Sailplane & Gliding



Soaring in the Andes

Pushing your personal boundaries

plus Freedom's wings Why I glide Sharing the skies

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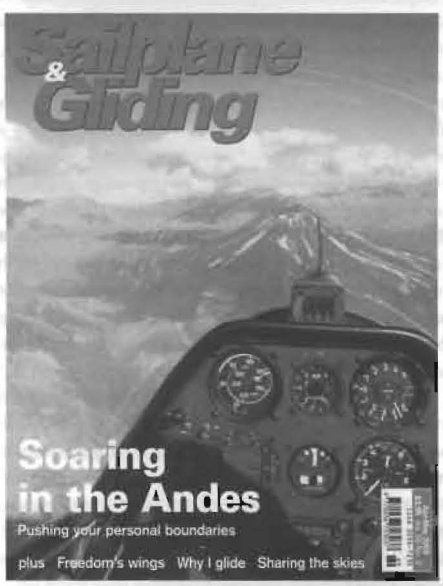
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The unique soaring environment of the high Andes gave five RAFGSA pilots – including one with just 35hrs solo – the chance earlier this year to explore their personal limits. Nick Smith's photo shows him heading for Maipo volcano. See page 36 for the story

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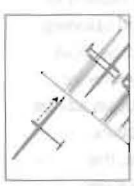
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FAI

Member of the
Royal Aero Club
and the
Fédération Aéronautique Internationale

Dates for your diary

Fly! The London Airshow

The BGA is exhibiting at the London Air Show, at Earl's Court from Friday, April 8 to Sunday, April 10, and will be joined on the stand by five clubs – Black Mountains, Cambridge, East Sussex, Shenington, and The Soaring Centre – who will be promoting themselves, their courses, trial lessons and the benefits of membership. The show promises to have something for all aviation enthusiasts including the latest simulators (including the BA 747 simulator) and everything from the latest fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to clothing and accessories. Visitors will also be able to enjoy a mix of information, education and fun in the seminar theatre, where a variety of topics – ranging from the history of flight and its heroes to more serious aspects of aviation such as the role of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) – will be under discussion. Tickets for the Saturday and Sunday cost £14 (£11 in advance) with reductions for children and families. For more information, see *www.londonairshow.co.uk* **Keith Auchterlonie**

UK and international competitions

Dan Smith Trophy (aero)	Dunstable	2/4-3/4
Aerobatic Nationals	Saltby	16/6-19/6
Overseas Championships	Ocaña, Spain	23/5-3/6
"Turbo" Regionals	Bidford	18/6-26/6
Regionals	Booker	25/6-3/7
Europeans (15m/Open)	Rayskala, Finland	4/7-16/7
18-Metre Nationals	Dunstable	9/7-17/7
Regionals	Bicester (Windrushers)	9/7-17/7
Competition Enterprise	The Long Mynd	9/7-16/7
Europeans (Std/Club/18m)	Nitra, Slovakia	10/7-23/7
Pre-Worlds (Club Class)	Vinon, France	20/7- 29/7
15-Metre Nationals	Honington	23/7-31/7
Inter-Services Regionals	Honington	23/7-31/7
Northern Regionals	Sutton Bank	23/7-31/7
Regionals	Lasham	23/7-31/7
Women's Worlds	Klix, Germany	30/7-13/8
4th Junior Worlds	Husbands Bosworth	31/7-20/8
Club Class Nationals	Lasham	6/8-14/8
Open Class Nationals	Lasham	6/8-14/8
Regionals	Tibenham	6/8-14/8
Standard Class Nationals	Nympsfield	20/8-28/8
Regionals	Dunstable	20/8-28/8
Regionals	Gransden	20/8-28/8
Junior Nationals	Tibenham	21/8-29/8
Two-Seater Comp	Pocklington	21/8-28/8
Mountain Soaring Comp	Deeside	4/9-10/9
1st World Sailplane Grand Prix	Saint Auban	2/9-11/9
Saltby Open (Aerobatic)	Saltby	10/9-11/9

Other events

AERO 2005 trade fair	Friedrichshafen	21/4-24/4
Vintage Rally	Haddenham	30/4- 2/5
K-Series Weekend	Tibenham	30/4- 2/5
UK National Rally	Kent GC, Challock	21/5-28/5
National Gliding Week	**At your club?**	**25/6-3/7**
75th anniversary event	London GC, Dunstable	25/6
Camphill Rally	Derby & Lancs GC	25/6-3/7
Flying For Fun (PFA rally)	Kemble	1/7-3/7
Royal Int. Air Tattoo	Fairford, Glos	16/7-17/7
VGC International Rendezvous	Oerlinghausen	16/7-26/7
Guild of Aviation Artists	The Mall, London	19/7-24/7
33rd International VGC Rally	Eggersdorf	27/7-6/8
Internat. Vintage Sailplane Meet	Elmira, USA	20/8-27/8
Slingsby Week & Rally	Yorkshire, Sutton Bank	27/8-4/9

More listed at: *www.vintagegliderclub.org/rallydiary2005.htm*

Max Bacon: a tribute from the BGA

THE BGA very much regrets having to report the death of Air Commodore Gray McAlpine Bacon – better known to his many friends in British gliding as Max.

Max's interests encompassed a wide range of airborne activity, from military and commercial aviation to the world of recreational flying. After early schooling in New Zealand, he joined the Royal Air Force as a Flight Cadet at the RAF College, Cranwell. A graduate of the Fighter Combat Leaders Course, he completed a full career, flying fighter, ground attack, advanced trainer and BAe 125 corporate aircraft in the UK and abroad. This distinguished career included commanding a fighter/ground attack squadron, an advanced flying training school, a major RAF base and, at the rank of Air Commodore, the UK Military Air Traffic Organisation.

Max started gliding at Cranwell, where he learnt the hard way that winches can be dangerous, by badly damaging his left hand and arm in an accident. This nearly put paid to his RAF flying, but his determination won through. He maintained his gliding with the RAFGSA at various sites, and was an aggressive, tough competition pilot. While flying his own glider in a competition at Husbands Bosworth he had a collision in cloud. Fortunately, both aircraft landed safely – and he later advertised his glider for sale with the caveat "shock tested". Among many club and administrative posts, he was chairman of the RAFGSA Centre at Bicester. On retirement from the RAF in 1985, Max joined Marshall Aerospace as General Manager Sales and continued gliding with Cambridge GC.

It is for his contribution to gliding and, indeed, other recreational aviation in the UK that we in the BGA will remember him. For many years, Max was a practical flying instructor in light aircraft as well as gliders; he was one of the first coaches to be approved by the CAA under the auspices of the Popular Flying Association's Pilot Coaching Scheme. He became president of the PFA Strut at Cambridge Airport, enjoying every minute of it and valued for his wise counsel and expert instruction.

In civilian gliding, not only did Max serve at club level, as a BGA instructor and as chairman of Cambridge GC, but



he also brought his considerable leadership qualities to bear in the national arena, as Chairman of the BGA Development Committee, dealing with issues of site security, management systems and statutory requirements in planning and site operations. Max was actively involved in the promotion of gliding and had a major role in the development of the BGA Media Pack and the publication of the Association's Site Operations Manual.

One recent, highly significant achievement was when, over a period of some two and a half years, he played a leading role in the team negotiating with the Civil Aviation Authority for the acceptance and establishment of the National Private Pilot's Licence (NPPL). It was largely due to his experience and negotiating skills that the NPPL was introduced on such favourable terms for the benefit of recreational aviation. His invaluable contribution was recognised by the award in 2003 of the Royal Aero Club's Certificate of Merit.

BGA Chairman David Roberts adds: "Max was a true friend to many glider pilots and respected widely for his enthusiasm, energies, professionalism and leadership. As Chairman of the BGA Development Committee he played a major role in assisting gliding clubs in a wide range of issues, in particular site security and development, for which those clubs will be forever grateful. This vital work, as a dedicated volunteer, was often unseen and never trumpeted, but will be a lasting testament to Max's contribution to gliding in the UK. Above all, Max was a wonderful person to know; I greatly enjoyed his company whenever we met. I visited him when he was in hospital in Cambridge in April 2004, and, despite his condition, for over three hours he sought information from me on all that was going on, both on the UK scene and in Europe. With the latest developments in Europe on recreational pilot licensing proposals, I hope that Max's efforts in bringing about the UK NPPL will find translation into future European legislation, for the benefit of thousands of pilots."

Max was the very opposite of the caricature of the rigid and authoritarian senior military officer. His heart was in aviation and he would go a long way to support anyone, irrespective of rank or status, who shared his love of flight. This enthusiasm made him a valued friend and mentor to many people within the gliding community and beyond. Our thoughts are with Max's wife, Jean, as well as with his family and their wide circle of friends.

A memorial service will be held at 2pm on April 2 at the parish church in Girton, Cambridge. For his club's obituary of Max, see page 61. S&G thanks John Brownlow, Roger Coote, David Roberts, Peter Saundby and Terry Slater for their help with this tribute.

Latest AAIB report

THE Air Accident Investigation Branch report on the fatal accident involving an instructor and pupil in Puchacz HCD near Husbands Bosworth in January 2004 is now available at *www.aaib.dft.gov.uk/sites/aaib/publications/bulletins/january_2005.cfm* This AAIB investigation considered a number of likely explanations but found no conclusive evidence to determine the accident's cause. Because, however, it could not rule out pilot incapacitation or a control restriction/malfunction, it made recommendations to the BGA and CAA relating to: stalling and spinning training; medical advice to pilots; NPPL and BGA medical standards; and an inspection regime for the Puchacz airbrake system. Drawing upon advice from BGA experts in the areas of instruction, medical standards and technical matters, the BGA's Executive Committee considered these recommendations at its February meeting and as a result has actioned a number of measures, including ensuring a technical inspection regime is in place and offering further advice to clubs, CFIs and instructors on stalling and spinning training.

New insurance limits – are you covered?

New European regulations which require operators of all aircraft operating in the EU to have minimum levels of insurance cover in respect of passenger and third party liability will come into force on April 30, 2005. In the UK the requirements will be enforced by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

To reflect this requirement, BGA Operational Regulation 1.8 was amended at the Association's March 2005 AGM to read: "Aircraft and gliders are required to comply with both EC Regulations and BGA Operating Regulations. EC Regulation 785 requires aircraft and gliders to be covered by third party insurance, full details of which are in the regulation. All gliders shall be covered by insurance for at least the minimum amounts that shall be decided from time to time by the BGA Executive Committee. These insurances shall be extended to cover the legal liability of the pilot while flying or otherwise operating the aircraft and the legal liability of the individual members of the insured club/syndicate to each other. At the time of publication, the minimum specified third party insurance including EC mandatory third party insurance requirement is: Single seat £1M third party; Single Seat 500kg MTOM and above £1.3M third party; two seat combined policy of £2M third party and second seat with minimum 'passenger' seat allocation of 100,000 SDR (equivalent to approx £85,000)".

Because these amounts are set by law in SDRs ("Special Drawing Rights"), an international unit of account based on a basket of currencies, make sure you have sufficient leeway in your cover to allow for exchange rate fluctuations.

The Department for Transport is now consulting on how to enforce the law. The CAA press release on its proposals (a one-off check on registration followed by random checks) is at *www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/regulatory.htm*. The consultation is at *www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_control/documents/contentservertemplate/dft_index.hcst?n=12473&l=2*

IGC at Lausanne

FORMER *S&G* editor Gillian Bryce-Smith was awarded the Pirat Gehriger Diploma at the International Gliding Commission (IGC) meeting in Lausanne in March 2005.

The Diploma, created by the FAI in memory of the first President of the Gliding Commission (CIVV), was awarded for Gillian's eminent services to international gliding, spanning more than 30 years of interesting, educative and expert journalism. The citation (available at *www.fai.org/gliding/meetings/* with the IGC meeting agenda) praises her professionalism, saying that in her hands *S&G* became an international benchmark for gliding association journals. IGC congratulates Gillian on her award *(and so does the current* S&G team*! – Ed).*

For 2007, the 5th FAI Junior Worlds was awarded to the soaring centre at Rieti, Italy. The 4th FAI Women's World Gliding Championships will be at Bailleau airfield, 60km south-west of Paris. The 2008 Worlds in the Open, 18-Metre and 15-Metre Classes will be hosted by the Berlin GC at Luesse, Germany. The 2008 Worlds in the Standard, Club and World Classes will be at Rieti. Dates for the 2008 competitions will be announced after discussions with the organisers to ensure that there is no overlap of the two events. In 2007 there will be two European Championships: the Standard, Club and World Classes at Pociunai, Lithuania, and the Open, 18-Metre and 15-Metre Classes at Issoudun, France. Dates will be announced after consultation with the host clubs to ensure there is no overlap between them.

The Commission has decided to reintroduce an FAI Two-seater Class for two-seat gliders with a span less than 20 metres.

The maximum mass for gliders competing in the Open Class will be fixed at 850kg. This weight limit should be introduced in 2007 and remain unchanged until at least 2017.

It was decided in principle that the duration for international contests should be reduced from three weeks to two weeks and that there should always be a reasonable period between IGC contests.

Bob Henderson was re-elected as IGC president. The IGC vice presidents, who constitute the IGC executive bureau elected at this meeting, are: Eric Mozer; Roland Stuck; Brian Spreckley; Arild Solbakken and Vladimir Foltin.

Brian Spreckley

Junior Worlds 2005: watch this space...

YES, NOW THAT we are well into 2005, we can almost count the days until the opening ceremony – as I write it is 158, fewer by the time you read this! This means that the organising team are really getting into gear. Chaired by the Contest Director, Ron Bridges, the team meets every month and most of the site decisions and local procedures are now in place. With 81 provisional entries, we are on course to host the largest Junior Worlds field, including a team from Australia for the first time. The final entries are to be confirmed by March 31, so keep watching the website for updates *www.worldgliding2005.com*. On Friday, August 5, a civic reception hosted by Harborough District Council will welcome the teams after they have paraded through the town with national flags, and suitable entertainment will follow! The official opening ceremony will take place on the airfield shortly before the first briefing. Our thanks go to the sponsors who have come forward to support this venture – especially Greenshires, printers of *S&G*, who are generously printing the championship brochure free of charge. Efforts are still being made to attract new sponsors to the event, as we really want to stage the best World Championships ever – whatever the weather! – and we need to ensure we have the cash to do so. We shall be producing T-shirts and other branded items, which we hope will go on sale well before the event, so you will be able to show your support by advertising it! Keep watching for news in *S&G*, the BGA Newsletter and on the website. Current sponsors are: UKSport, ASTRAC, Greenshires, NorfolkLine, Joint Aviation, AFE/RD Aviation, RAC/HarperCollins, Webz and *www.launch-point.co.uk*

Marilyn Hood

KEITH Mansell, President of Midland GC, was awarded the BGA Gold Medal at the Association's AGM (see p18). He has retired as BGA Treasurer but remains a BGA Executive member and the Company Secretary. John Birch (Cambridge GC) has been appointed as the new BGA Treasurer.

THE BGA is working with the Popular Flying Association on a joint proposal to obtain Design Organisation Approval to enable it to continue to approve certain modifications. This is due to be put to the Civil Aviation Authority by the end of March 2005. The intention is to source the technical expertise for gliders from within the BGA but to work jointly to avoid duplication on administrative and management costs.

A NEW section has been created on the BGA website intended to serve as a one-stop shop for links to all items relating to regulation and legislation affecting gliding (*www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/regulatory.htm*)

THE first BGA Regional Technical Officers are: Doug Jones (South West); Ian Pattingale (South East); Roger Hurley (Wales & East Midlands); David Mason (West Midlands & East Anglia); Reg Wooler (North England); Joe Fisher (Scotland). Photos next issue!

THE CAA has reissued the exemption (and updated list of sites) that allows us to operate from unlicensed airfields teaching in private category SLMG aircraft (*www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/ORS4_541.pdf*)

JOHN Roake has compiled the IGC's annual report on world gliding membership, showing a continuing decline in numbers, which he attributes to costs and gross time wastage. *www.fai.org/gliding/membership*

TAPIO Savolainen, former IGC Vice President and President of the Finnish Aeronautical Association, died in January after a long fight against illness. He was not only an important figure in the airsports world but a real enthusiast for the pleasure of flight.

THE increase in Class D controlled airspace in the vicinity of Nottingham East Midlands Airport comes into effect on May 12, 2005 and will be shown on the new aviation maps (1:500,000 Southern England/Wales Edition 31 published April 14, 2005 and 1:500,000 Northern England and Northern Ireland, Edition 28 published May 12, 2005.

THE Royal Aero Club Trust, as part of its *Flying for Youth* programme, has launched its 2005 Bursary Scheme for young people who wish to upgrade their existing qualification in a wide range of air sports and aviation-related activities. Nominations should be routed via the BGA. Closing date is May 31: see *www.royalaeroclubtrust.org/* for details.

THE Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN) has some attractive Scholarship Awards (including one for an ATPL) with *different* closing dates in April and July 2005. See *www.gapan.org* for details.

THE winner of the BGA 1000 Club Lottery for January 2005 was R Mackie (£35.75), with runners-up RJ Harding and I Johnston (each £17.88). The February winner was A Mayhew (£35.50), with runners-up C Greaves and BA Kimberley (each £17.75).

Your letters

Gliding accidents

"I KNEW that accident was going to happen." I've heard that said so often recently that I have begun to question the culture that is developing in gliding.

I recently attended an informal lecture by the BGA National Coach, Simon Adlard, where he discussed gliding accidents. He informed the audience that although the number of gliding accidents, per number of participants, has remained constant over a 30-year period, the seriousness of the accident has increased.

A quick calculation reveals that gliding is becoming a higher-risk sport (the likelihood of an accident remains unchanged but the severity is increasing).

As I firmly believe that instructional standards and techniques have improved over the same period, the statistics reveal a more fundamental problem: the supervision of competency is poor.

Unfortunately, until we all improve on our basic supervisory skills then the likelihood and severity of accidents will remain a sad statistic.

I only hope that I am not one of them.

Neil Goudie, CAMBRIDGE, Cambridgeshire

Gliding safety

PETER Hearne does us a great service in encouraging an attitude of mind that presumes unsafety (*Gliding safety*, December 2004-January 2005, p8).

It is by constantly imagining that something is about to go wrong that we are best prepared to cope when it does.

It is exactly this mentality that leads to greater safety on the road, via the state of mind of the advanced motorist: that is, he ASSUMES that there is a child hidden behind the parked lorry and about to jump out, and that the car waiting at the coming junction will pull out in front of him, and so on.

In the same way we should ASSUME that a whole catalogue of incidents will occur to us today at the club: for example, we can IMAGINE that our mobile phone will distract us just when we have rigged our tailplane but not connected the elevator.

We should ASSUME that during our winch launch the cable will break, and it is a pleasant bonus if we reach the top with the wire intact.

We can PRESUME that the glider may be at an unsafe speed when we are near the ground, and accordingly increase our scan rate of the ASI to a more rapid frequency than when at safe height.

We can IMAGINE that the cloud we are flying near conceals a glider coming the other way.

Having collected a glider from servicing we might ASSUME there is a loose tool left under the seat, which we then take out to check. Such an approach will not make you many friends with the inspectors, but you may be sure that one day you will find a screwdriver there.

I fear I have laboured the point, but no doubt we can all think of a plethora of similar scenarios that can bite us. I mention this particular list since, sadly, I know of fatalities resulting from all the above.

We should keep our imaginations fresh by reading every accident report we can get our hands on!

Rod Witter, *via email*

Safety again

WHILST I wholeheartedly agree with Peter Hearne's letter in your December 2004-January 2005 edition, I was somewhat concerned at the subsequent statement by Pete Stratten!

Firstly, the whole gliding fraternity knows, from my experience, that the fatality rate in accidents is rising, so why does Mr Stratten need a "new analysis" to tell him?

Secondly, "winch launching, spinning and mid-air collisions" are not part of any "causal group" – though I will accept a question mark over mid-air collisions. The first two events for sure are simply operations during which (fatal) accidents may occur. It is important to classify such matters correctly, as part of a "cause and effect" analysis, if we are to address the correct causes and place barriers in the way of the effects.

Thirdly, the remark he makes that: "It is the responsibility of the individual to make sure we manage the [gliding] risk based on experience and knowledge" suggests that risk management is a subjective and not objective matter. There can be no excuse for poor performance on the safety front, least of all "I did not know"!

Lastly, it might be useful to know that in the construction and oil industries, where I work, more than 80 per cent of accidents involve either very inexperienced or very experienced personnel – the first category because they know the least and the second category because they act in autopilot. Is there something for us to learn here?

Dominic Hope, DINNET, Aberdeenshire

The BGA's Chief Executive, Pete Stratten, replies: Apologies to Dominic Hope if my comment was open to misinterpretation. Quite right, the new analysis doesn't tell us anything new in terms of numbers of fatalities, but what it does do is describe more accurately the root of the problems that have led to the fatalities within the three significant descriptors. Unfortunately, a lot of pilots out there in all disciplines of flying have found themselves sitting in wreckage saying: "I didn't know..." As S&G's readers will now be aware, the BGA is prioritising a new, long-term initiative that closely targets how pilots occasionally get it wrong and so enables us to develop systems-based approaches to address the reasons why. It is my sincere hope that – without wrapping our sport in cotton wool, or alternatively wielding a big regulatory stick – this very positive BGA initiative will ultimately enable club management, supervisors, instructors and pilots to "know", and therefore get it right, even more frequently than they do at the moment

SSR and Airprox avoidance

I WAS interested to read the glider/Chinook Airprox report in the February-March 2005 issue (*Gliders and helis don't mix*, p24) and to see once again the suggestion that making all aircraft carry SSR transponders would improve flight safety.

In the conversations I have had with controllers over some 30 years of gliding and power flying, they have never been unable to see me on primary radar when within their operational area. In a transit of the Brize Norton zone last year, Brize Radar was able to tell another aircraft, also a Chinook, that I was turning right before I had completed a quarter of a turn. All SSR might add would be an altitude indication – but unless in communication with the radar controller, this would be unverified and therefore viewed with caution anyway.

In the incident reported in *S&G*, despite the lack of a transponder in the glider, the Chinook was made aware of its presence when six miles away and reported "visual with the traffic in our 12 o'clock" when at three miles. There is no argument that it was the Chinook's responsibility to avoid the glider and yet it continued on a course that took it within 80m of the glider. The glider pilot continued to turn – whilst this might not have been his best course of action, I believe it should have been anticipated by the Chinook pilot, who could not assume that he had been seen. In the Brize Norton experience related above, I was fully aware of the existence the Chinook in my area. I heard it – it sounded so terrifyingly loud I thought it was about to fly through me – although I knew from ATC that it was 1,500ft below me. Perhaps because of a camouflaged colour scheme, I never saw it. The same may have been true of the unidentified glider pilot, at least until the last moment.

I have a personal experience with some relevance to the SSR argument. In 2002 I reported an Airprox with a Harrier at about 4,000ft during a competition flight. I saw it manoeuvring around me and then flying directly at me in my 5 o'clock position – I thought, at the time, deliberately in a mock attack. I was able to report my precise position thanks to my flight logger. In the investigation it transpired that the Harrier was not receiving an air traffic service (ATS) and had no form of collision warning system (CWS) fitted. The investigation concluded that he hadn't seen me – perhaps not surprising, considering he was conducting high-energy manoeuvres at 360kt whilst concentrating his attention on looking for his mates, who were low level. Thankfully, I dived out of the way instead of waiting for him to take last-second avoiding action.

If I had carried SSR, it would not have prevented this incident, because of the Harrier's lack of CWS and ATS.

Furthermore, in the radar recording (from a somewhat distant radar station) used to investigate this incident, first of all the Harrier's SSR altitude transmission disappeared and then it disappeared from radar completely for about a minute during the period of closest contact.

I conclude that radar, even with SSR, cannot be relied on to avoid Airproxes.

As an aside, I'd also question why military aircraft are allowed to fly at speeds that would be illegal for civil aircraft, in the general area of a gliding competition, and in the height band most likely to be being used by gliders.

Finally, I would like to make the point that providing positive separation between SSR-equipped aircraft in the open FIR is only going to be possible if there is a vastly increased provision of radar service operators.

As a power pilot I find that radar service is usually available when the weather is good and not too many people want it. As soon as the weather deteriorates, requests for a radar information service are often refused on the grounds of "controller workload" or are downgraded due to "weather clutter" on the radar screen. Surely, if we are going to rely on technology to keep aircraft apart, we should be using an automatic system that employs modern technology such as the GPSes we almost all carry, not SSR radar systems, which originated some 60 or more years ago?

Andrew Reid, FOREST HILL, London

Missing the Jolly Noisy Giants

HAVING glided from an airfield with a multiple helicopter operation and shared airspace at another with Chinooks passing to/from an airfield four miles down the road, some puzzling aspects arise in the Airprox report appearing as *Gliders and helis don't mix*. The report gives us "the picture," but like a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing.

For both glider and Chinook, the location near Compton had to be *en route* cross-country, in which mode powered aircraft (including helicopters) tend to fly straight lines. A glider, on the other hand, frequently stops to circle in thermals where, following a typically 200m diameter helical track at about two revs/minute, it takes five minutes to climb 1,500ft in 3kt lift, plenty of time to get regularly "painted" as localised and therefore manoeuvring by radar sweeps.

We are told the Chinook was chugging along at 120kt and, from reported ground radar observations, its crew was notified of traffic manoeuvring ahead at the same height when they were six miles/three minutes, three miles/1.5 minutes and 1.5 miles/45 seconds before the incident; the Chinook pilot then reported seeing the glider "heading away" one mile/30 seconds off. If, instead, the glider had in fact been thermalling (as the radar "manoeuvring" reports seem to indicate), and simply continued doing so, then, from when the Chinook crew first saw it, the glider track would appear remarkably as reported and shown in the article's accompanying diagram.

Airprox Board members mentioned that the noise of a Chinook's engines should have been readily heard by the glider pilot. Indeed, a Chinook sounds very loud even when passing quite a way off but, whether far or near, it is very difficult for a pilot to sense the direction of an external sound source when sitting inside a glider whose reverberating acoustics derive from a thin skin over a frame, very much like a bass drum. No doubt the glider pilot was concerned about how close the noise source might be as he scanned visually for its source. However, the Chinook crew report, that they first saw him "heading away", indicates definitively that the Chinook was in his blind-region at that time, 30 seconds before the incident, so the helicopter would have come into the glider pilot's view only as he came further round the turn he was doing.

Questions not answered in the report include:

1. What were the forecast and actual cloud/inversion levels and was the resulting likelihood and height-band of glider traffic considered when the Chinook crew pre-flight selected/briefed their 3,000ft cruise height?
2. What was the angle of heading-change made by the Chinook after spotting the glider?
3. Was a member of the Chinook crew assigned to continuously monitor the glider's relative bearing and distance from them once it had been spotted?

