	BGA No	Damage	DATE Time	Place	PILOT(S) Age	Injury	P1 Hours
Late 2003 Report:								
146	Discus BT	3978	Minor	31-Aug-03 1530	Wyton	73	None	1040

On a cross-country flight the pilot had to use the turbo to reach home. The turbo started but would not produce any power as a fuel line had been kinked during rigging, so a field was chosen. The pilot chose to leave the wheel up, initially to ensure he over flew power cables and then, as the stubble looked very long, left it up and damaged the glider.

Late 2003 Report								
147	Dart 17R	1245	Write Off	16-Sep-03	Lyveden	–		–

Glider and its trailer were found completely burnt out in the trailer park. The fire was most probably caused by an electrical fault in the glider, which had a battery installed.

2004 Reports								
010	PA18 Super Cub Tug	G-BBOL	Minor	14-Dec-03 –	Aston Down	54	None	300

The tug pilot had just landed and had started to turn off the grass landing strip on to the runway As power was applied to move the aircraft off the soft ground, the tail lifted despite the pilot keeping the stick back. The propeller dug into the ground and the aircraft came to a halt at an angle of 45° nose down.

012	ASW 20CL	3516	Substantial	29-Nov-03 1420	Long Mynd	55	None	2306

After doing his pre-flight checks in the lee of the hangar the pilot then set full negative flap to assist the tow out to the bungy launchpoint. He forgot to reset neutral flap before the launch and the glider failed to lift off, struck a fence and ground-looped down the hill. The pilot was uninjured but the rear fuselage was broken.

013	T-61A	G-AYZW	Minor	18-Nov-03	Lleweni Parc	40	None	69
	Falke Motorglider			1130	57		None	–

While taxing downwind, at only about 5kts in the blustery conditions, the tail was lifted by a gust and the propeller hit the ground, stopping the engine. The tail remained up in the air until help arrived and it was pulled down.

014	Pilatus B4	1849	Minor	04-Jan-04 1338	North Hill	52	None	20

After a normal approach and landing the glider's undercarriage collapsed despite the lever being in the down and locked position. It appears that this glider had been subject to a modification to the u/c about 10 years ago and this may have been a factor in the failure.

015	K-13	–	Minor	–Jan-04	Incident Rpt	–	None	–
		–	Minor	–				

The cable retrieve vehicle pulled the cable out to one side of the waiting two-seater. The ground crew pulled off the shock rope but not the cable. The driver failed to notice this and drove off around the glider. The cable swept people off their feet then caught the glider, dragging it 100 yards and nearly decapitating the crew.

016	DG-101	–	Minor	–Jan-04 1210	Incident Rpt	–	None	–

The glider was being moved from the trailer park using a "one-man tow-out gear" attached to a car. The driver attempted to manoeuvre the outfit through a gap between a car and a tug, without a wingtip walker to check clearance. The wingtip hit the car, which broke the tow-out gear and the glider swung into the towing vehicle.

017	K-6CR	1970	None	24-Jan-04 1530	Nr Limavady	52	None	118

While ridge soaring the pilot had to make a hurried field landing to avoid a strong squall shower that was blocking his route back to the airfield. From a straight-in approach he cleared trees only to run into unseen power cables further into the field. These were broken as they caught on the tailskid and brought the glider down to a heavy landing.

018	Junior, K-7 and K-13	–		–Feb-04 –	Incident Rpt	–	None	–

After a DI check in the hangar the tractor was started from outside the cab. Unfortunately the tractor had been left in gear and, as it started it lurched forward into the gliders parked in the hangar. A Junior took the full impact and was pushed into a K-13 and K-7 causing considerable damage but no injuries.

019	PA25 Pawnee Tug	G-ASKV	Write off	29-Feb-04 1500	Parham	71	Fatal	3424

FATAL TUG ACCIDENT: Shortly after take off, at approximately 300ft AGL on the aerotow. The aircraft rolled right from a normal left climb-out and dived into the ground (apparently under power). The aircraft caught fire and the pilot was killed. Subject to AAIB Investigation.

020	K-21	4233	Minor	18-Feb-04 1255	Rattlesden	65 64	None None	738 42

The instructor gave P2 a simulated low cable break at about 40ft during the transition into a full climb. In the recovery P2 lowered the nose too far and P1 failed to take over in time to prevent the glider flying into the ground.

021	Discus B	4685	Minor	18-Feb-04 1443	Keevil	35	None	198

The launch started normally but hesitated, possibly as the winch engine hit its rev-limiter, and the pilot aborted the launch. The glider overtook the cable and, despite attempting to steer it away, it ran over the parachute, which became entangled in the wheel. The wheel stopped and the undercarriage collapsed as the glider yawed sideways.

Do you know of any issues of *The Sailplane and Glider* that are looking for a good home?

I AM trying to locate these remaining issues of *The Sailplane and Glider*, *S&G*'s predecessor, to complete two sets complete back to its launch in 1930 (a set to accompany the post of S&G editor, and my own set). If you know of copies for donation, sale or swap, please contact *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or call me on 01453 889580. **Many thanks to everyone who has already helped.**

Vol. 1 (1930-31): issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42.
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Vol. 5 (1934): issues 2 (Feb); 3 (Mar); 4 (Apr); 7(Jul); 9 (Sept); 10 (Oct).
Vol. 12 (1944): issues 1 (Feb); 7 (Aug); 11 (Dec).

Helen Evans

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Please remember that, if you are emailing text, your advert may not appear unless we have received payment by the deadline

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British Gliding Association

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Please complete the form below and return it to the BGA with your payment. Please note that only BGA members and their families may participate and that the BGA is registered under the Lotteries And Amusements Act 1976 with Leicester City Council.

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Please note that the deadline for claims is 31st October 2005.

For a Share Redemption form please contact the Secretary, Lasham Gliding Society, Lasham Airfield, Lasham, Hampshire, GU34 5SS. Tel: 01256 384900

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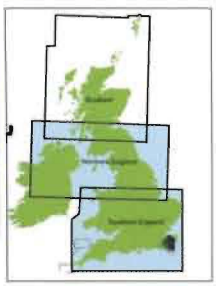
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