If, as seems possible, the Chinook pilot made his course change assuming the glider would thereafter fly a straight line ("heading away") but the glider was in fact thermalling, this would seem to explain how and why the unfortunate incident arose. Nevertheless, from their first sighting separation of 1nm (~ 1.8km), to get within 80m represents angular avoidance less than 1/20th radian or ~3 arc degrees; it seems strange that the Chinook crew, in visual contact with the glider for 30 seconds/1 mile and travelling at the glider's VNE, did not achieve greater separation.

We all need to share available airspace safely so I hope we might learn answers to the questions not answered, enabling us to get to the roots of this incident.

So long as pilots of gliders, helicopters and indeed all other air users have some understanding of each others' likely limitations and watch what the other guy might be doing, experience shows that such incidents are, thankfully, very rare.

Tony Gee, MARLOW, Bucks





What's in your wing? See Oh, nuts! *below, for the story of the discovery of a diligent rodent's larder. It varied its diet with a gourmet tasting of the air chart, too* (right)

Oh, nuts!

DURING a recent C of A on a vintage glider at Lasham, the starboard wingtip felt ridiculously heavy when carried – and it rattled slightly when shaken.

Further investigation revealed that there were 15kg of acorns stuffed extremely tightly into the inside of the wingtip. To balance things up slightly, another 10kg were found in the port wingtip!

One of my two photos *(above)* shows yours truly holding up a very heavy plastic bag containing the acorns removed from the glider and a 2004 half-million map of Southern England, belonging to a member of the syndicate, that had been left in the cockpit. As you can see, it had been well chewed by the mice. The other *(top left)* shows the acorns themselves.

This glider had been kept in a decent metal trailer that had been parked near to an oak tree. There was a bumper crop of acorns last autumn, so we believe that a family of mice had decided to make use of the glider as a convenient larder for their winter provisions, and also possibly as luxury winter quarters.

We have at least circumstantial evident that they were mice, as several were caught by mousetraps baited with chocolate and placed in the trailer.

Whatever species of rodent they were, they had gnawed their way through the wooden trailer floor next to a ventilation

➢

Your letters



The grid at Trent Valley's Wood and Glass Cup last year. One launch queue is headed by an ASW 22, and the other by a K-8! Over two days in 2005 the 13 gliders taking part flew 3,762km. This year the club has extended the event to cover two weekends and is inviting members of other clubs to join in. See Wood and Glass Comp takes off, *below, for more details*

hole covered with metal gauze, climbed up the vertically mounted wing root and entered the wing via a control-run hole. Why they should have carried the acorns the full length of the wing before stuffing them tightly inside of the wingtip is beyond me. Perhaps an animal psychologist could explain, assuming we have one within the gliding movement. So far, at least one other, more modern, glider has been found to be similarly affected.

The morals to be drawn are:

1) Inspect your trailer to make sure that it is rodent proof.

2) If possible, avoid parking it close to any plant that produces nuts or berries.

3) If there is any evidence of mice activity in the trailer, inspect the glider very carefully.

The good news is that the glider itself does not appear to have suffered any damage from the unwanted guests.

The bad news is the thought of taking off with 25kg of unwanted and asymmetrically loaded ballast in one's glider!

Derek Copeland, RICKMANSWORTH, Herts

An airshow changed my life

I COULDN'T agree more with Clive Groves' letter (*Use airshows to promote gliding*, February-March 2005, p7). I flew solo for a short time in 1985 with the Air Cadets, but it came to a halt when I left the school that gave me the opportunity to fly, for free, at RAF bases. About seven years ago I started to say to people I'd like to fly again, get my PPL, but never found the time to look into it. In July 2001 I went to an airshow at RAF Waddington and this visit changed all that.

I came across a couple of beautiful, sleek, glass gliders and some enthusiastic people handing out leaflets. I'd flown in Ventures before and had never seen anything like these things for real. One of the pilots talked to me and explained what everything was in his machine. My first lesson was about bug wipers. I thought he was barking!

However, I got home that Sunday night and typed three words he'd mentioned into an internet search engine. Those words were "British Gliding Association". I was rather surprised to find that there was a club just 20 minutes from my house. Three days later I was sitting in a glider. I was rubbish, definitely not current after a 16-year lay off.

Airshows are full of people that have an interest in aviation. That's got to be a market to pursue, surely?

And having watched Guy Westgate practise his aerobatic routines at Saltby, I think gliding clubs should make a more co-ordinated approach with aerobatics, static displays and enthusiastic reps to get the message out to a larger audience.

I've been to a good few airshows over the years and this was the only time I saw gliders. Missed opportunity, methinks.

Paul Machacek, *via email*

New backer for Faulkes Foundation

BEFORE Christmas I wrote to you to make you aware that, after five years of operation and over 8,000 young person flights, Faulkes Flying Foundation Ltd was faced with the prospect of finding a new financier for its fleet of aircraft as an alternative to closure. This was due to the originating backer – Dill Faulkes – needing to raise cash to finance his other major charitable venture, namely the Dill Faulkes Telescope.

I am happy to report that another wealthy industrialist has now come forward to take over the financial burden from Dill Faulkes, who will continue his management involvement in the charity, as chairman.

The charity now has a "green light" to operate through 2005, supported by a break-even budget, which needs to be adhered to for the charity to run for a further period of five years or more.

To achieve this budget we have looked hard at our operation, curtailing costs where they are not justified and seeking to maximise our cost recovery through a prudent operating policy.

The budget is realistic but depends upon the continuing and growing support and goodwill we receive from the numerous charities who have come to recognise the value of our work and provide generous grants to help us to function, particularly with disadvantaged and special needs youngsters.

We intend to operate through 2005 with a slightly smaller fleet of six rather than eight aircraft, thereby saving on insurance costs, although would like to source another Blanik L-13 if one can be found at a reasonable cost. We have reduced the number of operational bases to those where experience shows we can achieve the required number of flights to justify the base site investment. These will include London GC, Dunstable, Cambridge GC at Gransden Lodge, Portsmouth Naval GC at Lee-on-Solent and Windrushers GC, Bicester.

We can now continue our work developing young people through flight training in gliders and motorgliders, building self-confidence, boosting self-esteem and instilling a sense of self-discipline. In particular, we expect our work with inner London Schools to grow, fostered by the London City Livery Club – the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators; and we intend to continue to work with the inclusion programmes, special needs schools and The Prince's Trust.

We appeal to all our charitable supporters to do all they can this year to help us succeed and prosper through 2005 and beyond and we repeat our grateful thanks for all their help to date and, in particular, to the British Gliding Association, who provided us much valued support and help last year.

Mike Woollard, FFF Ltd, *via email*

Wood and glass comp takes off

A FEW years ago Trent Valley GC started running a wooden glider competition; this was later expanded to include glass-fibre gliders as well, and thus was born the "Wood and Glass Comp".

The comp was run on a *fun* basis and gradually gained in popularity. Last year saw possibly the best results in terms of weather and flying with some 3,762km flown by 13 gliders ranging from a K-8 to an ASW 22, all in the two-day event *(see photo, above)*.

This year sees the expansion of the competition with the FIRST leg being held at Saltby in the late May Bank Holiday weekend (May 28-30). The second leg, at Trent Valley's site at Kirton, is to be held on August 6-7. A certain amount of rivalry already exists between the two clubs and Rasher, the Flying Pig, regularly travels between us (collected by glider then flown back) – sometimes twice on the same day.

Last year's open cup was taken back to Saltby, but the guys/gals from Kirton seem determined to rescue the trophy. The comp is, though, open to anyone from any club: there are daily prizes and an overall winner's cup, defended the following year.

Everyone seems hell-bent on grinding last year's winner into the dust and relieving him of the trophy, and it certainly looks set to be a *fun* comp – come and join in if you can, you'll be made very welcome. Application forms on the Saltby (Buckminster GC) website: entry fee only £10 for the first leg, which includes food from the barbecue on the Sunday.

Dave Prosolek, MANSFIELD, Notts

Trailer brakes

IT IS very much agreeable to find somebody thinking about trailer maintenance and

especially brake maintenance on glider trailers. However, in the December 2004-January 2005 issue (*Glider trailer brakes*, p8) the suggested method to do so is not only ineffective but could even be dangerous.

Never adjust your overrunning brake at the brake rod or at the bowden cables. These parts are only to bring the force into the wheel brake. Any adjustment has to be done in the wheel brake itself.

From the rear of the brake drum you have access to adjust the brake shoes.

Because of the high risk of serious accidents it is highly suggested to have this done in a workshop or at least by experienced persons only.

A wrongly adjusted brake can cause overheating. This will burn the grease, destroy the bearing and finally melt the stub until total loss of your wheel.

Remember: never adjust the brake rod. It is adjusted for lifetime and every change of the length will cause malfunction and can lead to serious accidents.

Agnes Spindelberger, *via email*

BGA Chief Technical Officer Jim Hammerton replies: Due to the different designs of brake operating mechanisms, adjustment for wear may be at the wheel or operating rod. Always seek advice from the trailer manual or an expert if you are unsure where the adjustment should be made. Adjusting the incorrect part is dangerous, as the author suggests

Sites of Romantic Interest

FURTHER to Bob Holroyd's letter (*New task for scorers*, December 2004-January 2005, p6) the scoring adjustments for tasks completed at SIROs could be: *Size, Shape, Slope, Surface, Sensuality, Speed, Safety*:

Size: If P1 exceeds 242lb (max seat weight) disqualification is mandatory. If P1 or P2 is female and exceeds 242lb then the points are doubled for effort.

Shape: If one is curvy and one is not then normal points are awarded. If neither is curvy then there must be an explanation in the "how we dunnit" briefing the following day. No discrimination on points.

Slope: Anyone achieving task completion on a gradient of more than 25 per cent with feet *downhill* will have their score doubled.

Surface: Flat clear surfaces (with perhaps a little stubble) or well-trimmed bushes are acceptable.

Sensuality: This is dependant on a number of quality issues about the artistic and emotional components of the task. This can only be scored by an Official Observer (they are not allowed to coach).

Speed: Unlike the main task, marks will be deducted for outright speed, and you must go the distance. The only exception will be in cases where the task is completed while BOTH crew are still wearing parachutes, when a bonus of 100 points will be awarded for effort and ingenuity.

Safety: Full safety equipment must be worn in the event of the crew not usually "flying" together. Crews flying side-by-side types will be disqualified if they start the supplementary task while still airborne. In *all* cases both pilots *must* keep a good lookout.

Anyone claiming SIRO adjustments should normally be flying two up. Solo pilots may at the discretion of the Flight Safety Committee apply for points towards The DIY Cup.

Electronic Verification: Loggers with engine-on ports may be worn round the waist to give event analysis. Photographic evidence must have date/time stamp on the film and the camera should be sealed in accordance with FAI rules. After task completion it should be submitted unopened to Helen Evans, editor, *S&G*.

Mike Terry, *via email*

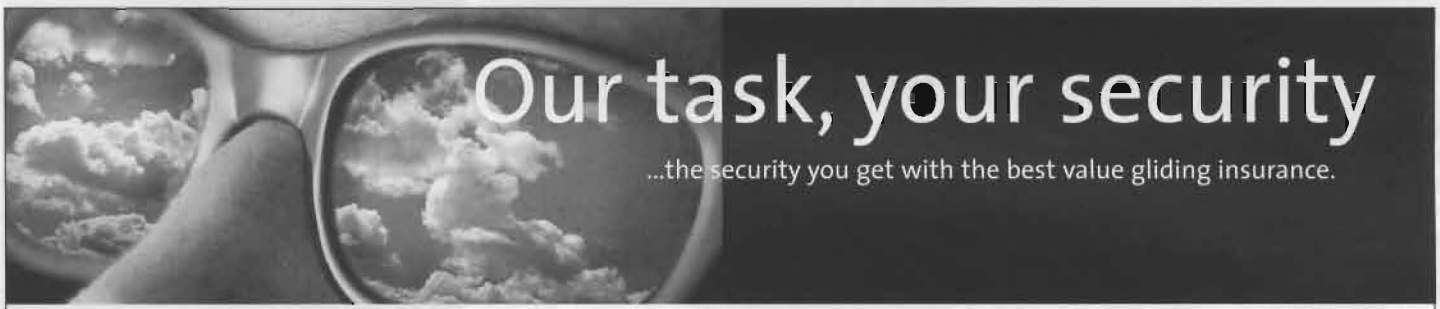
Thank you, Mike. Allow me to point out that any such evidence sent to me will be returned unopened – or it can be forwarded unopened to Mike on request! – Ed

Parachute repack due?

THE successful landing of the European space probe Huygens on Saturn's moon Titan earlier this year was in part due to Graham Fells, who packed the probe's three-stage parachutes nine years ago. The parachutes opened, despite not having had the BGA-recommended three-monthly repack. Is there anything to be learnt from this? Graham also looks after the Cambridge club's parachutes.

Paul Harvey, CAMBRIDGE, Cambs

Please send letters (marked "for publication") to the editor at editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk *or the address on p3, including your full contact details. Deadline for the next issue is* ***April 12***



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Unfortunate retrieve tale

A few weeks ago a relatively new pilot landed out at our club. As it was late in the day, he arranged a trailer retrieve, rather than towing back in the dark, he left the trailer to the next day. Nothing strange about that, you say.

The next day was a busy flying day and the car park was quite full. At our club the trailer park exit road is through the car park. On towing out, the pilot accidentally clipped a parked car with the trailer, after cutting a corner a little – a common mistake, especially if you're new to towing a long trailer.

The car was almost undamaged (fortunately) as the trailer mudguard hit the towing eye. However, the trailer was not so lucky. The steel mudguard folded back and cut its tyre.

OK, simple job – beat back the mudguard and change the wheel. Well, no! Here is the catalogue of disasters that followed:

1. Jack up the trailer – the car jack would not fit. Most jacks on modern cars are specially designed to slot into a special receptacle on the sill so are not suitable for general use. Eventually, the scissors jack in the trailer was freed up, and worked after a fashion.
2. Get the spare wheel – this was mounted in a carrier under the trailer. The release catch was completely rusted up and removing the spare wheel entailed cutting the catch off with a hacksaw.
3. Remove the punctured wheel – the wheel nuts were so tight and rusted that the normal wheel wrench was completely useless. To remove the nuts he had to resort to a half-inch drive socket set.
4. After more than two hours, the spare wheel was finally fitted after scrounging the tools from the maintenance section. Bear in mind that the trailer was almost blocking the car park for all this time.

What if this had happened in a narrow road or, even worse, on a dual carriageway or motorway? The pilot would not have had access to the tools needed; I doubt if the AA or RAC would have been particularly interested, but I bet the boys in blue from the local traffic division would have! So some points to think about before you go cross-country or, in this case, local soaring.

1. Have you maintained your trailer yet this season? You may be asking someone else to retrieve you. You can find trailer maintenance advice in the BGA AMP manual leaflet 4-10.
2. Would you want to put yourself or someone else in a position of danger for several hours whilst this kind of problem is fixed?
3. Could your trailer withstand a close inspection by the police?

I have not mentioned the pilot's name or the home club, as he has suffered enough embarrassment already.

Jim Hammerton, BGA Chief Technical Officer





Gliding at the RAeC

GLIDER PILOTS – including the BGA's Roger Coote – earned top billing at this year's Royal Aero Club annual awards ceremony in February, carrying off three honours.

Pick of the bunch was, of course, Russell Cheetham's Gold Medal, awarded for the first FAI 1,000km Diploma flown in the UK, with a 1,020km flight that took more than 11 hours, and also secured the UK free distance record. In August 2004, he became European Open Class Gliding Champion, winning Gold despite determined opposition from a strong German team that included the 2003 world champion.

Two RAeC Certificates of merit were also awarded. The first went to *Walking on Air*, founded in 1998 to provide access to gliding for people with disabilities, not just as an experience but on the same footing as able-bodied people. The citation praised its unswerving and successful devotion to its aims, which continue to serve the cause of sporting aviation while benefiting the wider community. (The charity's work will feature in the next issue of *S&G*.)

BGA Development Officer Roger Coote also earned a Certificate of Merit for his outstanding service to the BGA, in more than a decade's employment, in helping clubs to meet exacting new administrative burdens in the sport without causing friction. In so doing, the citation pointed out, he has led the way in enabling UK airsports to demonstrate effective self-regulation in discussion with the European authorities.



BGA waypoint list breaks 900 barrier

THE 2005 update to the BGA list of Waypoints and Club Sites is now available. The BGA list has increased to more than 900 points, each with accurate OS Grid References and the equivalent lat/longs to the WGS84 Geodetic Datum that is the IGC- and ICAO-standard.

New waypoints this year are in northern England, Scotland, south-west Wales and north and north-west of Lasham.

Also, some club sites now have new local points designed for task finishes (Dunstable, Snitterfield, Weston-on-the-Green).

Please remember that the BGA list is a database with the object of including points that are clear of restricted airspace and might be useful in soaring activities. So pilots and clubs with proposals for new points should not be backward in coming forward!

The other side of the coin is that, where local airspace has changed for the worse, please notify the BGA WP List co-ordinator so that the point can be described differently or even withdrawn. For example, SKI (Skipton) has been withdrawn because of expansion of the Leeds-Bradford CTA.

The definitive BGA list including the latest updates and any Stop Press items can be accessed through a link from the BGA web-site: *www.gliding.co.uk*. The list is held at: *www.spsys.demon.co.uk/turningpoints.htm* and it can be accessed directly at this reference.

Ian Strachan


Try something a little different this year
Try a BGA Course
BGA Summer Courses
Assistant Instructor Courses
IC5 28 May - 5 June
IC6 11 - 19 June
IC7 25 June - 3 July
Soaring Courses
SC1 10 - 15 July
SC2 17 - 22 July
SC3 24 - 29 July
For more information, or to book on a course, please contact the BGA office
Tel: 0116 2531051 Fax: 0116 2515939 E-Mail: colin@gliding.co.uk Web: www.gliding.co.uk
picture courtesy of Mike Fox

Welcoming people with disabilities

Diana King examines some of the topical issues that face gliding clubs, starting with new legislation about visitors or pilots who have a disability

THE 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is now in full effect and applies to any UK organisation providing services, goods and facilities to the public. This has important implications for sport, because organisations wishing to provide a service to the public will need to make "all reasonable efforts" to make these services available to people with disabilities.

No exemption is made for the voluntary sector or whether the service is free or in return for payment.

Although the Bill does exclude private members' clubs at present, there is an intention to amend the DDA to include larger private members club within the Act. This is expected to come into force in 2005 and therefore larger clubs would be wise to start considering the steps they might take towards compliance.

According to the Act, a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which affects his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes sensory impairments and hidden impairments, such as mental illness, learning difficulties, diabetes or epilepsy.

A service provider should not provide a service to a disabled person on terms that are worse than the terms offered to other people, without justification.

Where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to make use of a service, the provider will have to remove, alter, provide a means of avoidance or find a way round that feature.

Examples would be to provide a ramp up a set of stairs or providing enlarged signs.

Clubs would be wise not to wait until they have a disabled member or visitor before making changes, particularly adaptations that can be easily done without structural changes or major investment.

Some gliding clubs may have difficulty in raising funds to make large changes to building structures or to purchase expensive equipment. However, grants are available from a number of organisations, which may be used to assist with building changes. For information, visit *www.grantsonline.org.uk.*

Local Authorities may also be able to advise and the local Volunteer Bureau may be able to secure free legal advice, or a compliance audit for the club, on the steps required to comply with the new law.

It is worth remembering that a positive attitude towards inclusion can be more effective than any structural change. Training for staff and members and the promotion of can-do attitudes will be seen as positive steps towards compliance with the law. *(See pages 26-29 for an inspiring example – Ed)*

Whilst the implications of the DDA may seem daunting and costly, the emphasis of the Bill is upon "reasonable adjustments". Clubs will be expected to show willingness to become inclusive but are not expected to achieve the impossible.

It is suggested that clubs work with their disabled participants to determine what their needs are and include them in any decision-making processes.

In addition, it is recommended that clubs set out in writing the steps they have taken towards compliance, any long term commitments towards change and any circumstances in which the club would be unable to accommodate a disabled participant.

In particular, of course, gliding clubs must consider the safety aspects of people with various disabilities flying, either solo or dual. Potential dangers, for the disabled person themselves and also for others, must be explored fully and appropriate precautions taken. Refer to the BGA's *Guidance Notes on the Medical Fitness Required for Glider Pilots* for further advice.

For more information on the act, visit *www.disability.gov.uk/dda/*

More on CASCs

The latest information shows that, of the several thousand sports clubs registered as Community Amateur Sports Clubs, six are gliding clubs. We know of at least one more in the process of obtaining CASC status and we recommend that others do look carefully at taking up this opportunity to save precious club funds instead of paying them to the local authority or the taxman.

A quick reminder of the benefits:

Mandatory 80% rate relief
If you are currently benefiting from similar or even better levels of discretionary rate relief, you may still find it worth registering, as the discretionary relief could be removed at any time. Local authorities may continue to offer discretionary relief on the remaining 20% of rates.

Corporation tax relief
Clubs who have funds in interest-bearing bank accounts pay corporation tax on the interest earned. Tax is also paid on trading activities or fund raising proceeds if the funds come from outside the club. Although for most clubs this may not be a large amount, it is money that can be saved for better uses than the taxman and a registered CASC is exempt from this form of tax (up to a maximum income of £30,000 pa)

Gift Aid
Registered CASCs can recover tax on any donations received, in the same way that charities do, provided that the donor pays the gift out of income that has already been taxed. A registered CASC can reclaim £28 in tax from the Inland Revenue for every £100 donated by individuals. It is possible to be creative with this scheme. For example, a charity I know has always offered travel expenses to its volunteers, although most never made a claim. With Gift Aid registration, they now encourage everyone to claim their expenses, and then donate the money back. The volunteer is no worse off and the charity gains 28p for every £1 of the notional claim. There is of course some administration involved in setting this up, but the income raised can be quite significant, provided of course that your volunteers don't suddenly start claiming and keeping their expenses! Gift Aid also applies of course to ordinary donations. See the Inland Revenue website at *www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/casc/* for more details or contact the Inland Revenue at its Bootle office.

No tax returns!
CASCs whose income does not exceed the £30,000 threshold on trading or £20,000 on property income will no longer be required to complete an annual corporation tax return. This should please the treasurer!

It is important to make quite sure that all your members support the move, because once a club is registered as a CASC, it is not normally possible to de-register. This may have implications for the members' rights regarding club assets if the club should close down. You will also need to check whether or not your constitution or your Articles of Association will be acceptable – see *www.ccpr.org.uk/dyncat.cfm?catid=13897* for information and advice on this point.

Licensing Act

The fees to be charged to sports clubs under the Licensing Act 2003 have now been announced. Fees are to be based on a club's rateable value and will be at least £100 for a first application, with £70 per annum for renewals. The significant lobbying done by all sectors of sport (including the BGA) appears to have had little or no effect and these fees are substantially higher than most clubs will have paid in the past. Judging by a recent letter from the Sports Minister to sports governing bodies, it seems unlikely now that there will be any relaxation of the fees for the benefit of sport and clubs need to make provision in their budgets for these higher fees.

Diana King
February 2005

Seminar on a Saturday?

WHY ON EARTH would anyone want to go to a marketing seminar if they're not being paid to be there? At the gliding club? On a Saturday? You must be joking! But they weren't. Just as well it was February, and even better that it rained.

The BGA's communications guru Keith Auchterlonie and *Sailplane & Gliding* editor Helen Evans had headed far into the South West and arrived at The Park, home of the Bath, Wilts & North Dorset GC, to pass on golden nuggets to representatives from three local clubs on Saturday, February 5. Armed with PowerPoint presentations, overhead projectors, whiteboards and handouts we all tried hard to remember that we were not at work for the day, and turned our minds to promoting the image of our clubs in the local press and media. And very useful it all was, too.

Southdown GC fielded father and son team Duncan and Alex Stuart plus Julian Hitchcock (who wisely changed his mind about trying to bring his somewhat spacious motorcaravan up the wet and slippery hill to The Park in winter).

Dorset GC was represented by Carol and Jon Marshall, who had been goaded into attendance by seeing an erroneous press article stating that their neighbouring club at The Park was offering free trial flights. Happily for all, this turned out to be completely false, but it certainly grabbed their attention.

The home team at The Park comprised Mark Hawkins, Phil Gascoigne and me (Mike Thorne). The outdoor photoshoot was relocated inside the hangar when rain stopped play on the airfield, and the picture *(right)* proves that we really did meet.



Above, from left: Son and father Alex and Duncan Stuart (Southdown), Helen Evans (S&G editor), wife and husband Carol and Jon Marshall (Dorset), Keith Auchterlonie (BGA Communications Officer), Phil Gascoigne, Julian Hitchcock, Mark Hawkins and Mike Thorne (The Park) at the BGA Communications & Marketing Committee seminar at The Park

Keith tackled the big issues associated with marketing our sport, our clubs and our specific "products" for promotion. He explained where the BGA fits into the picture in marketing gliding as a sport at national level and, in particular, promoting our national status on the international stage. We took a long hard look at what we're actually trying to convince people to buy when we invite them to come gliding, and whether our product lives up to the expectations we create.

We explored the range of possibilities for promoting ourselves, ranging from specific advertisements selling trial flights through to marketing the benefits of an expedition, possibly to our fine wave-flying environment. All need different approaches and it was valuable to share experiences of what had and had not worked, with Keith and with the others on the seminar.

The inevitable case study followed, as did the SWOT analysis (sound familiar?). But why not apply professionally proven techniques to something that's even more important than work? The case study became the theme of the day, revolving around a fictitious club which had received a legacy for introducing young people to gliding, something we're probably all trying to do without the benefit of a legacy. We explored the process we would use, the message we wished to get into the community (market!) and best use of the media for achieving it.

After a hearty lunch provided by Sue Cutler (who was spared the usual queue of bacon buttie addicts owing to the rain) we turned our minds to the question of how to communicate with the market. Who better than *S&G* editor Helen Evans to lead us into battle?

As a print person Helen decided to forego the joys of PowerPoint, and opted instead for whiteboard and anecdotes, all of which made for a fun and instructive afternoon at the time when most delegates start to nod in the "real world" marketing seminar.

We uncovered the secrets of what a reporter or editor wants to see in a press release or article (something I appear to have opted to ignore completely in my write up of the day) and learned how to steer the media into our chosen pond, not the murky one containing glider wreckage or pilots sporting neck braces or suspicious rashes.

Helen ran reporter mock interviews for us and made it all too easy to find the pitfalls – then showed us how to avoid them. Duncan made an impressively rapid mental switch from being the reluctant participant in a telephone interview into a highly animated and informative press officer...

We wound up the afternoon with a lively interchange on past successes and failures in club initiatives, some amusing and others more soberly instructive. We ended the day, as most gliding clubs do, in the bar.

Should Keith and Helen plan more sessions they're not to be missed. We all found it to be a day well spent. Unlike in the work environment we now have to implement our plans with a reluctant workforce which would rather have its head in the clouds (Hmmm!).

In time-honoured fashion we'll measure success in our end-of-year financials, but if we don't improve it won't be for lack of good training.

Mike Thorne
February 2005

Mike Thorne has been gliding since 1982. An assistant instructor with 1,200hrs, Gold and two Diamonds, he is a committee member at Bath, Wilts & North Dorset GC, responsible for its Press & PR portfolio

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When silence is golden

BEFORE I visited the spacious and splendid home of the Scottish Gliding Union this last January as an after-dinner speaker, I was quite sure I had never set eyes on the airfield, nor on the majestic brows of Benarty and Bishop Hill, during my gliding career. But as I got closer to Portmoak, as a passenger in the SGU Chairman's car on the road from Edinburgh Airport, I realised that I had indeed seen the site before – but only very briefly.

It was Day Two of my honeymoon with Mrs Platypus back in 1974. The dates for the wedding and our journey to distant, romantic parts had been carefully timed (by me) to coincide exactly with the ten-day period when another member of the syndicate was taking the Kestrel away to the Nationals; I would have nothing to fly, and might as well do something else that would distract me and fill the aching void. Mrs P said nothing at the time but stored up this revealing facet of her future husband's obsessive nature for later, devastating use in this journal under the title "Advice to those about to Marry Glider Pilots (Don't!)" Quite contrary to her belief – being much influenced by Sigmund Freud; too much, in my opinion – that gliding was a substitute for sex, my robust dictum, "Nonsense, sex is a substitute for gliding" was, she soon realised, not an idle witticism but sober truth, not just about me but about most glider pilots.

She was pretty tolerant of this – well, it was a fact of life and had to be accepted before we started on our voyage into matrimony.

However, as we drove northwards from Edinburgh towards the fair city of Perth, and were passing two middling-sized but well-shaped mountains that collected and thrust upwards northerly breezes and westerly winds respectively, I foolishly uttered a cry:

"Ooh look, a windsock!"

The temperature in the car promptly dropped about 8°C. We drove on.

That was the first and last time during the trip that either of us made any mention of gliders, towplanes, airfields, thermals, ridges, winches, windsocks or wave clouds.

But it was the best honeymoon I ever had. On January 10, 2005 the field was too waterlogged to do any soaring (it was the day that Carlisle, on the Scottish border, was very seriously flooded) and after the previous evening's celebrations and test-flying a wide range of Highland Malt whiskies at midnight, I was frankly somewhat relieved.

Private-owner's dream

However, on my brief, fragile venture out into fresh air I was impressed with the SGU's solution to the question of how you store a lot of gliders, including private ships, fully-rigged in a hangar – and get any one glider out without damage and without taking longer to extract than it would take just to rig it. It is a long, thin, double-sided hangar, the roof of which is supported not by outer walls but by its central backbone, so that the wheeled doors that form the walls can be slid back and any glider can be pushed straight out, and straight back in at the end of the day. And no messing about with clever "side-waysing" gadgets either.

It does of course require enough flat space for gliders to be extracted and manouevred easily on both sides, so the usual practice of building hangars right on the edge of the field obviously does not work. In fact you need about as much space as a football pitch if your club has a large number of aircraft. The Portmoak hangar is more than 100 metres long, with bags of space on either side. I doubt we shall ever see its like at Dunstable, though a new hangar there is in prospect. There just isn't the space, and we are supposed to be part of a scenic area for the general public to enjoy, so there are serious restrictions on what we can knock down or put up. I guess our private owners will still be developing muscles for years to come, unless someone designs a glider with folding wings that will rig itself at the flick of a switch, like a carrier-borne naval fighter. Don't laugh – the mighty Stemme motor-glider is getting close to that blessed state.



at the flick of a switch

Mad as a Huckster

A distant relative breezed into my modest shack the other day from New York. Alvin Platt (I was sure he was christened Alfred, but never mind) seems to have made a very good living as a super salesmen since migrating from Stoke-on-Trent. I get the feeling that he models his style not on real Americans he has met but on the imaginary ones he has observed in a lifetime of looking at advertisements on television and in glossy magazines. He was truly glad to be able to light up a cigar somewhat smaller than the Hindenburg but giving off equal amounts of smoke – this being a persecuted hobby in New York the way fox-hunting now is in England.

"Is marketing a science or an art?" I asked him.

"Good question," he replied. "Planning a sales campaign is a science. Explaining to the client afterwards why it didn't work – and still keeping the account – is an art."

"I bet you incline towards the artistic side," I said maliciously. To be frank, I was consumed by envy.

"I do, I do," he said, unaware of any irony. "I am often called Renaissance Man by my colleagues. I can compose a jingle, write a thousand words of copy, lay out a two-page fashion spread and shoot a 45-second pile-ointment commercial in a morning."

"And in the afternoon?"

"I am usually recuperating from a three-



pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap



motion picture product placement



Madam, I'm sure you're in the market for a Nimbus 5!

martini lunch – sorry, I meant to say I am dreaming up my next big idea."

"What is your next big idea?"

"First, where are the martinis? (Skip the lunch.)"

I quickly found the cocktail shaker and fixed six slugs of the necessary brain-fuel. There was no need to worry about Alvin being caught driving under the influence of 99 per cent Plymouth Dry Gin and a hint of Noilly, since his chauffeur was outside waiting to drive him back to his Citation executive jet. (He can smoke to his heart's content on his own plane; that's why he bought it.) There was a party back in downtown Manhattan in a few hours' time that he absolutely must attend, being a champion schmoozer and networker. So I was of course inordinately grateful that he could spare the time to talk to me.

"I thought, when you told me about your sport of flying without engine, that I would see whether you guys were doing it right. So I looked at all the ads and brochures and stuff from around the world, and felt I could give you fellows a few hints."

"What's wrong with what we are doing right now?"

"Well, right around the world, glider manufacturers stress performance and safety and value for money and ease of maintenance. And all the clubs stress comfort and convenience and how you get bags of flying at low prices and so on. "

"So, what's wrong with that?"

"C'mon, Plat, where's the sex, the glamour, the buzz, the bling, the pizzazz? Where's the appeal to the sub-conscious, to the irrational, to the dark undercurrents of the soul?"

"Do glider pilots have souls or dark undercurrents?"

"Everybody does, and after reading the soaring journals and your weird websites, I would say especially glider pilots. I am about to deliver a ground-breaking paper to the Harvard Business School next month on *Perversity Marketing*"

"Perversity Marketing?"

He took a large swig, a big puff and launched in.

"Yeah. Take the travel market. Most sane and sensible people want cheap, safe holidays in warm places. But there is an important and wealthy segment of the population that want the exact opposite – extremely dangerous holidays in freezing cold places – and they will pay the absolute earth for it."

"Like climbing Everest or walking to the South Pole?"

"Right, Plat. Something like a 20 per cent death rate, and the queue of millionaire applicants is a mile long. Only the rich can afford to be that stupid; so the profit margins are colossal. By the same token, gliding clubs should NOT stress the comfort of the accommodation and the safety of the gliders: they should give the impression that to survive a soaring vacation at their site is a rare privilege and an adventure with which you will able to impress your grandchildren – if you ever live to see the little beggars."

"Yes, I can see it, Al: Six days with us at Adventure GC is like six months with Shackleton! Only real men (of either sex) need join our long waiting list. £1,000 a day plus gratuities; splints and bandages free."

"You're getting the idea, Plat. Another example: the apparel market – that's our word for clothes. Ordinary, sane people want clothes that fit, made in fabrics that don't fade, don't go into holes and don't shrink. But now the kids are all buying jeans that are guaranteed to fade and shrink, that don't cover their midriffs and that will rapidly go into holes – or if you're in a real hurry they rip holes in them before you leave the shop: all part of the service."

"So, how exactly do you make that apply to gliding?"

"Well, ordinary, sane pilots want aircraft with a very flat glide that are stable, controllable, quiet, and easy to maintain: so somewhere there must be an irrational *contra-market* – the people who want sailplanes that are unstable, uncontrollable, noisy, have the glide performance of a concert grand, and need constant attention."

"Sorry, but that group is already catered for. It's called the Vintage Glider Club."

"Pity. But we should visit with them some day – incognito of course – and see if we can pick up any smart wrinkles on Mad Marketing."

"Mad as in Crazy?"

"No, you poor schmuck, Mad as in Madison Avenue. Gotta go now. I'll be in touch with some more notions for you."

Sure enough, I got in the mail a few days later some rough sketches drawn on a variety of napkins from New York's finest lunching-places, which Peter Fuller has kindly worked up into advertising ideas...



I can't believe it's not an ASH 25

Family magazine

Some of my kinsman's ideas are not suitable for illustration in a family magazine: you'll just have to use your imagination.

That infallible marketing aid, SEX, offers infinite variations.

First, the ad for the Penetrator V super-sailplane is quite clearly designed to appeal to inadequate males.

Then there's Celebrity Endorsement: Alvin sees lots of press coverage for photos of a bosomy star crammed into a cockpit so narrow and reclining that she can't see past her own frontage; then there's –

Sorry Plat - we've run out of space (Thank Heaven.) Ed.

mdbird@dircon.co.uk

The Platypus Papers: 50 years of powerless pilotage *(hardback, 160 pages and 100 Peter Fuller cartoons) costs £19.95 + £3.50 p&p – buy at* www.gliding.co.uk

BGA weekend



The new Discus 2C/18 was on show at the conference. S&G's thanks go to Paul Morrison for covering the event: all photographs are his unless otherwise stated

Helen Evans reports on the British Gliding Association's 2005 annual get-together

MORE than 250 people attended the BGA Conference weekend at Eastwood Hall, Nottinghamshire, on March 5 and 6.

After a welcome from BGA Chairman David Roberts, the day started with parallel sessions on aerodrome safeguarding (Diana King and Roger Coote) and advice on soaring techniques from two British Gliding Team members (Jez Hood and Jay Rebbeck). Then Terry Slater and David updated delegates on three separate and key developments in Europe: European Commission law on mandatory third party insurance; the European Aviation Safety Agency's work on continuing and ongoing airworthiness as well as pilot licensing and operations; and Eurocontrol's proposals to charge for use of airspace and change airspace classifications. They referred the audience – of more than 180 people – to a new BGA publication on the subject available to download free at *www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/regulatory.htm*. In the ensuing question-and-answer session, delegates asked how much safer anyone would be as a result of such measures...

The BGA AGM, next, was characterised by remarkable unanimity: every proposal was voted through by the club reps without question, discussion or a single dissenting vote. Outgoing treasurer Keith Mansell reported that the Association had made a surplus of £59,804 in 2003/4 and so had been able to augment its previously depleted reserves. The budget for October 2005 to September 2006 was then passed, setting adult per capita BGA fees at £24 and the Junior rate at £12. BGA Chief Executive Pete Stratten explained the rationale behind three proposed changes to BGA Operational Regulations: the first (Op. Reg. 1.8) covering the revised levels of insurance prompted by the new European mandatory requirements (see p5 of this *S&G*); the second (Op. Reg. 5.10) to ensure that glider drogue chute problems as well as airbrakes are taken into account by tug pilots; and the third replacing the word "authority" with "permission" in Op. Reg. 7.3. The latter two amendments originated with the BGA instructors committee. All three were passed.

Auditors King Freeman were reappointed and those members of the previous year's Executive Committee who were eligible for re-election were reappointed *en masse*, with the exception of Doug Lingafelter, who did not wish to stand again: John Birch (Cambridge), Paul Hepworth (York), Mike Jordy (The Soaring Centre), Keith Mansell (Midland) and Patrick Naegeli (Lasham). Because the number of nominees did not exceed the number of vacancies, there was no need for an election. There was one nomination for the post of vice chairman: Mike Jordy again takes up this role.

All BGA Vice-Presidents were re-elected, as is customary, with one vote, ending the formal business of the meeting. BGA Diplomas were then presented for services to gliding, along with the Bill Scull Safety Award and the second BGA Gold Medal to be awarded *(see opposite)*. This means Keith Mansell can add a BGA Gold to his Royal Aero Club Silver Medal! Ted Lysakowski Trust awards were announced *(see caption, below)*. The morning closed with a brief and punchy presentation from Sir John Allison, the president of Europe Air Sports, outlining how EAS seeks to track and then influence forthcoming regulation to ensure it isn't detrimental to recreational flying.

After lunch there was the chance to chat to exhibitors (AFE/RD Aviation, gTrax, Hill Aviation, HSBC, Joint Aviation, LX (John Delafield), Mary Meagher, McLean Aviation, Pooleys, See You (Dickie Feakes), Severn Valley Sailplanes, Soaring Safaris, Southern Sailplanes and Walking on Air).

Then came a sobering and fascinating presentation from Patrick Naegeli and Hugh Browning about the BGA Safety Initiative *(see the next issue for more details)* followed by a video from Lembit Öpik MP, evidently an avid *S&G* reader, who urged us to keep an eye on forthcoming legislation and lobby accordingly. This year's Junior Worlds at Husbands Bosworth were highlighted before British Gliding Team members introduced the team's rebranding and explained how they hope to repay UK pilots for their support by, for example, holding debriefs at Inter-Club League fixtures this year. They asked for suggestions on other ways they could help. Keynote speaker and stunt pilot Dean Englehart rounded off the afternoon with a hugely enjoyable speech about his work.

The day concluded with the dinner-dance, an after-dinner speech by Gerhard Waibel, and the presentation of BGA trophies.



Who says glider pilots are competitive? If it's too dark to fly, try table football! There was an excellent turnout of younger pilots, including (left) British team member and coach and Goldsborough Trophy winner Jay Rebbeck



From left: Steve Jones with three of four Ted Lysakowski Trust winners: Luke Roberts (Devon & Somerset), Andy Holmes (Bristol & Glos) and James Ewence (Yorkshire). They will do a mountain flying course in Italy this summer



BGA Office Manager Debbie Carr joined volunteers and staff on the BGA stand to help answer queries on the BGA's work. Claire Emson, who flew over from the USA, Debbie, Alison Hadley and Liz Pike organised the day



Photo: Helen Evans





Keith Mansell (left) was awarded the BGA Gold Medal at its 2005 AGM (right) on his retirement as BGA Treasurer after 23 years. His record of service both to his own club, Midland, and to the BGA is exemplary. His professional skills as a Chartered Accountant, wise counsel, extensive knowledge, attention to detail and financial oversight have ensured the BGA's viability and earned him its thanks. He remains on the BGA Executive



Above: Russell Cheetham (right) collects his trophy
Left: Peter Holland of Trent Valley got a BGA Diploma

Awards and trophies for 2003/4

AT the Association's annual general meeting, as well as the BGA Gold Medal for ***Keith Mansell*** (see caption, above) *BGA Diplomas were awarded to* ***Ian Dandie*** *(Scottish),* ***Anthony Edwards*** *(Cambridge),* ***Peter Holland*** *(Trent Valley) and* ***Mike Randle*** *(Cotswold) for their services to gliding. The Bill Scull Safety Award went to* ***Hugh Browning*** *(Lasham) for his ongoing contribution to gliding safety, as a Regional Safety Officer, informing the BGA safety presentation and on the BGA Safety Initiative. Hugh initiated a comprehensive review of the BGA Accident Database, which has resulted in a fundamental reappraisal of the major causal factors involved in accidents within the UK gliding movement to inform that initiative.*

At the dinner-dance, BGA trophies were awarded as follows:

Wakefield Trophy for the longest handicapped distance: ***Phil Jones*** *(Cambridge), 891.81km in a Ventus 2cxt (18m) on May 22, 2004 from Gransden Lodge to Bruton, Tibenham, Mendip to land out 25km west of Gransden (actual distance 981km).*

Furlong Trophy for the longest handicapped triangle: ***Ed Downham*** *(London), 770.1km in an ASW 27 on June 25, 2004 from Dunstable to Cray, Pickering to Dunstable (actual distance 800.9km).*

Frank Foster Trophy for the fastest handicapped 500km: ***John Williams*** *(Scottish), 123.2km/h in a LS8-18 on November 5, 2004 from Comrie, Heugh Head, Loch Venachar, Mossat to Comrie (actual speed 130.6km/h).*

California In England Cup for the longest handicapped flight by a female pilot: ***Anna Wells*** *(Bristol & Glos), 511.1km in an LS8 on July 6, 2004 from Nympsfield, Bedford, Hereford, Towcester, Nympsfield (actual distance 511.1km).*



Recently-retired glider designer Gerhard Waibel, the W in Schleicher's ASW, presented BGA trophies and entertained guests with an after-dinner speech that began with three final glides and ended in an abbey...

Manio Cup for the fastest handicapped 300km: ***Kevin Hook*** *(Scottish), 136.1km/h in a DG-400 (17m) on June 4, 2004 from West Lomond Hill, Montrose, Balado, Edzell to Portmoak (actual speed 137.5km/h).*

Rex Pilcher Trophy for the earliest Diamond distance in the year: ***Michael Jenks*** *(Bath & Wilts), 504km on May 16, 2004 from Bath, Wilts & North Dorset's site at The Park.*

De Havilland Trophy for the maximum gain of height: ***Andrew Warbrick*** *(Cairngorm), 20,338ft height gain in a LS6 on September 11, 2004 from Aboyne (max height 23,903ft).*

Volk Trophy for the longest handicapped out-and-return: ***Andrew Davis*** *(Bristol & Glos), 525.6km in a Discus 2a on June 25, 2004 from Nympsfield to Norwich and return to Nympsfield (actual distance 525.6km).*

Seager Trophy for the longest handicapped distance in a two-seater: ***Afandi Darlington*** *(Surrey & Hants), 706km in a Nimbus 3DT on May 22, 2004 from Lasham, Crediton, Grafham Water, Taunton to Lasham (actual distance 804.8km).*

Goldsborough Trophy for highest-placed pilot in recent world championships: ***Jay Rebbeck*** *(Booker), Silver Medallist, Club Class World Championships, Norway.*

BGA 1000km Trophy, donated by Peter Hearne: ***Russell Cheetham*** *(The Soaring Centre), 1003.77km (declared) in an ASW 22BL on June 25, 2004 from Husbands Bosworth to TP1 (Norfolk), Hay-on-Wye, Bungay, Hinckley and Husbands Bosworth (free distance: 1020.07km). Russell is seen in the photo top left receiving the trophy from Gerhard Waibel.*

Enigma Trophy for the winner of the Open National Ladder: ***Andrew Davis*** *(Bristol & Glos) 14,254pts and Firth Vickers Trophy for the runner-up:* ***John Williams*** *(Scottish) 11,824pts.*

L. duGarde Peach Trophy for the winner of the Weekend National Ladder: ***Richard Hood*** *(Booker) and Slingsby Trophy to the runner-up:* ***John Bridge*** *(Cambridge) 10.094pts.*

Spitfire Trophy for the Junior Ladder winner: ***Ian Macarthur*** *(Midland) 8,262pts.*

Phil Lever Trophy for the most promising Junior pilot: ***Johnny Roberts*** *(Midland), who came second in the 2004 Junior and Club Class Championships.*

The John Hands Trophy for services to competition gliding went to ***Brian Spreckley*** *(European Soaring Club), who has helped establish and organise the very successful British Team training programme, is British Team manager and UK delegate to the IGC. World Gliding Champion in 1987, he has won medals in each of the three major championships – 15m (1987), Open (1983) and Standard (1995) – and shares his experience to give other pilots the chance to excel.*



Award winner Hugh Browning (left) with David Roberts



Mike Randle (left) gets his Diploma from Keith Mansell



Above: BGA Diploma holder Anthony Edwards (left)
Below: John and Wendy Williams with one of his trophies



100 years of airsports



Make sure you log all your kilometres from July 9-24 to help promote gliding (www.whiteplanes.com)

Brian Spreckley updates us on plans to celebrate the FAI's centenary, including an on-line mega-glide for glider pilots in July – this means you!

ON October 14, 2005 the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) will celebrate its 100th birthday. The FAI was founded on 14 October 1905 in Paris, and moved to its new world headquarters in Lausanne, the Olympic capital, in 1998. There will be many events around the world to celebrate the FAI's centenary. Full details of these can be found on the FAI web site *www.fai.org/centenary/*

The FAI is the world governing body for all airsports. In 1905 it was started with just eight countries including Great Britain, but it now has nearly 100 member countries and 11 airsport commissions.

An international, non-profit-making, non-governmental organisation, the FAI's main aim is the development throughout the world of sport aviation and astronautical activities. It ratifies records from microlights and hang-gliding to world-orbiting balloon attempts and distance records for space travel!

The sports commission for gliding is the International Gliding Commission (IGC). To celebrate the FAI's centenary the IGC have organised a worldwide gliding event, in which every pilot can be involved.

During a two-week period from July 9 to July 24, 2005, pilots from all countries in the Northern Hemisphere are invited to send their flights to the special centenary page organised by the Online Competition Centenary Glide.

The pilots entering the longest flights in any FAI class during the two week period will receive an FAI Centenary Diploma, but every pilot can help in the promotion of gliding by entering all the flights they make regardless of the distance flown.

The IGC want to encourage everybody flying during this period to enter their flights: the more flights and kilometres the greater the evidence to prove gliding's existence. It is very important for the future of our sport that we prove to the authorities that we use the airspace available, and this is an excellent opportunity to show them how important an airspace user gliding is.

You can organise within your own club a club award for the pilot achieving the most kilometres during these two weeks – all flights will be accepted.

The total number of kilometres flown in honour of the FAI Centenary will be reported at the October Centenary event in Paris, France. A 100 per cent input from all National Aero Clubs will provide a tremendous promotion both of and for gliding worldwide and would be something we could all be very proud of.

If you have an internet connection and can use a Flight Recorder, even if your flight is only a few beats of the ridge or a local soaring attempt, send it to the Centenary Online page and help us prove gliding is one of the great airsports.

There will be more information in the next *S&G* to help you plan the entry of your flights into the FAI centenary event.

The Black Mountains Gliding Club

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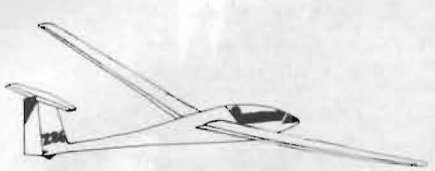
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For more details:- Visit our web site www.talgarthgc.co.uk E mail (Preferred) blackmountainsglidingclub@hotmail.com Telephone 01874 711463

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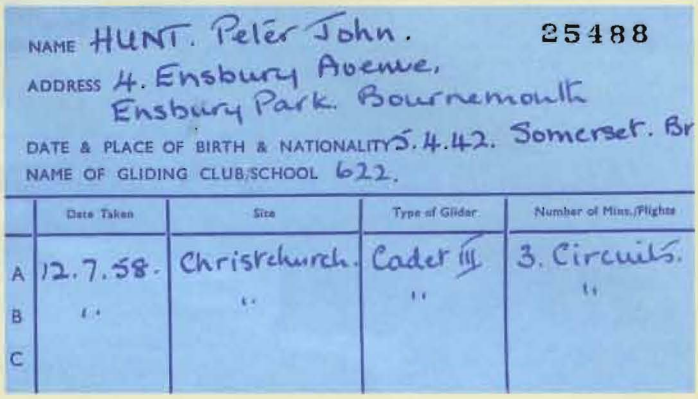
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Sharing the skies

For the second article in *S&G*'s series about airproxes, Helen Evans talks to the UK Airprox Board's new head, Peter Hunt



Civil Aviation Authority



NAME HUNT. Peter John. 25488
ADDRESS 4. Ensbury Avenue, Ensbury Park. Bournemouth
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH & NATIONALITY 5.4.42. Somerset. Br
NAME OF GLIDING CLUB/SCHOOL 622.

	Date Taken	Site	Type of Glider	Number of Mins./Flights
A	12.7.58.	Christchurch.	Cadet III	3. Circuits.
B	"	"	"	"
C				

Peter Hunt, director of the UK Airprox Board, retains an affection for his first flights – in gliders. He trained on T-21s and T-31s, and went solo aged 16 in a Slingsby Cadet 3 at Bournemouth, as his BGA blue card (above) reveals

IT'S every pilot's nightmare. Far too close for comfort, another aircraft flashes by. Was there, you wonder, really a risk of collision? Each year in the UK, about 200 such incidents are reported, roughly 20 involving gliders. All eventually end up on the desk of one man – Peter Hunt.

Peter may have been director of the UK Airprox Board (UKAB) for only half a year, but the subject is one that has long engaged him: he was involved with one of UKAB's predecessors, the Aircraft Proximity Hazard Panel, back in the 1980s. Introduced to flying by the CCF before moving on to Tiger Moths and a PPL, his career began in the airline industry, first as a pilot, then as a training captain and finally as a director of British Airways – "the guardian of the airline's safety standards," according to its then Chief Executive. He moved to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), finishing as Head of its Operating Standards Division, before starting at UKAB last August. Here he reports directly to the CAA Chairman and the Chief of the Air Staff, Royal Air Force. These two organisations jointly fund UKAB, although its small secretariat (three inspectors, three secretarial staff and the director) are proud of its independence and keen to get the message across that they are definitely not the enforcement branch of the CAA and do not share information with it.

Peter, a softly-spoken, diplomatic man, clearly has a passion for his job and a genuine commitment to promoting dialogue and understanding between different groups of airspace users – handy attributes for someone whose job as director involves chairing the board's meetings, where its 14 members look at the facts uncovered by UKAB's inspectors ("Part A" of the report) and discuss possible causes before assigning the incident to one of four risk categories. The facts and a summary of the discussion ("Part B") are then published in half-yearly batches *(see caption, opposite)*. UKAB aims for a four-month turnaround on 95 per cent of incidents but is running two months behind due to earlier staff shortages.

The board consists of eight civil and six military pilots and controllers, all experts within their fields of aviation, ranging from commercial air transport, General Aviation and military flying (fixed wing and rotary), along with civil and military air traffic control. Most have stand-ins and the board also calls upon specialist advisors, in gliding's case, Hugh Woodsend of the BGA Airspace Committee. Do all those different viewpoints lead to conflict?

"The words I use about board members," says Peter, "are seasoned professionals." In other words, they aren't there to fight their corner but to offer very particular expertise. "I might read about an Airprox and think this or that happened, then a Military Air Traffic Controller comes up with something I would never have thought of in a month of Sundays," he says. "That's certainly one of the things I have enjoyed greatly since I started."

What, then, are the issues facing gliding? After only six months in post, Peter is, very sensibly, cagey about being too definite but inspector John Craig (also an ex-glider pilot) is more forthcoming. Conspicuity, though, is something they both highlight: "It's not especially easy to see a glider," says Peter. "It's slow moving, doesn't always paint well on radar and it's designed not to have a big frontal area. Other pilots can be doing their best to see-and-avoid but gliders can still be difficult to spot". He believes that radio and transponder use can improve safety and hopes that the CAA-backed lightweight transponder initiative will come up with a

UK glider-related airproxes, military and civilian, 1999-2003

All General Aviation (GA): risk	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Average	Total
A	17	19	24	9	10	16	79
B	41	33	27	58	38	39	197
C	74	54	60	57	70	63	315
D	2	2	1	3	0	2	8
Total	**134**	**108**	**112**	**127**	**118**	**120**	**599**
As of total	13%	18%	21%	7%	8%	13%	
Bs of total	31%	31%	24%	46%	32%	33%	
Cs of total	55%	50%	54%	45%	59%	53%	
ALL GA: Gliders	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**Average**	**Total**
Gliders (excluding paragliders)	15	22	17	24	17	19	95
Total	134	108	112	127	118	120	599
Gliders of total	**11%**	**20%**	**15%**	**19%**	**14%**	**16%**	
Gliders: risk	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**Total**		
Gliders (excluding paragliders)	16	38	41	0	95		
All GA (incl gliders & paragliders)	79	197	315	8	599		
Commercial Air Transport	11	51	354	9	425		
	(A+B)	**Risk-bearing**	**C**	**D**	**Total**		
Gliders (excl paragliders)	54	57%	41	0	95		
All GA (incl gliders & paragliders)	276	46%	315	8	599		
All GA *except* gliders	222	44%	274	8	504		
Commercial Air Transport	62	15%	354	9	425		

Steve Longland



UKAB publishes two reports a year (see right), in which incidents are assigned to one of four internationally agreed risk categories:



***A:** risk of collision (an actual risk of collision existed);*

***B:** safety not assured (the safety of the aircraft was compromised);*

***C:** no risk of collision (no risk of collision existed);*

***D:** risk not determined (insufficient information was available to determine the risk involved, or inconclusive or conflicting evidence precluded such determination).*

The latest half-yearly report is due out in April 2005.

UKAB defines an airprox as a situation in which, in the opinion of a pilot or controller, the distance between aircraft, as well as their relative positions and speed, have been such that the safety of the aircraft was, or may have been, compromised.

The map, left, illustrates the general location of all 95 airproxes between gliders and other airspace users, for the period 1999 to 2003 inclusive. There were 21 reports in 2004, some still being assessed. Three-quarters of glider airproxes during the five-year period were reported by the glider pilot. Two were reported by both parties. The remainder were reported by the pilot of the other aircraft.

UKAB does not apportion blame or liability and has no legal powers: its sole aim is to enhance flight safety by assessing what happened in terms of cause and risk then raising awareness of the findings in the aviation community. Wherever appropriate, it can make safety recommendations: changes in procedures, for instance, or the introduction of new equipment.



A GA airprox reports booklet, which includes gliders, can be found at www.ukab.org.uk *(the hard copy version having now been distributed).*

model for General Aviation that offers a practical solution for recreational pilots. Meanwhile, good lookout, communication (talk to LARS, says John) and a heightened awareness by all airspace users of the needs of other pilots will help to minimise risk.

The trend for gliding airproxes is static – a bigger worry, says John, is commercial air transport operating outside controlled airspace. Still, any airproxes involving gliders do remain a concern, and John singles out the areas around Kenley (a chokepoint), Talgarth (now being addressed by a joint initiative between the club, BGA and RAF) and Lasham (because of the volume of traffic locally). He and Peter praised the BGA for fostering understanding between military and glider pilots.

UKAB urges pilots to report incidents quickly to increase the chances of tracing the other aircraft and so reaching useful conclusions. The nature of gliding clubs, where CFIs may be on site only two or three days a week, doesn't help when it comes to other pilots' reports. A fifth of gliders in airproxes are never identified, says John.

Unsurprisingly for someone whose CAA job involved chairing the GACC (General Aviation Consultative Committee) Peter is a strong advocate of consultation and communication between different aviation communities; one key aim of his is to improve how UKAB disseminates findings, through CDs, publications, and the internet. "I have to say," he concludes, "that I'm a real believer in people working together. It's not *your* airspace or *my* airspace, it's *our* airspace: let's work together and make sure it's as safe as we can."

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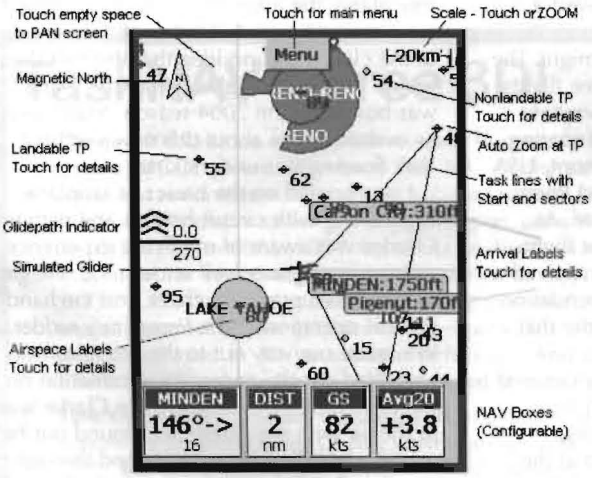
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Hold on to your dreams



Peregrine as used by Freedom's Wings, Canada, which has hand controls so people with disabilities can learn to glide (Carl Hiebert/www.carlhiebert.com)

What would you do if an accident left you paraplegic? This Canadian learned to glide...



MY NAME is Wayne MacDonald and this is my story. I have been a T-12 paraplegic since 1999. I was injured in a workplace accident falling 14ft from a rooftop to the asphalt parking lot below.

In the 34 years of my life, I had achieved many goals I had set myself. The previous November, after a decade's trying, I received my licence to be a refrigeration journeyman; I now had an income that would keep the family I envisioned quite comfortable. I was in a ten-year relationship: my fiancé and I planned to marry in St Lucia on March 8, 1999. I was also working towards my Private Pilot's Licence: there was nothing that made me feel freer than ramping up that engine to lift off into the sky: I was in control of every fibre of my existence and it was intoxicating.

The day of the accident began as usual and, after completing my jobs in the east end of Toronto, I ate my lunch in the van and went on to end my day with a routine maintenance call in the west end. My last memory of that day would be pulling on to the westbound 401 from McCowan *en route* to a moment that would forever change my life. It was approximately 12:15hrs on Monday, February 8, 1999. I awoke five days later not knowing where I was or how I got there. I learned later that my head injuries were so severe I was put into an induced coma as well as on a ventilator for four days. My friends and family waited on pins and needles, wondering if I would survive. After the trauma team had stabilised my head injuries came the grim task of piecing my shattered spine together. As the days progressed everyone breathed somewhat easier thanks to the amazing efforts of the medical team, but the toughest challenges were yet to come.

Once I came to, I was told point blank I would never walk again. I was devastated and over the next year and a half my life was a whirlwind of conflicts and decisions. What did my future hold? I had lost my legs, the career I had worked so hard for, my dreams and plans, not to mention the other surprises that come with being a paraplegic. I had to think fast. What sustained my sense of being before my accident? Somehow, I had to regain that feeling of freedom.

My first call was to the Brampton Flight Centre. After meetings, I was pleased to hear they would install hand controls in a Piper Warrior. I was going to fly again! This became quite an issue as Transport Canada informed me that due to my head injuries I would be under restrictions for seven years from the date of my injury. It was just another hurdle to contend with. I was fortunate enough to be introduced to Dr Knipping, an aviation doctor. I told him of my problem and he single-handedly submitted my info to Transport Canada and reinstated my medical with hand-controls only designation.

I became involved with York Soaring Association in 2002. It had borrowed a hand-controlled glider from Freedom's Wings International in the USA for a fortnight. They offered anyone with disabilities free flights. This sounded great! I had been fortunate enough to experience the sport of soaring over the mountains of Stowe Vermont, USA, as an able-bodied thrill-seeker, so I knew it would not take much to hook me. As I predicted I was sold after the first flight. Charles Petersen told me he had received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to purchase a hand-controlled glider that would establish a Canadian chapter, and Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company would pay all the operating expenses. Freedom's Wings Canada was born! He was excited at the prospect of having a programme run by disabled pilots for disabled and able-bodied pilots alike. I was intrigued and told him to keep me informed of progress. But I fell ill in the Fall of 2002 and lost touch.

As my health improved in 2004 I ran into Kevin Rogers of the Canadian Paraplegic Association. He knew of my experience as a power pilot and asked when I was going to try the new hand-controlled glider at the club. I contacted Charles immediately and set up a flight right away. Although I had 70 hours' flying time between Cessna 152, 172 and now a Piper Warrior at Brampton Flight Centre, I could only imagine the new adventure I was about to embark on.

The last time I had been to the gliding club was two years earlier so I was a little fuzzy on the area. As I got closer I remembered quite a bit of the farmland that surrounded the field. I pulled off the highway on to the dirt road that brought me to the club's parking lot. I first passed trailers that club members used on their weekend pilgrimage to the field, then a few boxes that would eventually hold some of the privately-owned planes, then the Quonset hangar that housed the club aircraft and tow planes, which was attached to another building that turned out to be the briefing area. I opened the van door and heard the distinctive sound of a tow plane: the adrenalin started pumping. I was received warmly by the other members of the club. I had no idea that this first flight would lead to 20 flights before the plane was boxed for the 2004 season. Many were as excited as me about this new venture York Soaring was undertaking.

I was briefed on the basics of sailplane flight along with circuit heights and patterns. Charles was aware of my flying experience, so his tutoring was well understood. He gave me the basic pre-flight check and the hand control operation of the Peregrine's rudder. We made our way out to the active runway and filled out the necessary information on the tow cards. At that time Mike Clarke was in the air with the Peregrine. I found out he was the first disabled pilot trained through the club flying solo at the time. I had no problem being number two. I was ready for anything. I watched the various planes gliding effortlessly through the sky and the chance of being involved in this new programme pulsed through my veins. As the

Peregrine touched down I repeated the pre-flight check over and over again.

I sided up to the cockpit and swung my legs into the plane and reached over to steady myself. I realised how keeping myself strong was going to be a big advantage. Using my arms I swung my butt over the opening and lowered myself into the seat. It was certainly a lot less complicated than getting into the cockpit of the Piper Warrior. The wind was strong with a slight cross to the active. I sat in quiet anticipation as each plane ahead of us was hooked up and towed into the wild blue yonder.

The tow plane taxied by us and we were next. I inspected the tow line before I was given the open and close sign to hook up. As the plane took up slack I waited to give the thumbs-up sign to our wing man. I had been gliding before but I was still slightly nervous as the tow plane pulled us forward. You could hear and feel the grass airstrip under the wheel and the increased response of the sailplane as we picked up speed, then we were airborne following the plane ahead of us like a highway in the sky. I kept my hands lightly on the controls as we climbed behind the tow. This was to give me a sense of the inputs needed to hold steady. As we gained altitude my instructor explained what he was doing, but in all honesty I was watching the earth falling below us. It is a perspective that never ceases to amaze me. At 2,000ft we disengaged from the tow and we were on our own.

The silence was golden and the warmth from the sun through the canopy felt great. My initiation was swift, as I was pilot in command soon after release. The transition was smooth, thanks to my previous power flying experience. The Peregrine had a stiffer rudder and I tended to yaw too much on coordinated turns. There was a peacefulness that I never experienced in power flying. In this cockpit there were no radios, headphones and engine noise. You truly knew what it was like to soar with the birds. We played in the air until we were at circuit height and began our downwind checks. The landing was smooth. I completed four flights that day with a shot at the tow on the last. I was humbled quickly with my aircraft swinging to and fro behind the tug.

One of my most memorable flights was with Charles one day, when after being released from the tow at 3,500ft he asked me if I would like to do a loop. I said yes without hesitation and we set up for the manoeuvre. He pushed the stick forward and the earth filled the canopy. As airspeed increased the drone of the wind became louder and louder. At 90kt he pulled the stick back and there was silence. It was such an abrupt change I was hypnotised as the negative g kicked in. I looked back and saw the earth behind my head. It was amazing. As we completed the loop we immediately went into a lazy eight. I knew this was what I would strive to accomplish one day.

I was proceeding well with my lessons and was asked by all the instructors to fly with them. They were extremely interested in how I was able to coordinate the rudder with my hand: they found it hard when they tried. I could only surmise that as a person with a disability I was rewired somehow so that coordination that would normally go through the legs was transferred to my hands. It seemed logical because I was quick to learn to drive with hand controls in my vehicle. They were also surprised by my flying ability. I felt good about the genuine respect I received, although I was caught one day on tow, releasing at what I thought was 2,000ft – as the rope fluttered ahead of me I soon realised I was at only 1,000ft, *Circuit height!* I was nowhere near the circuit. This little *faux pas* was a blessing in disguise: it reinforced my understanding about my abilities and those of the plane. We safely entered the downwind and proceeded to the touchdown point. One other memory of my first real season in soaring flight was spinning. Now I had done this with power flight so I was prepared. This time as we entered the spin I was startled by how vertical we became. All I can say is thank God for shoulder harnesses because it felt as if the tail was coming over the top of us.

My greatest challenge at the beginning was the inability to follow the tug: I would skate back and forth until the instructor took control and we would slide right in behind. I tried and tried and as my experience increased it just seemed to happen. I was flying formation and coordinating my inputs with the tug's movements. I felt a rush of satisfaction once I was able to conquer this. I was soon completing all parts of flight from take-off to tow, in-air manoeuvres, to circuit and landing. I was becoming a member of a very good club and could not be happier.

I could never express enough gratitude to Charles for his tenacity in accomplishing something that will allow me and so many others to pursue the magic of flight. When I spoke to others about being a pilot before my injury I was always greeted with: "Are you crazy?" or "I have always wanted to do that!" I cannot think of a way to truly express what I feel when I am in flight. It comes from within. If I tell people I fly with a disability they wonder what possesses me, when I have already been compromised by my injury. I have learned that following what you love creates the hub and the spokes naturally radiate from there. The memories I have of flying are something I want to continue to add to.

For those of us that may feel compelled to try soaring all I can say is: "Do it!" There will be a time when everything seems overwhelming, but with perseverance the overload of information will get sorted out and the beauty of flight will leave you with countless memories and experiences. Six years ago on that fateful day, I would have never imagined such a tragedy for myself and all those around me. As I sit here writing this today I feel very gratified by the fact that I did not let my disability control every aspect of my life. I have planned my life and then planned it with the wheelchair. Never let go of your dreams. ➢

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Nothing succeeds like success

Charles Petersen, the founder of Freedom's Wings Canada, sets out its achievements and plans

SINCE I began gliding I've heard again and again that we can't interest new people or younger people in the sport, we can't get publicity, and we can't get corporate funding. We have proven we can.

Our website is *www.freedomswings.ca* and we are named after but not legally affiliated to Freedom's Wings International – *www.freedomswings.org*. This North American organisation responded to our request for mentoring with a one-week visit in both 2002 and 2003 to our club, York Soaring Association (*www.yorksoaring.com*), 100km north-west of Toronto. During those visits we had four objectives:

1. Validate the community demand (in fact, so many came out to fly that we used a second and sometimes a third glider to handle the demand);
2. Validate the volunteer ethic at the club;
3. Demonstrate the publicity appeal to attract sponsors;
4. Form a strategic alliance with one or more organisations for the disabled (Canadian Paraplegic Association and K W Access-Ability).

All were accomplished, and based on these test flights we applied for and received a grant from a government foundation, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, of $75,000. We purchased a Peregrine, the newly produced American Krosno KRO3, from Barry Aviation (*www.barryaviation.com*). This is an ideal trainer (all-metal, low-energy, oleo for hard landings, with incredible spoilers, and well priced at US$45,000), but we operated for the season with a loaner with prototype hand controls while Barry and the FAA worked through certificate approvals. We expect our own this year.

There are two modifications, neither complex. First, a "Rudder Stick" gives hand control of the rudder (but the rudder pedals are not removed – just pushed forward out of the way). The Rudder Stick is attached to the fuselage below the pilot's left thigh with a pin affixed to a hard point. This Stick is clamped to the rudder cable (in the Peregrine), or connected directly to a rudder pedal (by a push rod to the rear rudder pedal bell crank in the G103) and has a hand grip on the top. Because the left hand will be operating the rudder, the spoiler control is modified to permit it to be locked in any one of a number of settings. Both front and rear controls can lock or unlock – an improvement on earlier G103 systems.



The Ottawa Citizen

We have a commercial sponsor (the Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company), which pays all our operating costs: insurance, maintenance, tows (no charge for a first flight to anyone with a disability, and if money is an issue, all tows for lessons too) and even club memberships for paraplegic student pilots and pilots. We had a great season, and did hundreds of flights. Our first student has completed his training and will be licensed as soon as he writes his exam. A second is very close to solo, and two others began training.

We towed the glider to Gatineau GC, near Ottawa, for a week of outreach in July, and based on that success we have applied for an additional grant to buy a second Peregrine for an Ottawa chapter. We are also seeking funds for two videos, a short one of around seven minutes to assist with fundraising and Rotary Club luncheons, and a longer one for outreach to peer groups at rehab hospitals and the like. Our other project will be a simulator, not unlike Lasham's (*New Sim*, October-November 2004, p31), but on a motion platform.

We are looking forward to working with Toronto's world-renowned Hospital for Sick Children this year. We expect to see more of our 'Inspiration Flights' turn into students, and more students into pilots, and, the summer after next, we expect to have two paraplegic instructors.

The growth of the concept is possible because of the strategic decision to not be another group for the disabled, but to provide a service to the members of disabled organisations, and, by allying our registered charity, Youth Flight Canada, with community groups and local clubs, bring a benefit to all. For clubs, there is a source of revenue, paid by a corporate sponsor, and significantly enhanced publicity: the illustration *(left)* is from our trip Ottawa: a full-page broadsheet photo essay, which was reinforced by a TV newsmagazine item. Club members find the activity very rewarding, and the operation has not affected flight line efficiency.

There are clubs across the country, all with the necessary infrastructure (tow planes, volunteer instructors, runways, and in some cases, gliders suitable for retrofitting hand controls), and we need only to bring the concept to each community's glider club and local disabled organisation.

Next issue: what's happening in the UK ➢



Learning as well as teaching

Paul Moggach outlines what teaching pilots with disabilities has meant for his club and for the instructors involved



Michael Clarke (left), York's first student to complete his practical training and the required 20 solos, watches Rob Murphy gets ready for a lesson, as CFI Richard Sawyer looks on (Carl Hiebert/www.carlhiebert.com)

EVEN at our active gliding club, up until two years ago it was a rare event to see someone on the airfield in a wheelchair, let alone participating in the flying. All that changed when we became involved with Freedom's Wings. Initial air experience flights for people with disabilities have evolved to the acquisition of a hand-controlled glider (KR03A/Peregrine from Barry Aviation, the new manufacturer) and our first students.

Often gliding and soaring attract a rather independent crowd, grudgingly forced to gather together to get a launch, and quite protective of "getting their flying" in, first and foremost. So what have we experienced at our club?

Well now, wheelchairs abound on the flight line. Everyone has become accustomed to watching their step around the ramp over the threshold of the door into the clubhouse, and there is always someone ready with the golf cart or fetching a wheelchair when the Krosno lands. Except for increased enthusiasm, there has been little other impact on our general flying operations. Everyone seems to be getting in "their flying".

As for the instructors, everyone wants to give the hand controls a try. It's a bit frustrating, though, when your students are more proficient at it, not being handicapped by all of that incessant training of the feet over their flying careers. The issues in instructing those with disabilities fall into two general categories: the mechanics of the cockpit, and flight control operation, particularly on approach and landing.

In our case, the flying regulatory body here has decreed that these pilots must be able to enter and exit the aircraft by themselves as a prerequisite to solo flying. For most of the wheelchair-bound crowd, this is old news. They usually, by necessity, have well-developed upper body strength and a lot of experience in getting in and out of other contraptions not designed for them. It helps, of course, that gliders in general are low to the ground; the Krosno, in particular, has an especially open layout. Still, there are little tricks, like having a split section of large diameter plastic tubing to drape over the edge of the cockpit to help with the slide in. As for the cockpit itself, two areas are quite important. First, since there may be very little stabilisation available from the lower body, it is necessary to provide good support to the back. Short seat backs can be problematic and we are having those in the Peregrine modified accordingly. Second is the issue of what to do with the parts of the body that don't work and are just along for the ride: the legs. With centre-mounted control columns you need to secure the legs well enough so that they are out of the way, but not such that they impair the normal movement of the controls. With most pilots it is easy enough to move the rudder pedals forward out of the way – for air experience flights it is a simple matter to remove the control column. Flight training is another matter entirely and is quite dependent on the actual geometry of the student's legs. What has been settled on for the new Peregrine, with expert input from Freedom's Wings' Ray Temchus, is foot blocks just behind the pedals, with Velcro ankle straps to keep the feet from touching the pedals, or the legs from injury caused by hitting the instrument panel when inverted (many of the pilots with disabilities love simple aerobatics). We will also have foam pads and straps Velcro'd beside the legs to stabilise them laterally.

With respect to in-flight instructing issues, there is no particular reason to treat these students all that differently from the able-bodied lot. Efficient flight instruction is best done using primarily visual cues, not feeling forces in the aircraft. Instructors should ask the students to get the 'picture' right. Given this it is not that important that the instructor operate the rudder with the hand controls. It is probably better that they do their demonstrations using what is most effective for them. Disabled students do not have enough hands to simultaneously operate the spoilers and the rudder on landing. The Krosno is equipped with a series of detents for the spoiler control. What this requires from these pilots is good planning such that they are on final between 300-400ft on a glidepath suitable to make a normal landing with about 1/3 spoiler locked in. It is not that corrections can't be made from these settings, it's just that this does increase the workload in the cockpit at a critical time. At our club this has not created particular hardship: it is what we demand of all pilots.

The instructor corps has developed a better appreciation of ground handling and operations from having to take into account an immobile student. This has spilled over to all flights and has certainly has improved general operations at the club in this regard. So other than feet not working (gee – seems like that's a universal problem) these students seem to have the same issues as the rest.

In closing, my mind always comes back to two student pilots on the edge of the runway, watching a launch and discussing the vagaries of their progress and their instructors. One is in a wheelchair and the other is just sitting on the ground. Nothing separating them when it comes to flying. Try it at your club: you may like it too.

Paul Moggach, a former CFI, started gliding in 1981 at the York Soaring Association and began instructing in 1984. An instructor, tuggie and Diamond Badge pilot, he has been a member of the Flight Training and Safety Committee of the Soaring Association of Canada. He has 1,700hrs in gliders with c 1,000hrs instruction and 300hrs power, mostly aerotowing. In spring and the Fall he can be found wandering about the ridges in Pennsylvania in his Standard Jantar. He recently published: *Life Is Hard And Then You Fly: A Glider Flight Instructor's Guide*, ISBN 0-9689151-0-8

Prepare for some fun

Summer is on its way and soon we'll see pilots scrambling for sunhats, maps and loggers. But wait a second: it's been a long winter. Before you tackle your Silver distance or 100km Diploma, Debb Evans (right) has collected a few tips to help you



Writer and broadcaster Debb Evans first tried gliding six years ago.

She lives in Bradford on Avon, in Wiltshire, and is a member of Bannerdown GC along with her husband, Willy.

In her spare time she commentates at airshows and enjoys holding dinner parties.

Her other interests include scuba diving and water skiing

LET'S START with a cautionary tale. We all love a good disaster story, and this is a great one I witnessed. Names have been changed to protect the guilty. You, of course, would never get into this kind of mess. Would you?

It was a lovely afternoon at the gliding club, warm and sunny with a gentle breeze but little or no thermal activity; and it was getting slightly hazy. This didn't stop John from wanting to fly, though; he was as keen as they come. Because of John's modest soaring experience, the duty instructor asked the tug pilot to tow him to 2,000ft above the airfield, so John could gently float back down without any worry about getting lost.

Off he went. Forty-five minutes passed with no sign of him coming back. Odd. OK, try the radio. Nothing.

Another 20 minutes went by and people were starting to worry. He really should have been back by now. So a motorglider and a tug were launched: no sign of John or his glider. Then, 15 minutes later, who should walk casually into the hangar but John! That nice farmer who had provided him with a landing site had also dropped him off...

The first reaction was utter relief – John was safe. Time to fetch the glider. There was, though, a snag. All John could tell his friends was that it was about 15 or so miles west of the airfield, roughly speaking. He hadn't found out the name of the farm, the farmer or the nearest village, and the farmer had already headed home. Oh dear.

So the tug was launched again to try to spot the glider, although dusk was now fast approaching.

Meanwhile, attention at the airfield turned to the trailer. It was locked, so we looked the other way while the lock was given a "little help" to open. Ah – there's another glider in the trailer. Ooh, wrong trailer altogether.

OK, not a problem, the team quickly found the correct trailer and with word from the tug driver on a rough location for John's glider, things were looking up. They hooked up the trailer and headed for the gate.

All too soon, they realised the lights on the trailer weren't working, and it had a flat. Once they had fixed it and started on the task in hand, it was midnight before they found the correct field, and 02.00hrs before they got back to the airfield – more than a little grumpy.

Although John's cross-country career began a little sooner than anyone expected, many of his mistakes are common ones for pilots who are first starting to flying beyond gliding range of their home site. Here's how to avoid them.

A few weeks before

As you feel the weather start to change, it's natural to start dreaming about venturing beyond the circuit. With the hedgerows turning greener, the days getting longer and warmer, and a Cross-Country Endorsement burning a hole in your logbook, it's time to start thinking seriously about the thermal soaring season.

Our first tip is to spend some time in whatever glider you plan to soar in. Make sure you are current in the aircraft, and feel confident in its performance. Do you know how far it will glide for every 1,000ft of height?

It's no good circuit bashing all winter in a K-21 then expecting to do brilliantly on your first trip in an Astir for months.

While you're getting current in your glider, brush up on your thermalling techniques, too. Even if you plan on just staying local for now, thermals are starting to bubble and if you do want to make the most of every knot, then practice will help. It could well pay to get an instructor to sit in the back and give you some pointers.

Imagine your disappointment and your embarrassment if you couldn't get away on a booming day, simply because you couldn't use the lift.

It goes without saying that another key element of cross-country soaring is finding your way. While the weather still isn't perfect, take the time to refresh your navigation skills. Most of us would admit that while we can read a road map fairly well, it is very different when you're airborne. There are more than enough tall tales of people who land out but can't actually tell their crew where they are. If you are struggling with navigation, grab an instructor and practise in a two-seater.

While in an ideal world we could all go cross-country and land nicely back at our club with several thousand feet to spare, the reality is that most pilots do need to land out sometimes. It's an eventuality that many dread, but all must be prepared for. Having your field landings checked is vital

Checklist

Cleared to go cross-country
Current on glider
Practised thermalling
Understand navigation
Field landing checks
Map study

Trailer all working
Retrieve crew
Official Observer
Barograph
Logger
Batteries
GPS
Know how the kit works

Weather
NOTAMs
Water
Map
Sun hat
Food
Toilet kit
Sunscreen
Shades
Mobile phone
Key phone numbers
Money



Std Cirrus

Make sure you take the necessary supplies if you plan a long flight *(www.whiteplanes.com)*

if you plan to fly out of gliding range of your home site. However, if the idea makes you uneasy, don't stew about it – work on it. Once you have put in some time and effort getting comfortable with the technique of picking a field and landing in it, the freedom and challenge of cross-country flying are yours for the taking.

The week before

So you've brushed up on the skills you need to fly cross-country, but there's plenty more to do. In the week before you intend to fly, consider your intended route carefully. It's worth preparing some alternatives so that you have options whatever way the wind's blowing on the day.

There are all sorts of factors to take into account. Is it easy to navigate? Are there obvious landmarks? How about places to land if you need to? Will your route mean that you'll be going near airspace or other NOTAMed or active airfields?

Once you've decided on possible tasks, study the map at length, and think about what it'll look like from the air. Make some mental notes on what you'd expect to see at different points along your way. It will help keep you oriented in the sky. If your planned course takes you to places you haven't flown over before, talk to good pilots who have, and get their thoughts about the area, the soaring conditions, and the aerial view. Remember, knowledge is power.

If it's at all feasible, take a look at the state of fields along your route. There might appear to be some lovely fields or parkland ripe for landing, but if a farmer has decided to put hay bales or an adventure playground in them, then you'll need to land elsewhere. It's also worth noting if the ground is still boggy or nice and firm. Take into account the stage of crop development, and whether the fields – are they larger than you're used to, or generally smaller? – are bordered by big stone walls or little hedges.

Keep an eye on the weather patterns. While the television forecasts may not give you all the detail you might want, they can warn you of the trends. There are a host of websites, including the Met Office and Weatherjack, that can give you very detailed information. If the forecast is marginal midweek, remember that the Met man is not always right, but prepare yourself mentally to either declare or decline on the day.

Next comes some housekeeping advice. Make sure you've got an Official Observer sorted out, as you don't want to put all the work for a badge flight in only to get nothing suitably recorded.

Check and double check that the kit in your glider is all working and charged: batteries, GPS, barograph, logger, etc. It's also worth reminding yourself of how all the gadgets work, that way there's no room for a mistake on the day. Half-way up a weak thermal 50km from home is not a good time to try to learn which buttons to press.

If you plan to take a camera with you, check that it's got film or is fully charged, depending on the type.

Nominate your retrieve crew early on. If they are pilots too, they might be planning to fly and so you'll need to negotiate, bribe or offer to return the favour should the need arise. Make sure you give them a full brief on what you are planning to do, and the route you expect to fly.

The next tip should be obvious, but I have to mention it. Make sure your trailer is roadworthy, accessible and that your crew has a vehicle that can pull it. A great idea is to hook it up and check the electrics, and then leave it attached to the car when you take off. That way there will be no room for error. Then should you land out, all your crew needs to do is get in and go. Not spend 45 minutes trying to find your trailer, only to have no key, break in and find it's the wrong one. Embarrassing.

Along with the trailer, check your crew has the necessary kit to de-rig the glider. Imagine everyone's frustration after an hour or more's drive to get to the landout site if you're unable to get the glider home. When people are offering their help and support, it's nice for them to see the person they're helping hasn't stitched them up.

Before you launch

So you've brushed up your skills, done your background work and the weather is on side. There are just a few last-minute things to remember before you launch.

First of all, double check that your kit in the glider is working, your trailer is all set to go and your crew are on standby.

Then make sure you've got everything you need in the glider with you. Remember things like water (absolutely essential), your sun hat and shades, and sunscreen too.

Carry something to eat if you plan on a long flight. Energy bars that won't melt are a good idea.

For longer flights it's also good to take the means to spend a penny if you need to. Difficult, yes, but important for comfort and concentration.

Take a mobile phone if possible, making sure you have the numbers you might need, like the launchpoint and clubhouse of your own club and your retrieve crew's numbers; it might be worth having the numbers for any other airfields you may be passing near.

And in case you do land out and end up buying dinner for your rescuers, best take your wallet along too.

Now all you need are great thermals, wonderful visibility and happy landings. Have a great summer!

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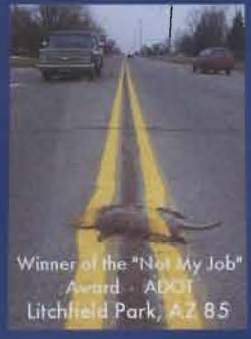
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Get your digital pho

THIS issue, S&G *has its first all-digital* Gliding Gallery. *As you can see, digitally-originated does not good, high-resolution digital images. Sadly, though, we do still get photos we'd love to run that, des to reproduce well in print. So here are some guidelines on submitting images from digital cameras:*

1. Photos should, wherever possible, be taken at the camera's highest quality megapixel setting. W of being used at a decent size on the page. A good lens makes a real difference, too. We can't emp chance of being used by S&G *if they haven't been seen elsewhere, on the internet or in print, befor*

2. Normally, an eight megapixel camera on the highest setting will allow for a full one-page image, i

3. Lower megapixel cameras can successfully generate smaller images, and three megapixels is a at 300dpi. While an image may look fine "on screen," by the time it has reached the commercial prin

4. Please send files as JPEG (.jpg) or TIFF (.tif) on email or CD. Degradation of images occurs on r that no post-processing is done. For compact camera images, the printers will adjust as required.

5. If all this sounds too difficult, just send send an example of your work at the highest resolution you can't make any promises we'll gladly take a look and let you know. This is now a broadband accoun

Our thanks go to this issue's contributors, clockwise from top: Nigel Green's panorama of Midland Gl July 9-16, 2005 (see www.comp-enterprise.com*); Pete Stratten took this shot near the French/Italian John Maddison's unusual perspective on a K-13 near Borders GC, Milfield, courtesy of Bob Cassidy contest (*www.weatherjack.co.uk*); Nick Smith's photo of tug and Ventus 2cT at Bloemfontein, New Ze Lake Keepit was dogged by storms – most of the cu-nims were dumping water, he says, like this one*





otos into print



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Experience of a lifetime

Gliding is all about exploring your own personal limits, as members of a recent RAFGSA expedition to Chile reveal. Our five-page feature starts with Nick Smith's account of a unique soaring environment

IN FEBRUARY 2005, along with the four other members of the Royal Air Force's expedition *Andean Condor*, I travelled to Santiago, Chile, to experience the unique flying conditions in the high Andes. We were very kindly and professionally hosted by the pilots of the Chilean Air Force Gliding Club at Vitacura Airfield. The airfield sits in the middle of Santiago's northern suburbs and, although it is only 50 metres wide and flanked by a motorway, tree-lined roads and houses, it hosts two gliding clubs and a powered flying operation. In order to gain the most from the time available, each of the British pilots was teamed up with an experienced Chilean mountain instructor, flying Janus Cs and Nimbus 3DTs.

The weather in Chile is dependent on a large high-pressure system in the Pacific. When the system moves towards the coast soaring conditions in the Andean mountains are reliable and strong. Flying here is unlike anywhere else in the world, although some of the techniques used will be recognised by those who have flown in the Southern French Alps. The thermodynamic lift in the Andes works on both faces of the ridges as the valley breeze, the anabatic flow up the ridges and valleys, combines with fierce heating of the sunward rock faces, causing turbulent lift below the ridges and narrow strong thermals from the peaks.

Soaring below ridge-top height the best lift is found a little way out from the ridge, where the smoother air is drawn up by the turbulent flow closer to the rocks. I was expecting to be very close to the rocks but on some days the lift zone is more than four or five wingspans from the ridge. On any given day and ridge you need to establish the distance out that this lift zone is working.

The techniques for using a thermal bubble below ridge-top height are the same as in the French Alps: always turn away from the ridge and only continue the turn if the lift is consistent and you can maintain safe separation from the ground. Otherwise, you must do figure-of-eight turns until you can dominate the peak and continue the turn. The thermals have a fixed base at the peak of the mountain rather than the mobile base of most thermals in flatland flying, which means that recentring into wind is more important than ever. The thermal cores are very narrow so that a normal angle of bank of 60° is needed. Any losses in efficiency are more than made up for by the strength of the thermal.

The flying day is different from back home in the UK: the lift starts late and it remains soarable all the way till sunset at 21.00hrs. Briefing is at midday: the military forecaster gives a comprehensive and highly accurate brief. The day is going to be good, with a number of weak inversions and a separate weather system in the high mountains above 10,000ft. I am flying with Carlos Bertens, a Chilean Air Force colonel and a Hunter and Mirage pilot. We've got a Janus for the day, which – with flaps – will help us optimise performance in the strong lift and sink we're going to experience. First take-off is planned for 14.30hrs so there's just time for a light lunch and a swim in the club pool before getting ready to launch.

'I can't help but shout with delight through my oxygen mask as the averager climbs to 14kt'

On aerotow behind the Bird-Dog tug the climb rate is superb; in our brief at the start of the week we were told that emergencies below 300ft are prohibited and now I can see why. Landout options are limited, to say the very least, in the crowded suburban area. Local procedures are to retract the undercarriage on tow, so releasing at 2,200ft Carlos and I track straight up the ridge to where the two Nimbus 3DTs are climbing well. The tight thermal is 6kt and takes us to the first inversion layer at 4,000ft.

At this height we can think about pressing on into the hills to the north. The Andes in this area are absolutely desolate, with no options for landing out safely, so safety heights at each point are very much the order of the day.

As we climb again, the inversion is quite weak and the strong thermal punches through. Although it becomes very broken within the inversion layer it smooths out nicely on top and we continue climbing well. In order to move on and safely enter the Valle de la Muerte (Death Valley) we need 5,200ft. The valley is a dead end to the east and is too shallow to glide out to the west. We have little to worry about as the lift is good all the way across and we pick up the ridge on the far side high enough to comfortably continue.

Cruising along on our right wingtip is a large Condor, quite relaxed in our company until he catches an updraft and easily out-climbs us. By way of contrast the Chilean Eagles often resent our presence and we've started thermalling in the territory of a big 1.5-metre span bird. Normally they attack only when the glider is low down near their nest but this one seems to have a grudge as it repeatedly buzzes the glider. Climbing 300ft above us it dives down on our tail before drawing its talons and coming over the left wing at about 80kt.

Catching me by surprise, the eagle spins round and dives head-on for the cockpit, talons outstretched. I duck and I'll admit something blasphemous escapes my lips but while I'm more worried about the proximity of the eagle to the tailplane Carlos can only laugh at my reaction. I'm sure he's seen bigger and closer before.

There are very active cumulus high over the peak of Los Lagunas and, joining the Nimbus again, the climb is 8-10kt to cloud-base at 11,000ft. We can now see our first goal of Alto Los Leones, a 14,700ft crag covered in snow and set against the deep blue sky; jumping the valley, we pick up the ridge which will take us to the top. It takes only one more climb and we get the chance to cruise around the peak to where the other expedition members are calling wave in the centre of the valley. All those expeditions to Portmoak and Aboyne now pay dividends and we pick up the wave at 15,000ft, as the lenticular resolves itself and the climb builds to 10kt. Topping out at 24,000ft we can see the Chilean coast to the west and well into Argentina to the east; the whole width of Chile beneath us. It really is like sitting in an armchair with the best view in the world.

After landing we are debriefed on the day and share learning points over a cold beer. With no previous experience flying in these mountains we are all eager to pick up all we can from the local instructors, who know each ridge in the area so well that they can predict the exact position of the thermals and what time of day they will appear.

Conditions the next day are better than any of the instructors has flown in 30 years and we're treated to what the Andes really



Back row, L-R: Chilean instructors Alex Chanes, Arturo Diez, Alfonso Soto, Felipe Zarpa, Don Alejo Williamson, Carlos Bertens. Front, L-R: expedition members Nick Morris, Peter Gallagher, Del Ley, Rick Jones, Nick Smith

Opposite: flying above the volcano of Tupungatito. 'It is difficult to put into words the feeling of cruising 20ft over the lip of a volcano at 21,520ft,' says Nick Smith



Nick Smith

have to offer. I can't help but shout with delight through my oxygen mask as the averager climbs to 14kt and we shoot straight up to cloudbase at 18,000ft. Flying in these conditions makes it all seem too easy but I know that to fly solo this far into the mountains takes five years of structured training with the club's excellent instructors. That makes it even more of a privilege when an hour and a half after launch, all five members of the expedition are soaring close to Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas, at 22,831ft. As if this was not enough, the weather holds for the following day and the expedition is treated to a guided tour of three dormant volcanoes. It is hard to put into words the feeling of cruising 20ft over the lip of a volcano at 21,520ft. The colours are vivid in the bright sunlight and there's a small turquoise lake in the crater that is steaming gently; the smell of the sulphur is almost overpowering.

All good things must come to an end but after eight days' flying I think that the 40 hours I have spent in and over the Chilean Andes are worth two or three times that in experience gained and the memories will stay with me for a very long time indeed. I have nothing but praise for the Chilean Air Force instructors, who took everything in their stride, remaining perfectly calm in the face of my rather agricultural flying techniques.

If you're in Chile then I recommend that you look in on the civilian club at Vitacura (*www.planeadoreschile.cl*); soaring the Andes really is the experience of a lifetime.

It's attitude that matters

Novice pilot Nick Morris reflects on the lessons learned from his two-seater flights in the Andes

WITH a mere 35 hours P1 in my logbook and no mountain flying experience at all, I was apprehensive about joining an expedition to the Andes. On the other hand, it was a unique opportunity and there could be no better way to build confidence, airmanship and flying skill. The fact that no one commented on relative experience levels, other than to confirm that I would, indeed, learn a great deal, did much to stabilise my confidence and reduce stress levels – so a big thank you goes to the many people who encouraged me to go for it.

In terms of the lessons that I learned in some 40 hours' unprecedented flying, I hope the following will offer encouragement to novice pilots given an opportunity to do anything that stretches their personal envelope.

I realised from the outset the first priority had to be to fly the aeroplane. It sounds obvious, but, when stress builds up (and it never announces its arrival!), the most basic reactions are often distorted. Attitude is also essential – in both senses of the word: personal attitude and attitude of the aircraft in flight. Being comfortable, hydrated and totally familiar with the cockpit enhances sensitivity to the conditions of flight and the aircraft's handling as conditions change. When I first learned to fly, I well remember an instructor encouraging me to feel the aircraft as an extension of my own limbs and this proved sound advice throughout the expedition. You simply cannot feel the glider if you are tensing every fibre and not relaxing in the seat. Getting a comfortable position before take-off pays dividends throughout.

Attitude in the aerodynamic sense was another early lesson – keeping it constant while thermalling, maintaining a consistent rate of turn and adjusting positively to centre. I learned again the importance of balanced turns and precise control inputs – all basic stuff, but fundamental to performance and safety. Just because there are 10kt thermals around, that doesn't make it any easier to find them or centre in them! With a constantly changing external horizon, it was important to build an 'internal' horizon through the appreciation of attitude based on other senses. It also helped to picture airflow relative to the wings (if in doubt, ask someone to draw the picture and then lock it in your brain). Another immensely valuable aspect was the feedback from other people's flights, not just the formal briefing and debriefing sessions but also the more general discussions throughout the day.

Ridge flying in the Andes was like nothing ➢

I had ever seen before but, again, the basic lesson of flying the aircraft at all times ensured that maximum advantage was taken of every ounce of available energy. Adequate speed means controllability and energy; energy means safety – these became my watchwords for some really profitable and highly exhilarating flying. I was fortunate to fly with very experienced instructors who allowed me to build progressively my own appreciation of the local geography – again, guaranteeing a manageable level of comfort as the workload increased.

Then it all came together, day four saw all five pilots soaring close to Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas. To get there, I had worked hard – but there was another lesson waiting to be learned again... when you need a break, don't hesitate to hand over to the instructor. So not only was I able to enjoy the scenery, I could also follow through as an expert worked the conditions to gain further altitude. Suitably refreshed, I took control again for a high-level transit to our next point and some more spectacular ridge flying at the end of the day. In between, maintaining heading and airspeed gave more invaluable practice at basic skills.

The priority for day five was to consolidate, to prove to myself that it had not all been a matter of one lucky day and to move on to increase awareness and maximise the value of each phase of flight. It worked, and the reward was more exhilarating flying, this time over volcanoes, with my first experience of mountain wave.

Looking to the future, I won't be rushing off to fly 500km in the mountains, but I know I shall be feeling comfortable and confident in handling the glider – with the added satisfaction of more accurate thermalling and manoeuvring in dynamic lift.

Equally important, though, I shall be aware of my relative experience and continue to manage my comfort level to guard against any temptation to become complacent.

One final point for all novice pilots... no one ever progressed by standing still. It's only when you push your own performance that you can start to maximise the improvement potential that we all have. I was fortunate to go near to the extremes, but my advice is to seize any chance to really stretch the boundaries of personal experience to see what lies beyond and to see what can be learned from the challenge.





An epic flight

Rick Jones relates the story of the Silver Badge pilot who, in 1964, became the first pilot to soar across the Andes. The 250km flight to Mendoza in a Blanik made Alejo Williamson a Chilean national hero

ON DECEMBER 12, 1964, Don Alejo Williamson launched his Blanik in pursuit of his personal dream and a world record – the first sailplane flight across the Andes. Conditions weren't ideal, but he chose to go simply because it was the anniversary of the flight that had inspired him – the first crossing of this hostile terrain by a powered aircraft. Alejo, a self-taught mountain pilot, had just 150 hours and his Silver Badge. Confronting and conquering these formidable mountains would secure him his place in the history books.

Alejo, born in 1925 in San Bernardo, is fourth generation Scottish. His ancestors moved to Chile in 1818, a century before Dagoberto Godoy made the first powered crossing of the Andes in a Bristol aircraft. Aviation was Alejo's dream from the age of seven, when he read about Dagoberto's inspirational flight. He grew up near the Chilean Air Force Academy in Santiago, and remembers seeing the aircraft flying over his house. In 1938 he and some friends taught themselves to glide by bungying a Grunau 9. Later, he and five friends went to Spain and became instructors. They returned in 1946 and two years later established the first gliding club in Chile to teach students, close to the present site of Vitacura in the north-east corner of Santiago.

Alejo now has around 8,000 hours gliding and 2,000 hours in tugs, but in 1964 he had just a Silver Badge and only 150 hours; he was teaching himself to mountain fly, in a Blanik, by trial and error. He kept this a secret because he "didn't want other people to think him crazy". As someone who has flown in these harsh mountains, I can safely say that this was one of the craziest ideas I've ever heard and it no longer happens: it takes around five years for a pilot to gain the necessary experience within a very well-structured training system. But Alejo had his dream of crossing the Andes to Argentina, and there was no one with any experience he could call upon. So, after gradually pushing his boundaries over the previous months and years, on December 12, 1964 he set out over a cold and snow-covered landscape in Blanik L-13 CC-K7W.

He had decided on the flight the day before after a cold front had passed over Santiago. The conditions weren't as good as anticipated and he launched quite late, at



Main picture: the route Alejo flew in 1964
Left: launching at Vitacura in the suburbs of Santiago
Right: Rick Jones (left) with Alejo (right) in 2005

(photos on this page and opposite by Nick Smith)

Andes facts and figures

THE ANDES is the longest mountain range in the world, stretching all the way along the western coast of South America. It is more than 7,000km (4,350 miles) in length, up to 500km (310 miles) wide in places and, with an average height of 13,000ft, only the Himalayas are taller. Flying here is extremely impressive, whether you're a novice or a pundit. Increasingly, pilots are heading to South America for outstanding conditions and breathtaking scenery. Klaus Ohlmann has explored the Andes as part of the OSTIV Mountain Wave Project. World record chasers are to be found in Argentina, including Steve Fossett, Terry Delore and Diether Memmert. Europe's winter has been a busy soaring season in South America with many incredible flights pushing the limits of the possible. Here's a taste of what can be achieved: some of the world record claims currently waiting to be ratified by the FAI (Fédération Aéronautique Internationale):

Free Distance: 2193.4km (04/12/04)
Pilot: Terry Delore
Crew: Steve Fossett
Where: El Calafate, Argentina
Glider: Schleicher ASH 25 Mi

Speed over an out-and-return of 1,000km: 196km/h (17/12/04)
Pilot: Manfred Albrecht
Crew: Margitta Albrecht
Where: Chapelco, Argentina
Glider: Schleicher ASH 25 Mi

Distance using up to three turn points: 1,820km (17/12/04)
Pilot: Diether Memmert
Where: Chapelco, Argentina
Glider: Schempp-Hirth Ventus 2 CM 15m

And this ratified record is one of several held by Klaus Ohlmann:

Free distance using up to three turn points: 3,009km (21/01/03)
Pilot: Klaus Ohlmann
Where: Chapelco, Argentina
Glider: Schempp-Hirth Nimbus 4 DM

If you want to try your hand at mountain gliding why not start with a visit to some of the UK clubs that have access to wave and ridges (see *www.gliding.co.uk*)? Talk to someone who's flown in the Andes and see what they advise. Klaus Ohlmann (*www.quovadis.aero/uk/index.html*) runs guided trips to the Andes, too, and offers tips on expeditions.

Debb Evans



Reaching Alto Los Leones, which was on Alejo's route to Argentina, was one goal for a flight during this year's RAFGSA expedition to Chile. Over the valley beyond this 14,700ft crag, they found wave







Above: then and now – Alejo's 1964 picture of Alto Los Leones, and Nick Smith's, taken this February. Above right: journey's end – Alejo and his Blanik leaving Mendoza

13.10hrs. His release height was 3,000ft, but Alejo was down to a little over 1,100ft before he found a reasonable first climb, and it took him 40 minutes to climb away over the nearby hill of Manquehue (I call it a hill but this is relative: it's 2,000ft higher than Snowdon). He just hoped the terrain would warm up as the flight progressed. Gradually, he worked his way west of the hills of Los Espanoles and across Valle de la Muerte, then north-east to Lagunas, with its unique cement-like rocks, and east towards Alto Los Leones.

By now Alejo really was in the Andean mountains: there is a stark contrast between the rolling hills of scrubland and the sheer cliffs of the Cordillera. Just before Alto Los Leones, he came across a sharp ridge and tried to work out how long the sun had been heating the rock face. He decided that the valley winds would eventually start. After making several more passes close to the cliff, Alejo noticed what he thought at first was smoke coming from the ridge crests. Then he realised it was snow being blown by thermals. He entered the next valley and began to climb, at one point getting caught out close to the mountainside and thinking he would crash. However, he managed to find an escape route and continued to climb.

Following the ridges north, he crossed the national border at Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer!) 18,500ft above where the old road crossed the border into Argentina. At this point he took one last picture, a self-portrait, deciding not to take any more, as he "didn't want anyone to accuse him of being a spy". He had no documents at all with him: no passport, no licence and no flight plan. He had his doubts, but had to get to the other side and realised there was now no turning back. He turned north again and headed for the highest peak in the Americas, Aconcagua (22,831ft), but ran into heavy sink, so turned back south.

He headed east, now zigzagging the Rio de las Cueves gorge, but found himself dangerously low. A condor marked a climb just north-east of Punta de Vacas. Running the ridges using whatever energy he could, Alejo realised it wouldn't be possible to get to Mendoza in a straight glide: he didn't have the height. Instead he followed the Rio Mendoza gorge. North-east of Polvaredas he was just a little over 1,000ft agl in the valley. As he passed over a bridge Alejo found zero sink; he eventually began to climb north of Cerro del Burro and contacted wave. Flying at 65km/h, he climbed to 13,000ft, headed south then east, and tried to remain high as he crossed over the road to Mendoza south of Guido. North-west of Portrelliros, Alejo found himself in a valley that seemed too narrow to turn in. Eventually he managed to turn north, but it was now starting to get dark. He hung around trying to find lift but the valley winds that feed the thermals had stopped. Poor light meant he had no defined horizon. Fortunately, he made his way into a wider valley, leaving it near Cerro Pelado. He found himself going into a rocky, unlandable area at a height of a little more than 200ft agl. At this point he thought he would "either crash or succeed". He gently pressed on and finally the horizon dropped away – he could see Mendoza and knew he was going to fulfil his dream. The straight-line distance from Vitacura airfield to Mendoza is around 185km, but Alejo flew about 250km in extreme conditions. Starting his final glide, he felt "lord of the world".

'He found himself going into a rocky, unlandable area at little more than 200ft. At this point, he thought he would either crash or succeed'

The flight had taken 5 hours and 50 minutes and, when he arrived over Mendoza international airport, he had no radio, so he made a circuit in the opposite direction to attract the attention of the controllers – as if a Blanik glider arriving from the direction of Chile needed to! He landed on the main runway and taxied off at the first available exit. Initially, a jeep raced towards him and four or five Argentinian Air Force personnel approached, but no one was sure quite what to do. However, a journalist had seen the Blanik's arrival and telephoned his office; soon reporters surrounded Alejo.

Once news of his incredible achievement reached Chile, President Eduardo Frei Montalba ordered a Lan Chile DC6 be sent to retrieve Alejo and his glider.

Such a special achievement made a national hero out of a quiet, friendly and very modest man. On his return he had to move out of his house for a while and stay with friends, such was the media interest in his epic journey. Shortly after the flight, he was introduced to President Montalba, and later met astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

Gliding had a much higher profile in Chile after his flight and Alejo has inspired many others. He has been awarded numerous accolades, but pride of place goes to the FAI Lilienthal Gliding Medal, presented to Alejo in Helsinki in July 1969.

I have been very lucky and feel extremely honoured to have met and flown with Alejo, a living legend who is revered as a national hero to this day.

As he approaches his 80th birthday, Alejo still flies with students – living proof that dreams can be fulfilled.

Two decades later: the first out-and-return

THE knowledge that was gained by Alejo Williamson and the marvellous example he set inspired other pilots in turn to fulfil their dreams. One successfully crossed from Mendoza to Santiago, the reverse of Alejo's journey, but it would take another two decades for a double crossing to be successfully completed.

Alex Chanes, the current CFI of the *Club de Planeodores de Santiago*, set off with four others in early 1984 to attempt this difficult trip. The possibility had been discussed before and it had been tried twice, but both bids had failed when the gliders had to land in Santiago. This third attempt was made on January 11, 1984 using two Januses (one of which Alex was flying), two Mini Nimbuses and a Ventus.

The reason for starting in Argentina was twofold. The first was political, as at the time the Argentinean authorities wouldn't allow the gliders to enter their airspace unless they also landed in the country. Secondly, soaring conditions start slightly earlier in Argentina, allowing for a longer gliding day.

With everything ready, the gliders took off around about 11.00hrs local. Suitable conditions were triggered at around 13.00hrs. They climbed to 16,500ft on the eastern side of Cordon del Cerro Yereta, and headed west, following the reverse of Alejo's route. This time though, they had the luxury of height and excellent soaring weather.

Flying over the tops of the ridges in the Rio Mendoza gorge, they managed to stay high using the techniques Alejo had developed. As he had, they crossed the border over Cristo Redentor, heading south-west for Santiago and their turning point of Vitacura airfield.

They turned Vitacura at approximately 15.30hrs, still high, and headed north-east to re-cross the border again at Cristo Redentor. Soaring conditions were once again excellent for the flight back to Mendoza. The only problem the team encountered was a large thunderstorm over the airfield there and, although they arrived back at 18.00hrs, they had to wait about 30 minutes before they could land.

The aircraft were all high-performance sailplanes, the pilots had all had years of training in the mountains and, although their double crossing was no mean achievement, it demonstrated just how exceptional Alejo Williamson's original flight had been.







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Airspace update

Carr Withall provides the annual update from the BGA's airspace committee on recommended procedures for cross-country flights in sailplanes

DURING 2004 the Airspace Committee was continuously involved around the country, as reported in the last issue of *S&G* (p10). The long-awaited raising of airway bases in Scotland and Carlisle area can be seen on the map *(right)*. These changes took effect from February 17 and are most welcome. The changes to the West of England airspace will not take place until March 2006.

On the European front, the UK will not implement the change to lower from FL245, what we refer to as the upper airspace, to FL195 until early 2006. The Single European Sky plan to further lower all airspace as controlled airspace down to possibly FL100 is to be discussed again. However, the opposition from both military and general aviation in UK is definitely a die-in-the-ditch matter to protect Class G Open FIR airspace.

Aeronautical Information Service

During a competition, gliders met with RAF display aircraft en route to a large display that had been properly NOTAMed. The gliding club had not fully checked the AIS NOTAMs. THIS IS INEXCUSABLE. I know that the AIS system is still far from user friendly but please make sure you check the AIS website before flying cross-country (*www.ais.org.uk*). The Red Arrows website, where you can see their display programme, is at *www.raf.mod.uk/reds*. The BGA website (*www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/airspace/introduction.htm*) has an excellent guide produced by Chris Nicholas and Michael Cross on how to obtain AIS and NOTAM information.

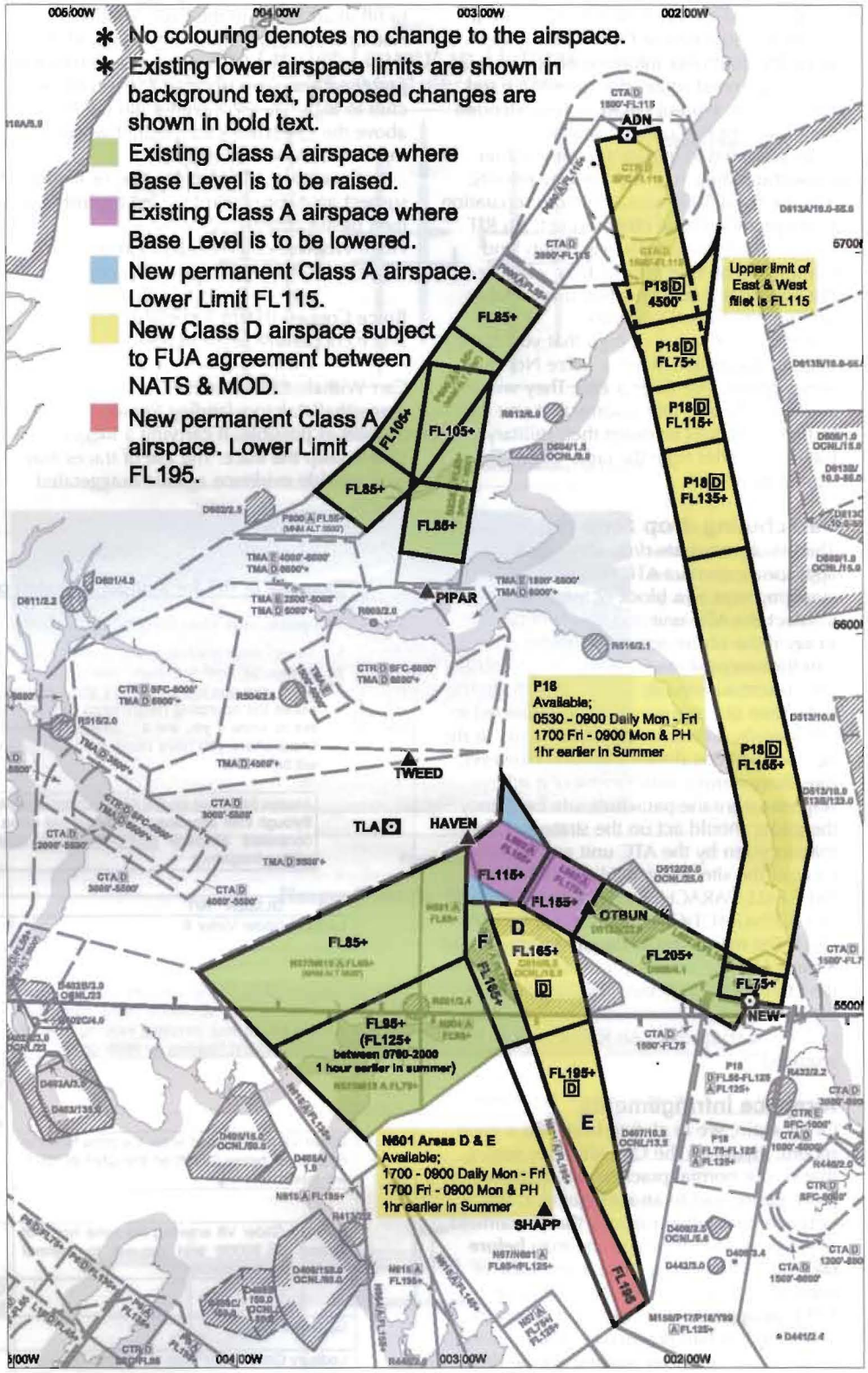
This *S&G* does not therefore include the full description of all types of airspace. See *Gliding and UK airspace* update, April-May 2004, p42, for full details and descriptions of airspace. What is important is that we follow recommended practices that will assist our safety and other users of airspace.

Class D airspace

The increase next year and in the future of these areas of controlled airspace around regional airports will mean that cross-country flights will more often have to route through Class D airspace. The only good reason for controllers to refuse access to a glider to transit this airspace is if they are truly busy with other traffic. It is known that a couple of ATC units, A couple of ATC units are not helpful to gliders while others are being very helpful. If after first contact with ATC you are refused access immediately ask for the traffic information that is causing the refusal and politely remind the controller that it is Class D and you are flying VFR in VMC conditions. There is an agreed R/T wording for requesting a clearance and flying through Class D airspace and this is on the BGA website (information for clubs and members then airspace) and reproduced overleaf. There is also a form to complete when a pilot has flown through successfully or been denied access to Class D airspace, which is also on the BGA website.

Code of Conduct for flights through Class D airspace

Remember that you must obtain an ATC 'clearance' to fly through any Class D



airspace. Tell the controller that you are a 15-Metre, Standard or Open Class glider. Keep the controller informed of any change of your planned route, due to massive sink, for example. Do not circle on the extended centre line of the airfield runway.

Be prepared to initiate avoiding action notwithstanding your right of way priority. You are flying VFR rules, therefore separation is not provided from other aircraft. An R/T licence is required. However, safety and commonsense take priority over whether or not you have a licence when unavoidably drifting into Class D airspace.

If the cloudbase is so high that you can fly over the top of Lyneham or Brize Norton zones please give them a call. They will see you on radar and will assume that you are in their zone and so divert their military traffic five miles from the radar target. They should be helpful.

Parachuting drop zone procedures

The list of parachute drop zones and the appropriate contact ATC frequency is on the aviation maps as a block of information. Contact the ATC unit and they will be able to say if the site is active. The glider pilot can then request the DZ frequency to obtain the current activity. By talking directly to the parachute site one may either be allowed to cross safely, if they are having a break, or fly around the zone if they are busy. However, most importantly, in the event of a nil response from the parachute site frequency the glider should act on the strategic information given by the ATC unit and remain clear of the site. YOU WILL NEVER SEE A FREE FALL PARACHUTIST IN TIME TO TAKE AVOIDING ACTION. IF IN DOUBT KEEP OUT. The major sites at Langar, Peterborough/Sibson, Weston on the Green and Hinton-in-the-Hedges are very busy. Be sure to make in-flight R/T calls to ascertain actual status of DZs on your route. An R/T licence is NOT required.

Airspace infringements

Once again, we in gliding have had a good record. Flying on the QFE altimeter setting, that is, our normal practice can, however, more easily lead to an infringement. The airspace committee suggests that the airfield QNH be written down on the map **before take-off**. When flying close to the base of controlled airspace this QNH setting or 1013, as appropriate, should be set on the altimeter. It is bad practice to add the airfield height to the altimeter reading during flight.

Airproxes

Despite the new symbol for gliding sites on aviation maps and the clear cable warning given on the leaflet with every new map, there have been several airprox reports involving gliders, at less than winch launch height. Both military and civil aircraft disregarding the symbol on the map caused these. There were also very many other incursions over gliding sites well below winch launch height. There is a simple form to fill in and send to the Civil Aviation Authority's Safety Regulation Group when this happens. The BGA sent out a *Cables Kill* poster with a piece of cable to every flying club to highlight the need for aircraft to fly above the cable launching height when flying very close to a gliding site.

If considering filing an Airprox, or if you suspect an Airprox may be filed against you, then please contact:
Hugh Woodsend, 01993 830588 or
Hugh_Woodsend@compuserve.com or

Bruce Cooper, 01628 521360 or
bruce.cooper68@virgin.net or

Carr Withall, 01442 862577 or
carrwithall@ahappylanding.freeserve.co.uk
as soon as possible. If carrying a logger please keep the trace. The use of traces may well provide evidence against exaggerated claims.

Maps

There is much useful information at the bottom and side of the map that can greatly assist on cross-country flights: for example, parachute site contact frequencies, ATZ frequencies, Danger Area activity, etc. With the number of light aircraft, helicopters and gliders flying in our congested skies it is essential to use every bit of airspace possible. This can only be done if the correct frequency is immediately to hand when you wish to inform airfields that you are likely to fly close to or over fly. **Always fly with the current map.**

Finally, if you're lost...

Remember if you are truly lost and are worried about infringing controlled airspace call on the distress frequency 121.50. This service can very quickly find you as long as you're above 2,000ft and south of Manchester.

Example of R/T for a glider crossing or flying in Class D Airspace

Two golden rules when using R/T.

1. Always listen out before you speak: there may an R/T call already taking place.
2. Always be brief and state clearly your request. On initial call you should give your call sign, your position and height and then state your request. As we are gliders you may be asked the operating height band that you are hoping to operate within. Controllers would like to know if you are a Standard/15metre or Open class glider. They do not need to know where you have come from, but an idea of where you wish to leave their airspace will be helpful.

Always listen out on the ATC frequency whilst flying through their airspace and always call when leaving controlled airspace BEFORE going back to a gliding frequency

GLIDER R/T	ATC R/T
Ledbury Glider Victor 8	
	Glider Victor 8 pass your message
Ledbury Glider V 8 is a standard Class glider overhead Syston at 3500ft flying north and wish to transit your airspace keeping East of Wymeswold and heading for Nottingham.	
	Glider V8 cleared to enter Ledbury zone North of Syston not below 2000ft on the Ledbury QNH of 1021 maintain VMC and call entering.
Glider V8 is cleared to enter the zone North of Syston not below 2000ft on the QNH of 1021, will report entering	
	Glider V8
Ledbury Glider V8 entering the zone North of Syston at 3000ft and request to thermal overhead Wymeswold	
	Glider V8 request granted, please call when back on course for Nottingham
Glider V8 Wilco	
Ledbury Glider V8 is back on course at 4000ft	
	Glider V8, roger , you may see a 737 on your left 3 miles away climbing to the North. Report leaving the zone
Glider V8 wilco and I have visual contact with the 737	
Ledbury Glider V8 leaving controlled airspace	
	Glider V8 roger, have a good flight.

In this example the glider callsign is V8 and the Class D Aerodrome is Ledbury

When it isn't worth rigging

Brian Brown, the vice-chairman of Borders GC, explains why their smart new hangar is far more than just a storage shed

LAST June Borders GC officially opened its new purpose-designed hangar to accommodate 22 private syndicate gliders. For a low rent (initially £100 per year per glider) it offers access to each individual glider, which can easily be moved in or out by one person with no risk of hangar rash.

Rationale

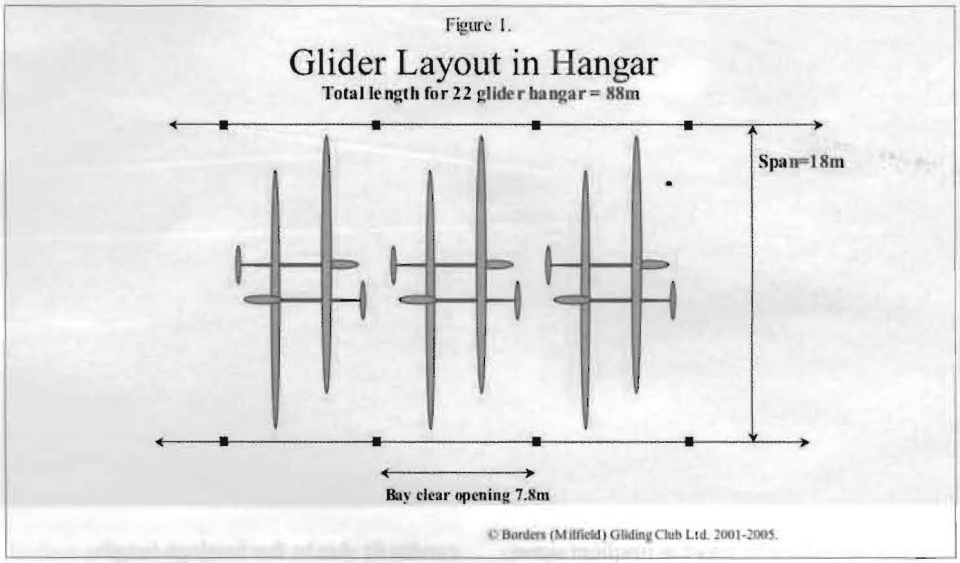
Extra hangar space is always "nice to have" but this construction was intended to address two problems in particular. The first is one of the major disincentives in the sport, namely, the daily chore of rigging and de-rigging. Normally at the start of a promising day pilots would start to rig with the help of two or three other people and then return the favour to help them to rig also. The process would be reversed at the end of the day. When the wasted time was measured it was found to be typically over two hours.

This is not news to glider pilots. However it is becoming an increasingly important factor as today's work demands leave less free time and gliding must compete for attention with many other sports. If the rules of golf specified that at the first tee players must spend an hour lifting a pile of logs off the course, and at the end of play an hour must be spent lifting the logs back again, then golf would become less popular.

This new hangar is for privately owned gliders so in theory the problem could also be solved by having a hugely increased fleet of club gliders. Even if that were affordable it would then, of course, need the construction of a new hangar in which to put them.

The second problem addressed was how to get the most cost-effective use of all the club's facilities. The club launches gliders by aerotow only. The success of the club has been based on aerotowing gliders to the excellent hill lift, which is out of reach of ➢

Figure 1.





The author of this article believes he has enjoyed almost twice as many flying days since the new hangar came into use, because he flew on days he wouldn't previously have believed it was worth rigging. For a full explanation of how it works, see Hangar design *on the next page. All the photos are Brian Brown's*

Figure 2.

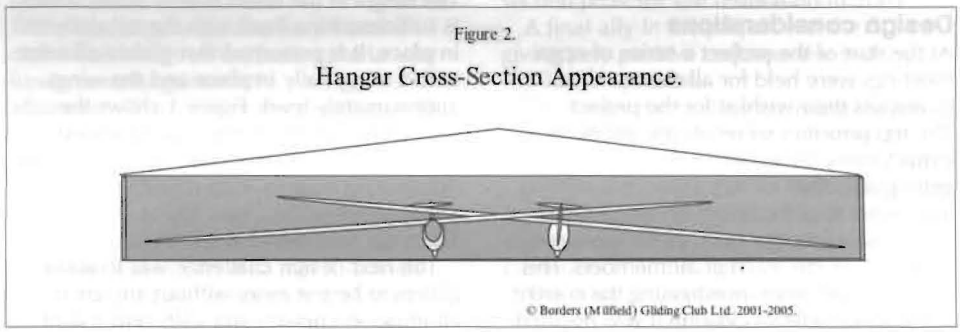
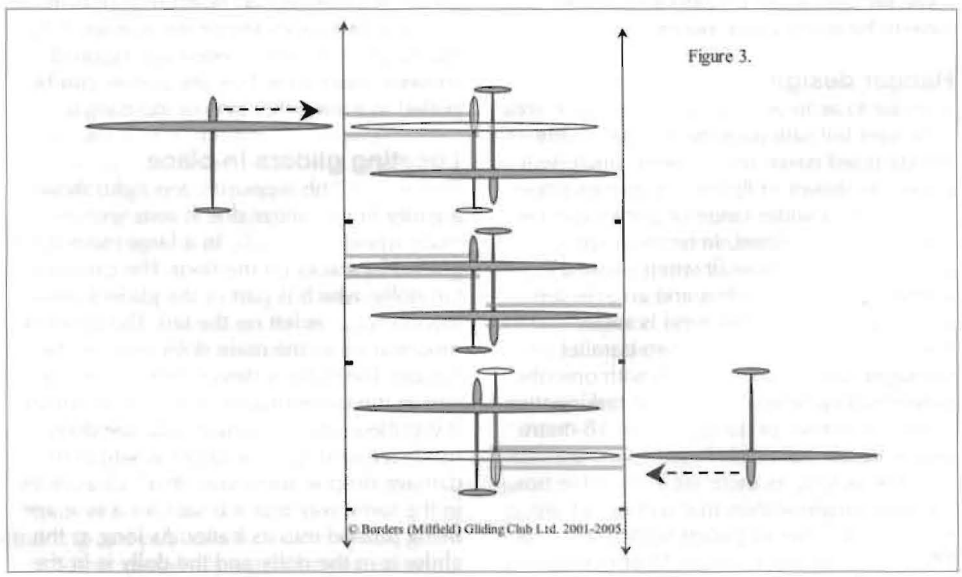


Figure 3.







Above: the completed hangar (the rainbow is optional)

Left: under construction. The low height is a deliberate decision to keep costs down and rent affordable

➢ a winch launch, and into the frequent wave. It has also been based on careful control of costs to keep our prices low. We need to maximise the utilisation of our tugs to spread their high fixed costs. This means being ready to seize even brief opportunities for good flying. Our new hangar allows pilots to decide to fly at short notice and be ready to go at the launchpoint with no other help.

The concept of the hangar therefore goes beyond just putting up a storage shed. It is about maximising the opportunity for a good day's flying. It is also about better control of costs, which is of benefit to all members, including those not using the hangar.

Design considerations

At the start of the project a series of open meetings were held for all the members to discuss their wishlist for the project. The top priorities were: (1) the ability to extract every glider individually without getting out other gliders, (2) easy putting-in and removal of the glider by one person, (3) no risk of hangar rash, and (4) low rent, to be within the reach of all members. This is a tall order. After investigating the current designs available worldwide it was decided that this would require a novel design and some firm decisions on priorities would have to be made at the outset.

Hangar design

In order to achieve minimal use of floor area with tight but safe packing, the bays were standardised based on 15-metre single-seat gliders as shown in figure 1 *(previous page)*. In practice, a wider range of gliders can be safely accommodated. In terms of span, gliders up to 17m can fit when skewed at a small angle. A Phoebus and an SHK are currently hangared. The limit is set by the closest safe gap for the two parallel fuselages. Larger spans can fit with one (the outermost) tip removed, a trivial task relative to the alternative of derigging. An 18-metre LAK is inside but much larger spans are possible as long as there are removable tips. The only single-seaters that will not fit are the small number of gliders with spans over 17m with one-piece wings. Most two-seaters cannot fit due to the fuselage length, the limit being slightly over 8m. Not all two-seaters are excluded; a K-7 is currently hangared.

These exclusions are the consequence of the priority decision to make the most cost-effective construction to accommodate the vast majority of all private gliders on site. People choosing to buy a glider in future can factor this limitation into their choice.

An important factor in cost reduction was to keep the hangar height to the minimum. Not only does extra height add direct material costs but also extra consequential costs due to wind pressure and risk of uplift. The height at the doors is only 2.3m, which is sufficient for a T-tail with the tail dolly still in place. It is presumed that gliders all enter with a wing dolly in place and the wings approximately level. Figure 1 shows the general layout. The hangar for 22 gliders is 88m long and has an 18m span. Each bay opens on both sides with a pair of sliding doors, giving a clear opening of 7.8m. There are no internal supports.

The next design challenge was to allow gliders to be put away without any great effort by one person and with zero risk of hangar rash. Figure 2 on the previous page shows in cross-section how the gliders fit in interlocked pairs inside the hangar, having been pulled in sideways. Figure 3 shows in plan view how the gliders can be pulled in from either side of the hangar.

Locating gliders in place

The photograph *(opposite, top right)* shows a glider in its hangar slot. It rests with the main wheel in a cradle in a large main dolly guided by tracks on the floor. The castoring tail dolly, which is part of the glider's usual tow-out gear, is left on the tail. The glider is mounted on to the main dolly outside the hangar. The dolly is then connected to the end of the cable of a hand-winch by which it is pulled into the hangar until the dolly reaches end-stops. The glider is safe from damage despite some very small clearances in the same way that it is safe for a fuselage being pushed into its trailer. As long as the glider is in the dolly and the dolly is in the tracks it is located very precisely.

The post holding the winch is near to the centre-line of the hangar and is bolted not to the floor but to the end of the metal tracks. The tracks themselves are bolted into the floor at just a couple of points. This means that the tracks and the winch post can be easily moved to suit the individual glider and easily changed if the glider changes.

You may wonder why a glider pulled sideways will not twist worse than a skittish supermarket trolley and refuse to enter exactly into the tracks inside the hangar: outside there is only sloping rough ground. Within the club there was scepticism (to put it mildly) about whether this would work. The trick is in the detailed design of the main dolly and a wing-tip dolly.

Main dolly

The main dolly is a strong tubular metal construction with fat wheels. The glider sits on a cradle in the longitudinal chassis. The chassis is not connected directly to the rear axle but is jacked up in a frame connected to the axle using a simple bottle-jack. Outside the hangar, lowering the jack drops the cradle to the ground, which allows the glider to be rolled onto the cradle on the level. Having wedged in the glider wheel, the jack is raised to give the cradle a small ground clearance so that the dolly and glider can be winched-in sideways. The cradle carrying the weight of the glider is close to the rear axle and there is a long length of chassis up to the front steerable axle. That front axle has a long A-frame handle to which the winch cable can be connected. This geometry and weight-distribution makes the whole assembly easy to steer.

Tip dolly

Another part of the kit is a wing-tip dolly *(see the photo at the top of the next column)* fitted to the outermost wing just before winching in. This tip dolly has a fat wheel in line with the wing and is deliberately heavy and non-castoring – unlike a normal tip dolly for towing out. This provides a non-castoring drag with a greater lever-arm than the tail dolly to keep the glider moving





Above: the tip dolly is what prevents hangar rash

Right: in the hangar, the glider rests with mainwheel in a cradle in a large dolly guided by tracks

straight whilst being pulled in. Fitting the dolly to the tip is easy since it has a handle up to waist height for wheeling around. The weight is unimportant since it is only wheeled, never lifted. As well as keeping the glider moving straight, it keeps the wings level, and it prevents the outermost wing from lifting if there is a sudden gust of wind when the glider is halfway in. The dolly is an ugly duckling but it is cheap, simple, and works perfectly.

Moving gliders single-handedly

To put away the glider, it is towed to its place outside the hangar using its normal towing gear. The main dolly, with winch cable attached, is wheeled out in front of the glider nose. The cradle is lowered to the ground and the glider rolled on. The wheel is wedged and the new wing-tip dolly is fitted. The cradle is raised using the dolly's jack and winching-in can start. Once inside, the heavy tip dolly can be removed and the normal tip dolly replaced.

To remove the glider, simply open the doors, grab the wing tip, and walk backwards. Outside, the cradle is lowered, the wheel wedge removed, and the glider rolled off ready for towing away.

The system has worked very well for all gliders, with some minor adjustments according to type. Even if the glider is not perfectly aligned before being winched in, and starts a bit off-line or skewed, it usually self-corrects or just needs a minor pull on the steering arm as it approaches the tracks.

The benefits

Looking at my own logbook for the past year, almost half my flights were on days when I would have initially decided that it was not worth rigging.

It is now possible for instructors to get in some solo time in their own gliders at the end of the day even if there are only a couple of hours left before sunset.

It is also possible for syndicates to expand if they wish since there are now more usable hours per day per glider.

For the club as a whole the extra flying is noticeable. One example is that flying on Fridays previously attracted a fairly small group during the summer only but the numbers have expanded and it now runs all year round.

Funding

A quite separate challenge was to obtain funding for the project to make it affordable for members. A wide range of grant sources was probed and Sport England was found to be the only option for the size and type of grant needed. In the unlikely event that such a grant could be obtained, and at maximum level, it would still require more than a third of the cost to be raised from other sources.

The first steps were to ensure that the club would meet all the basic criteria – be fundamentally grantworthy – and to build alliances with groups or organisations with a mutual interest in the club's success. An important criterion for grants is now not just the direct sporting activity but also the contribution which the club makes in the local community. Fortunately, the club is an important asset in an area that is sparsely populated and that is not over endowed with facilities. We have a history of being involved in local events, such as school fundraising and disability sports promotion, and make a positive contribution to a fragile local economy.

This is recognised by the borough and county councils who made small but significant grants towards the project. One demand by Sport England is evidence of local support and there is no more convincing evidence than cash squeezed out from tight local budgets.

One step taken was to formalise some of our *ad hoc* activities: the club became one of the founding members of the Glendale Sport and Leisure Association, a consortium of about 30 local sports clubs. This aims to improve facilities in the area and increase participation. Although our club is not large in gliding terms, it is the biggest sports organisation in the area and helps create critical mass for the association to bring training and publicity to smaller clubs.

Another useful ally was a nearby quarry company, Tarmac Northern. Our airfield is on a restored former gravel quarry, which must be restored to meet specific planning permission requirements. However, future planning requests can be helped if a company has "gone the extra mile" in helping with the after-use of previous sites. We therefore identified an area of mutual interest and they provided free of charge the site levelling work and sub-base materials for the large hangar area and surrounding aprons.

For us, the benefit was worth about one fifth of the project cost. For Tarmac it helped them win the Quarry Products Association second prize for site restoration in 2003.

A final ally in the project was the BGA in giving very positive endorsement in the grant application process.

The tracks and trolleys are integral parts of the functioning of the hangar so were included in the scope of the project. Many club members played a role in reaching our target by volunteering to fabricate these and this counted as part of the financial contribution of the club.

The grant process was a lengthy one of application/refusal/appeal/reapplications over a period of more two-and-a-half years but the club is grateful to Sport England for the final grant of over £95,000 which made the project possible.

A final bonus was when we gained second place in the UK Sports Club of the Year Award of 2003. This prestigious national award is presented by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts and the Central Council for Physical Recreation.

The club was nominated by the BGA to represent the sport of gliding as setting standards of best practice for gliding in terms of sporting and community contribution and fundraising skills.

The nominated clubs then compete for the national title against all other sports in a "short"-list of several hundred clubs. Although pipped at the post by a worthy winner, the Dartford Judokwai, we were pleased to be the first gliding club to reach the finals. The cash prize of £4,000 was also most welcome.

Flying with confidence

Helen Evans shares her story in the hope it might help you realise your gliding dreams

CURRENCY and confidence are linked problems I've dealt with on and off during my flying life. I love gliding, but at times they've come very close to making me pack it in – and I'm certain that they do prompt other capable pilots to quietly leave the sport. Such pilots want to glide, and gliding needs them, but we aren't always good at keeping them. If *you* are one of those people, I hope that this article will help. If you aren't, maybe you'll recognise someone you know... or once knew.

A decade ago, things looked pretty good for my flying. I'd soloed in 1990 and got Silver in 1992, despite a bad second solo landing that left a nasty little dent in my confidence and a rather larger one in the K-8. In 1994, I did Gold height in my K-6CR, DJE; in 1995, it took me through 73 hours to my first regionals; then I bought into a Discus and flew 27 hours in 1996, finishing Gold with 351km in my second comp.

Looking back, the timing couldn't have been worse for a competitive perfectionist like me. Getting my Gold Badge coincided with a new and demanding PR job, as well as the onset of winter. Suddenly, I had no obviously achievable goal, little time to fly, poor weather when I did steal the time, and a glider I wasn't yet fully at home in. The following year, gliding holidays were weathered out while work made weekend flying too intermittent for anything other than the odd "check flight" followed by timid little solos followed by – well, another long gap before a repeat performance. And the job didn't get any easier; indeed, promotion meant even more work.

The less I flew, the less confidence I had, and the less confidence I had, the less I flew.

A couple of years of this were enough to make me wonder if I really had it in me to fly gliders. Understandably, people at my club were starting to wonder the same. "Fly more!" they urged. But "fly more" seemed to be the problem, not the solution: I knew that my skills weren't what they had been – I couldn't create time to regain them – I began to seriously doubt my abilities – and the last thing I wanted to do was to talk to anybody about what I thought was a personal failing. Surprisingly, even becoming *S&G*'s editor in 1999 didn't help – on top of everything else I now felt I was meant to be some kind of expert glider pilot, as well. The two-seater flights became fewer and the solo flights almost completely disappeared.

Still, after another 18 months of getting work under control I tried again, with a fortnight's gliding holiday in July 2001; the weather, for once, obliged. Thanks to some comprehensive P2 flying, I got back solo, cross-country, and current on field landings. Problem solved. Then chronic family illness and bereavements intervened, and two more years passed in a haze of distractions and exhaustion. I barely got airborne, even P2. Bone-weary, I almost convinced myself I would never fly again.

Throughout those years of doom and gloom, one thing helped me persevere, a throwaway remark an instructor friend had once made: "What you have to decide, Helen," he'd said, "is whether or not you really want to fly gliders". There was no question. So, in 2003, as the exhaustion slowly passed, my first task was to clear the way to go gliding. No gardening. No guests or visits away at the weekend. And no wasted holidays crewing.

The classic gliding problem, of course, is that when you have the money to fly, you don't have the time, and when you have the time, you don't have the money. The answer for me then was to visit a club where I could book a half-day and be sure, weather permitting, of a decent amount of time in the air. A date in the diary also meant that, psychologically, my gliding came first.

'You've flown yourself right into a danger zone here,' he told me. 'You do realise that, don't you?'

Another bonus was that I knew the instructor was both an excellent and an honest one. "You're so uncurrent you've flown yourself right into a danger zone here," he told me before we even left the ground. "You do realise that, don't you?" Such honesty, followed by the necessary training, is much more useful than a hesitant "well, your flying *seems* OK, just a bit rusty," from some kind chap who, bless him, has spent half an hour with you doing a normal soaring flight and ordinary circuit.

Scheduling your gliding like this is not cheap, but the intensive refresher first got me airborne regularly then, in September 2003, solo. I wasn't really sure where to go from there, but one flight made all the difference.

December 17, 2003 – the Wright Brothers' centenary – was a crisp, sunny winter's day and I was desperate to fly. I managed to book the last (powered) trial lesson of the day at a nearby airfield; my husband kindly treated me to it and joined us for the ride.

If you were lucky enough to fly above southern England that day, you may recall how beautiful it was. As we took off, the Welsh mountains along to Hay Bluff were a solid black silhouette edged in the bright orange of sunset, their bases obscured by

How you could help other pilots

IF YOU'RE an experienced pilot or an instructor and you think someone is going through currency and confidence problems, the first thing you have to recognise is that there's only a limited amount you can do. The only person who can actually make a difference here is the pilot himself or herself. And if they don't want to talk honestly to you about it there's almost nothing you can do – apart from making sure the club doesn't let them fly themselves into a situation beyond their capacity to deal with.

However, if they are prepared to talk and do have the motivation to do something about it, here are some hints from my own experience.

Don't tell them straightaway what they need to do, even if it's obvious; people need to arrive at their own solutions. Instead, ask open questions (ones that can't be answered with a simple yes/no) like:

What flights have you enjoyed/are you proud of?
What flights didn't you enjoy/aren't you proud of?
Why did/didn't you enjoy them?
What's getting in the way of your flying?
What's helped your flying in the past?
What would be a realistic goal for you to aim for?
What would help you, do you think, to achieve...?
What one thing would make a difference to you?
What else haven't we talked about that's relevant?

If they come up with practical things that they need (training, check flights, dual cross-country, field landing checks, a roadworthy trailer, or whatever) and you can't deliver those yourself, help them develop a plan to achieve them.

Do ask difficult questions, in a non-threatening way ("Is the job an excuse?" one friendly instructor gently asked me. No, but it made me realise that the things that the job displaces – boring things like shopping, cleaning, mowing the lawn, sleeping – had become excuses).

If your club doesn't have a mentoring scheme – my club, like others, has an excellent one – can someone be found who has the capacity and character to set one up and keep it running?

If you're a less experienced pilot and see someone else at your kind of level going through problems, team up with them – sometimes it's easier to admit your fears and mistakes to a friendly equal than to an instructor or pundit – and together look for further advice and help. You're almost bound to learn something along the way... and at worst may be lining up a willing helper for your own flying!

Five tips to get you back where you belong

1. Be honest with yourself

Do you really want to fly gliders? Why? (It's not compulsory!) What do you love about gliding? What pleasures/responsibilities are you prepared to give up or postpone to do it? Who or what are you going to say "no" to? What's stopping you? Are the obstacles really obstacles, or are they excuses? Or both? If you genuinely can't create the space in your life to glide, would it be better to promise yourself a return date – when the job ends, when the kids turn 15, when you've got the cash – rather than try now to attempt the impossible?

If after answering those questions you believe you can do something right now:

2. Examine the evidence

Go through your logbook – you might want do this in meticulous detail and/or in a relaxed, musing kind of way – and relive the high spots and the low points. If you haven't kept a logbook for ages, talk to your gliding friends about how you and they perceive your flying history. When was it going well? What factors helped then? And when did it go badly? Can you trace any problems to life events, or to a particular site, or time of year, or group of people, or incident or scare, or instructor, or glider, or disappointment... or whatever? If you can, what would help you get past that? Flying with a good instructor you trust will enable you to get an honest critique of your strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes it can help to do this at another club, away from any baggage you may have accumulated at your own, or where there are more opportunities to get airborne.

Once you've examined the evidence, you have some ideas about what helps or hinders your flying, and what you might realistically aim for next. Then:

3. Be positive

What have you learned about your flying that will help you in future? Do you need to fly regularly at your own club? How frequently? To take regular gliding holidays – in this country or, if you can afford it, abroad? Do you need to find a different instructor or fly at another site, away from peer pressure? Would a dual cross-country loosen the chain that keeps you sitebound? Would a lead-and-follow help you fly faster? Or do you simply need to shed some other responsibilities? (Let's face it, if your club really is too shaky to survive without just one person's devoted input, your martyrdom is probably making it weaker in the long term, not stronger). If you're the kind of person who responds well to goals, get some reliable input from an instructor or knowledgeable pilot when you set them, and make them realistic, enjoyable and incremental. To begin with, make them easy enough for you to score a few successes to keep you motivated, moving on to more challenging ones as your confidence or currency or skills or knowledge develop. Top pilots flying cross-country have shorter and longer-term goals, and run the two plans simultaneously. The same principle applies to your own flying life. If your goal is to get Silver height, but today conditions aren't up to it, take a launch anyway and practise contacting thermals low down. Then, when those higher cloudbases arrive, you're ready to take advantage of them. Focus on the opportunities, not the obstacles. And, if what you're doing isn't fun, then ask yourself why you're doing it.

4. Be open

Find a mentor or, better still, a small group of them (so you don't bore one poor person out of their mind with a second-by-second account of every setback and achievement – and so that they don't start feeling responsible for your gliding). Ideally, they will be people who know more than you do about gliding, people you trust and whose personal style doesn't clash with yours. If your problem is timidity, the last thing you need is a bully; if, on the other hand, getting up in the mornings is the issue, someone prepared to phone you without mercy at 07.00hrs could be just the ticket. If one or more of your mentors is an instructor that you can fly with as much as you need, even better. (The purpose, I need hardly say, is not for them to convince you that you're competent to do what you want; the purpose is for you to improve your flying to the point where you know you're competent to do it.) If your club is friendly and supportive, tell everyone what you're doing... you may be amazed at the amount of goodwill and support you generate. I was. If your club isn't... perhaps that's the problem.

5. Be persistent

Once you start, keep on going: don't let your achievements lull you into false complacency; don't let setbacks dishearten you; and don't let anything stop you!

a thin layer of low stratus; in front of that, the low light reflected silver from the river's broad meander; below us, pale frost that had endured all day defined the shaded Cotswold valleys; and further up the Severn Vale, on the horizon, was an extraordinary, opaque, shimmering petrol-blue colour I'd never before seen in the sky. All this – and the instructor let me handle the entire flight, too. It was just magnificent. I could not stop grinning for hours.

After that, my husband offered to help fund a motorglider licence for me; and when I mentioned this among friends at the 2004 BGA Conference, one instructor offered some motorglider flying, while another suggested I send her monthly progress reports. That encouraged me to examine my flying history in detail, by transferring my flying stats into spreadsheets. It took eight hours but the patterns were so interesting it was worthwhile. For example, though I'd always preferred aerotowing, the analysis reminded me some of my best flights had been from winch launches. Worth getting winch current, then. Again, it revealed I'd progressed most on courses or in comps, away from everyday pressures. And it was amazing how closely highs and lows in gliding reflected external life events rather than personal inadequacy. Obvious, really – with hindsight.

Armed with all this detail and after some useful motorgliding I asked an instructor to help me set some gliding goals. It took about ten minutes flat but had a value out of all proportion to the time taken. Adding numbers and timescales helped me understand the shape of what I was trying to achieve (not just "fly more," for example, but "fly fortnightly, if possible, and at worst every three weeks"). It helped me focus on the small things that make the big things possible and decide on an overall aim: by September, I would be back at the level of competence I last enjoyed in 1996, capable of at least attempting 300km cross-countries.

All the above was written in spring 2004; I was intending now, in early December, to finish with an account of my brilliant progress. And for the first couple of months all did go according to plan. I got current, soloed regularly and reconverted to glass. The reports helped, the targets were a great way to stay on track and the flying was fun. My first solo soaring flight that year was another I'll long remember, as a family of buzzards flew with me from cloud to cloud.

Then in May I went on a week's holiday. Disaster! Camping in the Scillies, I caught a cold, and it gave me a painfully blocked ear that grounded me until November.

So now I'm trumpeting a plan that appears to have failed. But of course that's not the case. Those useful spreadsheets reveal that in 2004, despite the six-month grounding, I did more solo hours and launches than in any previous year since my Gold in 1996; and it was the first year since then that my solo hours and launches outnumbered my P2 flying. So I'm annoyed but not dispirited by the enforced lay-off: I'm looking forward to summer and I know what I need to do.

Everyone is unique, so my story may ring no bells for you. But please do take anything helpful out of how – with the support of some very generous and able people – I feel I've managed to turn things around. I've put together some points that made a difference to me *(above)*; I hope they're useful to you.

Finally, if you do find yourself trying to regain currency, confidence or competence, remember that other people will also be struggling to progress. Within the limits of your own experience, do try to help them as others are, I hope, helping you. Good luck – and enjoy your gliding!

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has helped me: I'm sorry not to list you, but I'd need another page

From Typhoon to T-31

On weekdays he can go from stationary on the runway to more than twice Diamond height in a minute and a half. But at weekends Eurofighter test pilot Willy Hackett slows down considerably. Here Debb Evans asks about his day job and why he still glides

Where and when did you start gliding?
Well, I'd wanted to fly since I was a little boy, and by the time I was 11, my parents let me join the West Wales Gliding Association at Templeton airfield. I was so small I had to use my mum's cast iron skillet as ballast.

Did you like it?
It was amazing. I can still remember my first flight. There was this complete feeling of freedom, and it felt natural. I knew I wanted to be there. Learning to fly was clearly going to be a challenge but the instructors and club members were very supportive.

What was your first solo like?
It was on my 16th birthday, which was a Saturday. I remember getting into the K-7 on my own, not too nervous, again it felt natural. Then I was struck by how light the glider felt with just me in it, how quickly it got off the ground and how high I got on the launch. The other thing was how quiet it was with no one else to talk to.

Tell us about your day job
Frankly I'm very lucky. After that solo I went on to an RAF Flying Scholarship, got my PPL and then joined up. After flying training I was posted to the Tornado F3 force and did three tours. Then I went on exchange and flew Sea Harriers with the Navy for three years and, after that, to was posted to Test Pilot School.

What was that like?
It was fantastic. The course is a year long, with a lot of time away from home and a lot of work. But I got to meet some wonderful people from all over the world, and fly all sorts of aircraft from sexy fighters like F/A-18s to the Airbus A320 prototype. There's even a gliding night at Upavon, which was great. After the course I was posted to the Fast Jet Test Squadron at MOD Boscombe Down and to the Eurofighter Typhoon project.

What sort of flying do you do there?
Test-flying Typhoon varies, from envelope expansion flights where we probe and map out the handling and physical limits of the airframe, to weapon and sensor testing. When we were testing the carefree handling it was amazing. Typhoon is designed to look after pilots – you can do what you want with rudder, stick and throttles, so we had to test the corners of the envelope to see if the Flight Control System could retain control of the aircraft and prevent departure from controlled flight or possible aircraft damage. It was an incredible buzz, with my senses on overdrive, concentrating very hard and ultra aware of what was going on.

So how does that compare to gliding?
The biggest difference is that Typhoon is very clinical to fly. You feel totally removed from the aircraft at times. In a glider there's that direct link between hands, feet and control surfaces. With Typhoon, computers and black boxes fly the aircraft and you can feel detached, like you're only influencing the motion of the craft through the air. But what a ride: it is a brutal aircraft. The power and agility are phenomenal; it even accelerates vertically after take-off.

But you still glide – you must be hooked?
Oh, yeah. I'm a member at Bannerdown. I like the fleet – which ranges from a T-31 to an LS8 – and it's a great site with wave, ridge and thermal activity. The people are very friendly, there's a wide age range, they're passionate about flying and there's a strong social side.

Any funny stories?
I have to admit on my first attempt at Silver distance I managed just 13km from 9,500ft at Portmoak, landed out in the grounds of a mental institution and attracted a lot of attention from the inmates. No one would let me use a phone to get help. As it was in



In his day job Willy Hackett is a fast jet test pilot flying Eurofighter Typhoon. But he still enjoys flying whatever gliders he can get his hands on, at Bannerdown GC, Keevil



Flying over the Andes mountain range in Chile, on a 2003 RAFGSA expedition to the Andes. For more on this unique soaring experience, see p36 (photos: Willy Hackett)



Computers and black boxes are how you fly the Typhoon, says Willy: it's not like the direct link in a glider between hands, feet and control surfaces

the days before mobile phones, I ended up having to walk two miles to a payphone.

And what's your most memorable gliding experience?
It has to be going to Chile. I was part of an RAFGSA trip in 2003. It was amazing: breathtaking scenery, ridge racing down the side of glaciers, and flying over the top of Mount Aconcagua, an extinct volcano, at 27,500ft.

So why do you still glide?
For a number of reasons, really. It's a chance to give something back. I'm an assistant instructor and being able to pass on some of the things I've learned is great. Aviation has given me a hobby and my livelihood, and it is important to do something in return. Plus there's still more for me to learn, and I do pick up something new on most trips to the airfield. It brings me into contact with some wonderful people, and is good for keeping up core skills. For me gliding will always give a sense of freedom, because it is the purest form of flying you can get. There's that incredible sense of solitude, a wonderful view and life gets put into perspective.

In what way?
Well, as you sit thousands of feet above the earth, you feel separate from all the trials and problems of life. You see the bigger picture as you pass over fields and hills, different counties and sometimes even different countries. Plus an hour spanking up and down the ridge still sends me home smiling.

Finally, what gliding goals do you have?
I'd really like to get my 500km to complete my Diamond...

Do you know someone who you think should feature in this new series of pilot profiles? Hotshot racer or club stalwart, it doesn't matter: if you think they've got an interesting story to tell, we'd like to know. If you'd like to suggest someone, please do drop us a email with their name, contact details and why you think they should feature – editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk





MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

OFFICER IN CHARGE

Joint Services Adventurous Training Gliding Centre (JSATGC), Band C2 (MSF)
RAF Halton, Buckinghamshire

A vacancy will shortly arise at the JSAT Centre (Gliding) for an Officer in Charge. The aim of the centre is to develop the personal qualities of members of the Armed Forces through Adventurous Gliding Training in the Service environment. The training takes place in various gliders operating from RAF Halton.

Background: You will manage a team of 8 Service and 2 civilian gliding instructors/technicians. You will be required to manage the production and implementation of syllabi and an annual course programme covering some 25 weeks of the year with the occasional deployment to overseas military bases. You will be expected to supervise and instruct gliding to all BGA standards as well as manage all aspects of this small Adventure Training Unit including the maintenance of the Gliders and aircraft, and supporting ground equipment and infrastructure.

Qualifications and Experience: It is essential that you should be familiar with the ethos of Service Adventurous Training and have a comprehensive knowledge of the Armed Forces and be able to pass a JAA class 2 medical examination. You must be a BGA Full Category gliding instructor and also have a Motor Glider instructors rating. You must also have at least 5 years post qualification experience preferably with time supervising a flying operation. You must be a team player, with good communication skills and have the ability to manage work and resources to achieve results.

It is desirable that you have a comprehensive knowledge of flying and engineering supervision, in accordance with EASA, CAA and BGA procedures and that you hold a Private Pilots Licence Group A (SEP). You will be responsible for the supervision of all accounts, course planning, selection and administration, estate security, building maintenance and energy conservation, environmental protection and health and safety. You will be required to work flexible hours that may include some evenings and weekends.

The post is likely to involve contact with many high-ranking officers from all 3 Services. The candidate selected will be expected to attend a number of courses and meetings, some of which may be on military bases overseas.

Salary: The starting salary will be £20,821 which rises in increments to a maximum of £30,908. This post also attracts a Recruitment and Retention Allowance of £1,500pa.The Civil Service offers a choice of final salary and stakeholder pension schemes, giving you the flexibility to choose the pension that suits you best. Subject to prior approval, assistance with relocation expenses may be available to the successful applicant.

Further information about this post can be obtained from Mr Ted Norman, Officer in Charge, Joint Service Adventure Training Centre (Gliding) RAF Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks. Tel: 01296 696818. This vacancy is expected to arise in Aug/Sep 05.

Application forms are available from CPM (Rect)1F, HQ PTC, RAF Innsworth, Gloucester GL1 1EZ. Tel:01452 712612 extn 5122. This is a non-reserved post and is open to UK, British Commonwealth and EU nationals who have normally been resident in the UK for at least 5 years

The closing date for receipt of applications is: 21st April 2005.

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Club news



*Fred Platt, seen with CFI Tim Macfadyen (right), soloed on his 16th birthday, at **Bristol & Gloucestershire GC***

Angus (Drumshade)

LAST year was fraught with problems, including the retirement of our main training glider, a Bocian, so we ended up buying a K-7 in time for autumn. Now the days are getting longer, the sun is coming out and the first weak thermals were felt on the first Sunday in February. Much work has been done to improve the equipment and site for reliability, safety and appearance (thanks to Ian and Roger and everyone else involved). One major project to improve the access road will hopefully be done by the time you read this. A first for the club, two members went solo on the same day in early February. Congratulations to Roger Gibson and Graham Taylor. This will ease the burden on our instructors although we have a number of new members still in training to go solo and could really do with more instructors, but finding and training them takes time (any visiting instructors are always welcome!).
Wolf Rossmann

Bannerdown (RAF Keevil)

THE past year has not been outstanding, but highlights came towards the end of the year – with the brand new K-21, followed by a new Rotax Falke, which has now carried out its first aerotows. At our AGM awards went to Glen Turpin for most progress and to Bob Bromwich for coming second in the Pocklington Regionals.
The CFI nominated Pete Brownlie for his all-round contribution to the club. Hog of the Year had to be Keith McPhee, Best Flight went to Ron Peach for a gallant effort in his Astir, being 20km short of 300km, and the trophy for Overall Merit went to Jon Arnold, while Sue Brownlie and Alison Arnold were recognised for all their hard work. Discussions on a new clubhouse revealed that, although the basic structure is there, the building would have to wait for finances. Guest speaker Mick Boyden entertained us with his amusing reminiscences of his time in the RAF and GSA.
Derek Findlay

Bath, Wilts & North Dorset (The Park)

CLUB members have continued to arrive at weekends, and we have managed to keep flying on most of those days. Doug Mills took a break from his never-ending maintenance work on the mini tractors to create a diversion from flying by landing out behind the trees. Doug and glider landed safely. The Land Rover has been posing some niggling problems for Malcolm Rouse but, in his usual manner, he is working methodically through them, with a little "advice" from members. Thanks to Doug and Malcolm for their tenacity. The safety evening organised by Nick Bowers, our safety officer, was a great success with about 50 members in attendance. The hot meal before the meeting may have been a contributory factor. We are planning our annual trophy presentation evening and a club visit to Sutton Bank.
Jan Smith

Please send news to *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or Helen Evans, 7 Ollney Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud GL6 9BX to arrive by **April 12** for the June-July issue (for later deadlines see *www.gliding.co.uk*)

Black Mountains (Talgarth)

AT the end of 2004, we had achieved 2,444 launches and clocked up 3,301 hours' soaring, which means our average time/launch is 81 minutes! We owe a lot to the efforts of Don Puttock, our CFI, whose enthusiasm is a lesson to us all. The new rustic cladding of the club-house is complete and much admired by all. On a very sad note, Derrick Eckley's wife Gwen passed away during an operation at the end of December. This has shocked us all and our deepest sympathies go to Derrick and his family. We regard Gwen as one of the founders of BMGC some 25 years ago. She is already missed by all those who knew her quiet smile and amazing ability to keep Derrick under control.
Our AGM this year is being held in the local rugby club with refreshments provided. Kick off is at 7.15pm on Saturday, April 8.
Robbie Robertson

Booker (Wycombe Air Park)

AT the time of writing in early February, most of the activity is planning, but by the time of publication a good deal of it should have come to fruition. There are expeditions to Shobdon in the spring, Aboyne in the autumn and hopefully Spain next year. The AGM is imminent and the dinner-dance has been another great success. Prizes were awarded for a large number of achievements including Paul Brice's 750km-plus in his ASW 27B; our guest speaker was Brian Lecomber. Also planned are cross-country training and task weeks, while our own "No Entry Fee" Regionals is back again for June. All are welcome, but you do actually have to enter. After many years we've said goodbye to our resident tug engineer Dave Sarney, and we are also losing staff instructor Nigel Perry. We thank both of them for all their efforts and welcome Andy Henderson back to the staff.
Roger Neal

Borders (Milfield)

WE have had a healthy run of first solos recently. Kathy Maley went off in September, Chris Glennie followed her in January and Graham Mitcheson did so in February. Mark Fielden gained Silver height on January 15 with a wave climb to 10,000ft. It has become obvious that there is hardly a day when there is no soaring at Milfield. Usually wave provides the elevation. We have open weeks in September and October when all are welcome to try the Cheviot wave and slope experience. Details at *www.bordersgliding.co.uk*. On January 30, Andy Henderson climbed to 13,600ft and travelled the length and breadth of the Tweed Valley. Both Andy Henderson and Mike Charlton are taking up appointments as professional instructors (at Booker and Gransden Lodge respectively) and will be missed here. We are buying two Tost towrope retraction winches for our Pawnees. Among other things, these should improve turnaround time.
Len Dent

Bowland Forest (Chipping)

FLYING recommenced in late January after an extremely wet winter and for some it meant wave flights to



*CFI Matt Cook officiates at **Booker GC**'s annual dinner dance. (Richard Starey Photography)*

6,000ft. The fleet continues to improve, with one of our K-13s getting a complete re-covering and overhaul. The decision has been made to order a brand spanking new K-21 complete with anti-collision paint, although the CFI rejected a tinted canopy, as he wants to see the whites of our eyes. Our marketing team attended a superb marketing course at the Mynd in January run by Keith Auchterlonie and Helen Evans. Bob Pettifier hosted a successful Northern CFIs meeting in our lecture room, bristling with electronic gadgetry. A few days later, we held the AGM: congratulations to all who won cups and trophies. Most of the year's objectives have been achieved, and we are set to continue as one of the most financially accessible gliding clubs in the country. On that note, we warmly welcome visitors who wish to fly in this area of outstanding natural beauty.
Phil Punt

Bristol & Gloucestershire (Nympsfield)

CONGRATULATIONS to Fred Platt on going solo on his 16th birthday. The "new" Grob 103A Acro is proving popular. Don Puttock, our midweek winter instructor, is giving lectures and talks when flying is not possible, Gavin Wrigley starts again in April. Amelia Nash (Bristol University) and Fred Bebington, from South Africa, are to be midweek BIs this summer. The task week run by Sid Smith will be from July 23-30 and we're running the Standard Nationals from August 20-28. At the AGM, smoking was banned in the club bar. Members and visitors have enjoyed winter ridge flying from Bath to Broadway on west to north-west wind days and around the Welsh hills in north-easterlies.
Bernard Smyth

Burn (Burn)

THE Christmas dinner and our annual awards ceremony was well attended and enjoyed by all. Thanks to Edna Sharples and her team for providing excellent fare. The awards were presented by our CFI Alan Jenkins and for ➢

Trent Valley

TRENT Valley GC celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. The club was founded in October 1965 when 12 members of the Lincolnshire GC flying alongside the GSA at RAF Swinderby decided to form their own club. After rejecting several wartime airfields in the area, Sturgate, an ex-USAF base near Gainsborough, was selected. The club obtained a loan from members to purchase its first glider, a Slingsby T-31, and the first flight took place on the February 27, 1966. The club progressed well with membership increasing and the club fleet improving until in 1973 when the three concrete runways were dug up and used as hardcore for the nearby Gainsborough bypass. The club then had to search for another site and with the help of the local MP our current site at Kirton Lindsey was found. Members dismantled the hangar and reassembled it again at Kirton, and because Kirton is an all-grass airfield members built a twin drum winch to replace the reverse pulley system used at Sturgate. By February 1974 all the work was completed, the gliders brought out of storage and the club was able to resume flying. In 1989 it was decided to purchase a Piper Super Cub to use for aerotowing and a Piper Pawnee, our current tug, replaced this in 1995.

The club is currently upgrading its fleet; training is done in the Grob Acro and Puchacz with a K-13 used for basic instructional flights. Single-seater gliders include a K-8, K-6 and Astir, it is hoped to progress to an all-glass fleet. The club was recently given a Slingsby Swallow, which is being used to encourage our younger members. There are about 18 privately-owned aircraft including a Dart 15, Pirat, and K-6s up to Discus, ASW 20 and DG-505.

The club operates from two grass runways on the edge of the Lincoln escarpment, which unfortunately is not high enough for ridge lift; the airfield is situated about midway between Lincoln and Scunthorpe, our neighbours being the Red Arrows based at RAF Scampton. The main lift is thermal but when conditions are right wave from the Pennines to more than 14,000ft can be contacted.

At a glance

Full membership cost: £165 pa

Launch type and cost:
Aerotow to 2,000ft, £19.50; Winch, £5.00

Club fleet:
Grob Acro, SZD Puchacz, K-13, Astir, K-6, K-8

Private gliders: 18

Instructors/members: 17/80

Types of lift: Thermal and occasional wave

Operates: Weekends, Wednesdays, Bank Holidays and midweek on request

Contact:
Clubhouse: 01652 648777
www.tvgc.freeserve.co.uk

Radio frequency: 130.1

Location: 53° 27.955 N 000° 34.768 W



Above: the airfield at Kirton Lindsey, looking north. Below: the club fleet complete with winch and Piper Pawnee tug

Members frequently enter local and national competitions but we look forward each year to our own Wooden and Glass Cups. Over the last six years the competition has mainly involved just Trent Valley members but anyone with a wood or glass glider is very welcome. The club actively encourages new members: gliders are displayed at the annual RAF Waddington Air Show, and the local Air Training Corps are members. We fly several hundred Scouts every year from the Poacher Jamboree and welcome visits from local schools.

The club will be holding several events during 2005 to celebrate its 40th year; we have only one surviving founder member, Peter Holland, who has been the club's diligent treasurer since its formation – is this a record? We would like to hear from any past members who would like to come and help us celebrate. *Janet Nicholson*







➢ the first time aerobatics was recognised with Ron Jubb earning "Most Improved Pilot". Our flying got off to an exciting start in 2005. The club K-21 landed out on January 1 when the Pennine wave collapsed and, a few days later, Alastair Mackenzie completed a 90km cross-country flight using only thermals/power stations. Winter has not prevented us improving our flying skills; Stewart Otterburn delivered a very successful two-day aerobatic course from Oxford GC with Dave Bell completing the Standard Badge. Congratulations are due to Terry Foster for going solo in rapid time and to Karl Zatorski for his talents in Weatherjack's photography competition. An expedition is planned to Denbigh at Easter with many pilots looking forward to the prospects of soaring over Snowdon.
George Goodenough

Cairngorm (Feshiebridge)

SUNDAY, January 30 is a day Mike Morrison will not forget. A good west wind always creates a well-defined wave system, and Mike, strapped in his ASW 19, and armed with oxygen and a barograph, pulled off tow at 2,400ft and climbed to 14,500ft, and a Gold height badge claim. Well done! Our thanks go to our team of inspectors for keeping our fleet C of A'd and in tip-top order. "Mayfest" runs from April 30 to May 15 this year. The soaring conditions are wonderful up here at this time. Many 300km (and one or two 500km) up for grabs! Anyone wishing to join us should let me know ASAP by email at *chris@capercaillie.flyer.co.uk* or phone 01540 673231. Dates for "Octoberfest" this year are Saturday, September 24 to Sunday, October 9 – book as above. Check out details at *www.gliding.org*
Chris Fiorentini

Cambridge (Gransden Lodge)

CAMBRIDGE has reviewed its instructing programme, now teaching much more from aerotow. Colin Cowden, Pete Belcher, Mike Roberts, Gavin Dean and Alan Head have successfully finished their assistant category completion courses. Don Lees is continuing to run motorglider PPL training from Gransden. Our very successful refresher courses will be running from February to April. We will also be welcoming back our professional instructing team of Mike Charlton and Alan Head for the new season. From April 4 we are open seven days a week with evening flying starting on Tuesday, April 19. We are also running gliding "evening classes" from May 4 with fixed slots over six weeks for students. The Gransden Regionals are from August 20-28 and we still have some places available. The club has benefited greatly from winter works and is looking much smarter: many thanks to all who helped for their hard work.
Paul Harvey

Cotswold (Aston Down)

WE fly weekends and Wednesdays through the winter but this year the weather seems to have reduced flying days. Some brave pilots ventured to Lleweni Park over Christmas and were rewarded with wave climbs to 16,000ft and a good buffeting in the rotor! The AGM in January was uneventful although blizzard conditions reduced attendance. We welcome Robin Birch to the committee as projects manager, supported by Richard Carter. Richard Kill becomes social secretary and has also introduced occasional Sunday dinners at the club-house. Our Saturday evening winter talks continued with the chairman regaling us with his Gold height and 1,000km achieved on a bicycle in Central Asia. Regrettably, a keynote talk by Andy Davis had to be postponed owing to a serious power failure. At the annual dinner-dance, everyone had a magnificent time. Following a short speech from our president, Larry Bleaken, trophies including the prestigious white stick were presented to deserving recipients.
Frank Birlison

Cranwell (RAFGSA Cranwell)

THERMAL site or wave site? Whilst awaiting that first thermal of the New Year, on January 3, conditions allowed us to enjoy wave flying not often associated with flat sites. First contact (sounds like science fiction) was made off a winch launch, overhead the airfield. This took Chris Franklin to just over 3,600ft. Not to be outdone, Tim Davies took a solo aerotow in the K-21, contacting wave 4nm north of the airfield and spending a happy two hours between 5,000ft and 8,000ft with the best climb between 1-2kts directly overhead the City of Lincoln. Chris Franklin decided to have another go, contacting wave west of the airfield and spending a couple of hours between 5,000ft and 10,000ft – the latter being the highest climb of the day. For many clubs in or near the Pennines a regular occurrence, for we lowlanders a very rare opportunity to experience wave, but great fun when it happens.
Zeb Zamo

Dartmoor Gliding Society (Brentor)

THERE have been few opportunities for derring-do in the skies over Brentor recently, but notable achievements elsewhere. Steve Clark earned a Gold and Diamond height in South Africa (subject to ratification at time of writing), which makes him our first home-grown Diamond, after going solo at Brentor only two years ago. Other 'away' events include Paul Franz's annual sojourn in Australia, whilst closer to home Mark Gatehouse has been training for his BI rating with Bruno Brown at Shenington. The Zugvogel is grounded for repairs, but should be flying by the time you read this, as should the K-6CR, with its recovered wings and repaired tail skid. A huge effort has gone in stopping the rot in our launchpoint caravan. Alan Holland and others managed to soar to 3,000ft in shallow wave conditions produced by the north-easterly that blew across Dartmoor on Sunday, February 6.
Martin Cropper

Deeside (Aboyne)

THE poor weather that marked our 2004 season went on through December. However, the wave-season badge claims show that 90 per cent of the height gains in the UK were at Aboyne, so it can't have been all bad! January brought much better weather, with a number of 300km flights, while Jack Stephen and Roy Wilson both logged 500km. Jack romped round at 109km/h and Roy carefully ran in his new Ventus at a blistering 138km/h. Steph Cape has completed her Bronze Badge and has joined a single-seater syndicate on site. We were sorry to lose Lyn Ferguson-Dalling as our CFI; Al Eddie taking over for his second stint in the hot seat, while Sue Heard has taken over as secretary. For all wave-season bookings or UK Mountain Soaring Championship entries contact Mary-Rose Smith and for general information on visits at other times, please consult our website.
Mary-Rose Smith

Denbigh (Denbigh)

CONGRATULATIONS to our visitors from Aston ➢



*Top left: aerobatic course at **Burn**. Standing (left-right) are Matt Ellis, Ron Jubb, Martin Ellis, Dave Bell, and Peter and Betty Clayton. Bob Baines is in the front seat and Stuart Otterburn is in the rear cockpit*

*Above: Kath Maley's solo at **Borders** (Helen Barlow)*

*Below: **Dorset GC**'s winch, driven by Colin Weyman*





Bidford and RAFGSA pilot Terry Moyes encountered an unexpected hazard when he landed out on a recent expedition to the little-known African site of Polofrali. S&G is surprised Pete Evans, his partner in the glider, stayed long enough to snap this record of events. Now, chaps, repeat after us: "Size, slope, surface, STOCK..."

Club news

Down – Robin Birch achieved his Gold height with a 12,000ft wave flight, and Chris Huck achieved 16,000ft. Our cub members have also been active – Malcolm Austin completed his five-hour flight in challenging conditions on the ridge between Christmas and New Year in his K6-CR, and his syndicate partner, Ian Walton, has achieved his Silver height. The club fleet is recovering with the return of the Super Blanik and the restoration of the K-8. The K-7M is near completion, meaning we will have three two-seater club gliders active. The development of club facilities is also in progress. Most obvious is the new cabin at the east launchpoint, replacing the bus. Expeditions to Denbigh to enjoy all-year-round soarable conditions are welcome – please contact the office on 01745 813774 for more details.
Paul Jewell

Derbyshire & Lancashire (Camphill)

AT the AGM Dave Martin took over as chairman from Dan Reeves, whom we thank for all his hard work. Trophies were presented to Mike Armstrong, Nigel Howes, Jonathan Thorpe, Anne Jennings, Trevor Watcham, Ken Singer, Tony Smurthwaite and Martin Harbour. One outstanding achievement before Christmas was Rodney Williams' first solo. He is profoundly deaf so especially well done Rodney and his instructors. Part of the hangar roof also did its first solo in January, followed by a caravan, and a caravan roof. You will not see these in the badge claims, as none were acceptable landings! John Klunda has completed his Gold and Chris Worrall his Silver. Neighbours' Night was on January 22, when those who have acted as unintentional hosts to our gliders were invited for supper. Trips to Pocklington and Portmoak have been planned, and we are back in the Inter-Club League this year. Task Week is at the end of May and the Vintage Rally at the end of June.
Dave Salmon

Dorset (Eyres Field)

LIKE many clubs, we had been spending to maintain our tug, but our winch often got overlooked. Our Tost winch was pretty ancient when we bought it but has given us sterling service, and it now deserves some TLC. We have a replacement Chevy engine on its way, with transmission and all ancillaries. Doug Every, our chairman, has confirmed that our CASC application has been successful, and will mean a rates reduction. Other clubs thinking of applying should hurry as there is a backlog at the Inland Revenue, and the process is very slow. Our chairman is also working hard to finalise a revised lease with the landowners. We thank Doug for all his hard work. Club membership and aerotow fees have been increased for the new season, but winch launches and glider hire will stay at last year's prices. Mike Slade went to Omarama in New Zealand in December, flying at 21,000ft on oxygen, above the clouds. He also enjoyed a lead and follow along the Hawkdun mountain range, for nearly 300km. He then came home and made us all green with envy telling us about it! Our task week is from Friday, July 22 to Sunday, July 31. Visiting pilots would be made very welcome: contact Gerry Cox on 01929 555106.
Colin Weyman

Dukeries (Gamston)

OUR President Tim Bowles died on New Year's Day (see obituary, p61); he will be sadly missed. He worked to the end to help us relocate our site, which we may lose, as the power operation at Gamston wish us to leave the airfield. That quest continues, as does the flying with a keen and dedicated membership. The weather has not been kind, however. With the K-7 being refurbished, we have flown whenever possible. The K-7 looks good after being recovered and resprayed and she is entered along with our Janus and IS28 in the Two-Seater Comp at Pocklington in August. Three two-seaters in a comp from a club of 40 pilots shows the spirit and dedication to flying that Tim Bowles would have been proud of and which will see Dukeries survive site problems and go from strength to strength. Congratulations to Barry Belmont on going solo.
Mike Terry

Fenland (RAF Marham)

IT is confirmed. Fenland is now the official wave site of East Anglia. Early in January, Paul McLean and Bernard Hicks climbed to 10,300ft followed the next weekend by John Doubleday, though with not quite the same results. Details of next year's wave camp to follow! Also in January, Shipdam came to visit with their tug and their IS30. Lots of first aerotows for some of our members and some valuable spinning practice. Thanks to all those who attended the Christmas Do in the club-house, with special thanks to that special person who arranged, cooked and served it: that'll be me then! Big thanks too to those who helped and did the washing up! Welcome back to Olly Chubbock and Sid Wright. Stand by in the next issue for a report of the AGM. Don't forget to keep checking your emails for those important messages from your CFI and keep checking the website for the new feature of Duty Instructor.
Graham French

Herefordshire (Shobdon)

FOLLOWING our recent successful wave soaring week, the winter at Shobdon has been quiet. All of our *ab initios* have reached solo standard, which means that any new members wishing to learn to glide are likely to receive some intensive instruction! The strong winds in January removed most of our clubhouse roof and so in addition to carrying out some frantic repairs we are currently looking for a long-term replacement building. Thanks are due once more to John Warbey, who has decided to take a well-earned rest from his many years of service as tugmaster. These duties have been taken on by yours truly, who has consequently learned that daydreaming about soaring with red kites is not a good idea, particularly during the club AGM!
Mike Hayes

Imperial College (Lasham)

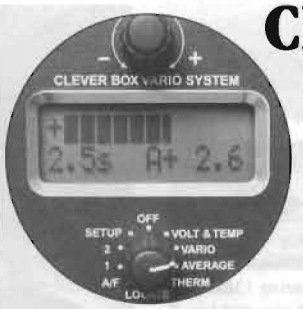
THE club celebrated its 75th anniversary in style at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, on February 5. We were honoured to be joined by John Farley as guest speaker for the evening. Thanks to everyone who came and to Claire Malpas for organising it. New Year was spent at the Mynd with Surrey University and the Lasham Cadets, flying five of the six days! Thanks to Alex Hartland for instructing and Midland GC for their help. To continue with the anniversary celebrations we are planning an exhibition of 'Imperial College Gliders throughout the ages' on the Queens Lawn on February 21, and a new website with the club's history has been launched at *www.icgcarchive.co.uk*. We will be sticking with tradition and plan to spend a week at the end of the Spring term gliding at Lasham to help give new members concentrated training for the soaring season ahead.
Edward Coles-Gale

Kestrel (Odiham)

WE have recently acquired a Skylaunch winch, which together with two retrieve vehicles is LPG powered. Thanks to Ian Pattingale for transporting it from Halton. Sylvia Scott did a great job organising our annual after-Christmas party, which was enjoyed by all. At our AGM Brian Garston and Bernd Vermeulen were awarded the Chairman and CFI awards. Peter Appleford, Kevin Buchanan, Barry Sealey and Mark Wilkins also featured. Fred Field is working hard breathing some new life into our K-21 gelcoat. A number of courses and an expedition are being planned for this year and our winter lectures will hopefully have explained some of the theory in anticipation of the practical.
Simon Boyden



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Lakes (Walney Island)

CONDITIONS in late November were very good with several pilots posting very respectable heights. Shaun Ryan took the opportunity to use the conditions and achieve his Silver height. Weather since then has been poor with very little flying due to the conditions and airfield work. All three runways are now available again for gliding. There are three new gliders on site: a K-6, ASW 19 and Skylark.

Phil Storer

Lasham Gliding Society (Lasham)

CHRISTMAS was celebrated with the traditional pantomime with the staff and senior club members acting the clown, followed by a delicious dinner provided by Mike Evans and his staff. A real live dance band completed the evening. We welcome Sandra Johnson to Mike's team. Our new glider simulator has proved its worth, not only on rainy days, but also as an effective training aid. Instructors under training can learn their "patter" on the machine. A new member was given his aerotow training on the simulator. He only required one check flight on a glider before being sent solo on aerotow. Three two-seat Lasham gliders are going to Jaca for all of March. The expedition has been well over-subscribed. We have taken delivery of a new Toyota diesel cable-retrieve vehicle. Our tug G-BPZP is expected back shortly from France following a complete overhaul.

Tony Segal

Lincolnshire (Strubby)

THE club has invested in the fleet that now consists of two K-13s and a K-8. We are planning an expedition to Shenington at the end of May. They have been warned. We are of course attending the Two-Seater Comp at Pocklington again, so look out there too. We intend to run at least one five-day course from our site this year and also a task weekend and flying weeks in May and July. The winter flying has gone well. We have been flying off the grass all winter, the plan from now on. The club looks forward to seeing friends old and new this year: bring a glider and try for the prestigious flying tiger. We intend to fly the rosebowl back to Trent Valley this year. It's cluttering the case up.

Dick Skerry

London (Dunstable)

DURING January we trailed three K-23s to Poland for refurbishment. Lloyd DuHaney and Hans Schuricht took one to the Polish border, collected by Dave Brown and Mike Pettican four weeks later when they delivered the third one. Many thanks go to Bernadette Pollard and Joint Aviation Services for the vehicle loan. We expect another Robin tug from Germany (due in February), joining our fleet of five. We had an incident half way up the slope of our driveway when a fuel tanker with full-ballasted tanks of aviation fuel could not make it. Moral: it climbs better with lighter ballast! A number of pilots visited New Tempe airfield in South Africa late last year, experiencing thermals to 15,000ft, and coming home with 300/500/750kms under their belts. Our 75th celebration on June 25 is coming together with lots of attractions. Sadly we report the death of our oldest serving member since 1935, Charles Ellis – a real link from the past (see obituary, p61). We offer our condolences to his wife, Annabel, and family.

Geoff Moore

Mendip (Halesland)

THE winter months brought prolonged periods of high pressure with associated northerly winds. On our narrow east-to-west ridge-top site this means either a brief circuit or risking being sucked into the valley. Ridge soaring days have been few and far between. One hardy group of members decided that Talgarth would make a pleasant change and went off there for two weekends with one of our K-13s. Overall it was a success despite the snow and mud. Our CFI was particularly chirpy, having celebrated his birthday with an 8,000ft wave flight.

Keith Simmons

Nene Valley (Upwood)

WE had a lively AGM discussing the many points arising from being a limited company. Pete Pearson has taken over from Ron Sibley as social member: thanks, Ron, for all your hard work over the last eight years. Alan Wyse has taken over from Trevor Taylor-Peach as safety officer. Alan is already planning a safety evening. We are now in the process of getting our K-13 and K-7 repaired after last year's hangar incident. Tom Brewster, who was a member of the Air Cadets when he was 16, soloed in 2002 in a Grob 109B at RAF Syerston then two years later soloed at Nene Valley in a K-7.

Dave Mansfield

Newark & Notts (Winthorpe)

CHRIS Harris and Adam Thornton managed to go solo before the club shut down for its annual maintenance in January. Everyone is looking forward to the coming season. Trips have been booked to Milfield and Pocklington for later in the year and a contingent will be attending the BGA Conference in March. The club is hosting a BGA Safety Evening at the end of February.

Noel Kerr



*Andy and Steve Mills (front) with their father Trevor at **London**'s awards. Andy and Trevor, respectively, were awarded "most promising" young pilot and instructor*

Nottingham Uni (RAF Barkston Heath)

AT the end of January, 13 NUGC members hitched up their trailers and headed for Wales, but ended up spending the weekend at Long Mynd instead! There was lots of great flying and it was particularly enjoyable getting to know the Midland GC members. Between paper tablecloth fights and an offer from one of the members to buy us dinner, everyone is looking forward to going back there soon! Also during January, we had many more students signing up at Refreshers Fayre, eager to learn how to fly! In addition to this, we would like to congratulate Huw Williams for his recent conversion to a Duo Discus and Chris Emerson for becoming aerotow solo.

Amy Cooper

Oxford (RAF Weston on the Green)

FINALLY something of note has happened at OGC: our winch breaking down! Our 18-month-old aluminium



*Inside the new 22-glider hangar at the **Scottish GC**, Portmoak. The idea, borrowed from Nympsfield, impressed Platypus (see p16). For **Borders GC**'s approach, see p47*



Club chairman John Williamson outside the £165,000 hangar, part-funded by private owners (12 years' rent at 6,000 each). It takes the entire club fleet (photos: Mike Bird)

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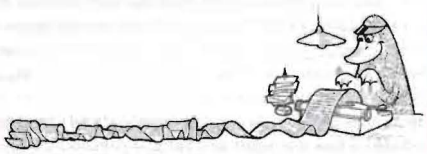
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Club news



*At the club dinner, Roy and Eve Gaunt were awarded honorary life membership of **Portsmouth Naval GC***



*Dan Yates of **Staffordshire** soloed on Christmas Day 2004 – his 16th birthday. Matching the red glider is his red hat with white trimmings, just like Santa's. We were rather disappointed to discover that the launch was not by reindeer...*

Tost drums broke again – frustrating and extremely expensive. We are looking into purchasing steel drums, which Tost apparently now supply for high-powered winches. On a lighter note members have remembered how to fly. Most notable are Claudia (Cloudy) Buengen, who stormed round her first 300km to claim Gold distance and a Diamond, and Ryan, John and Ben, who threw themselves in at the deep end, soloed within a short time of each other and are making great progress. George (TMB) Crawford took 'higher, further, faster' to heart and has spent the last year notching up more hours, countries and km than could possibly be decent and has managed a number of fantastic flights with a 655km among them. Last but not least, Andy Bray has re-soloed after a 29-year absence. It took him just eight dual flights. Well done to all of you. I also happened to notice John Gibbons and Jack Miller taking a dual trip recently and, by my reckoning, I make their combined ages to be somewhere around 155 years – could this be a record?

Simon Walker

Peterborough & Spalding (Crowland)

THE new hangar floor is complete: what a difference! Our Pawnee G-PSGC has arrived and looks beautiful. A party of members has left for Australia to combine Jim Crowhurst's wedding and sampling gliding conditions. We expect them to return with Diamonds in their luggage. Another expedition is booked for Ontur in March and we look forward to hearing tall stories from Spain. We have two new gliders on the airfield. Neville Robinson bought into a K-8 and Paul Goulding bought an ASW 19. We wish them many hours of fun with their new toys. Our dinner dance is booked for April 2 and our AGM takes place on Friday, April 8. We have introduced a social evening every first Saturday each month. On the first one Tony Fidler showed us pictures of his many decades of gliding and in February Martin Ewer hosted a great horse-racing evening.

Robert Theil

Portsmouth Naval (Lee-On-Solent)

DESPITE the winter gloom we have lost few flying days to the weather. Normally at this time of year the airfield acquires the characteristics of marshland, restricting us to aerotows only. This year it has kept relatively firm and we have been able to keep the winch in use, allowing most members to maintain currency and complete their annual checks. Once again HMS Collingwood provided the venue for our annual dinner and dance. This year the occasion was marked by the presentation of honorary life memberships to Roy and Eve Gaunt for their outstanding contribution to the club. There are few instructors at our club who have not benefited from Roy's teaching and experience on numerous courses he and Eve have conducted at Lee over the last 15 years.

Steve Morgan

Rattlesden (Rattlesden)

WITH the new season fast approaching, things at Rattlesden are gathering pace, with many talks planned for the coming weeks. Our Skylaunch is due for a facelift and our resident tug is on three-yearly overhaul. A very big thank you to Norfolk GC for letting us hire one of their tugs at this very important time of year – white card checks. Andy Page has gained his assistant rating, and huge congratulations to Bill Morse on his first solo flight. Chris Read is already taking cross-country flying seriously, landing out just up the road in our club Astir. We have two flying weeks planned for this season: May 23-27 and August 15-19.

Paul O'Leary

Scottish (Portmoak)

AFTER a very wet start, we ended January with excellent wave and many members achieved personal bests as well as height claims. The changes to the bases of P600 and B226 will be to our advantage and visitors should make themselves aware of these changes (details on *www.scottishglidingcentre.co.uk/* and our notice board). Our annual dinner and award presentations took place on January 8 with guest speaker Platypus. Awards went to Brian Scougall and John Galloway (Thorburn two-seater trophy), Kevin Hook (Boyle altitude trophy), Tony Brown and G Fraser (Andy Penswick trophy), Charlie Guthrie (Darren Powell Shield), Steve Derwin (Nick Wales trophy), Colin Hamilton (Instructors Quaich), Kenny George (Service Salver) and John Williams (Marshall 100km Triangle, Parker Distance, Docherty Distance, Sutherland, Lomond, McLay, Hot Wings and Height Gain Ladder). Flying achievements include: Brian Cox (Bronze), Roland Adams (re-solo), Ricky Jackson (Gold height) and Derek Storey (full Silver and Gold height).

Ian Easson

Shalbourne Soaring Society (Rivar Hill)

CONGRATULATIONS to Liz Sparrow on being selected again for the British Women's Team, Colin Baines for achieving his assistant instructor rating and Randle Theobald and Peter Ellison for gaining their Silver Badges. Mike Truelove has also been successful in gaining a Ted Lysakowski Trust award of a soaring course later this year. Thanks must go to the faithful few whose efforts, led by Rob Nicol our new equipment officer, keep the airfield machinery going through the dank winter months. We are currently trialling a new winch built by several members headed by Keith. It is proving to be very powerful and effective, and should come in useful when we host an inter-club competition on May 21-22.

Simon Holland

Shenington (Shenington)

WAITING for a launch recently, Ray Brownrigg and pupil were surprised to see a fox skip over the cable. Resuming pre-flight checks, a few minutes later, we witnessed a torrent of foxhounds come pouring over the bank, down the concrete runway, and right across the cable, in front of a K-8 on approach. Thankfully, the horses went round by road. Beware of leaving bits in a Toyota! Steve Codd set his annual bonfire alight and when Rowan Griffin couldn't find the tailboard for his glider anywhere, hinges were found in the ashes. Our landlord, Paul Gibbs, has kindly filled in the ruts and arranged a new parking area near the eight-acre east-west runway. We are getting used to the centre triangle being fenceless and useful, especially for cable break alternatives.

Mary Meagher

Shropshire Soaring Society (Sleap)

THE weekend weather has been awful. We have had some wave flights but most launches have been to maintain currency. Last year there were more expeditions than ever and our winter turnout shows the triumph of hope over experience. The Twin Astir syndicate has expanded to eight with exciting plans, possibly including a hangar. Colin Ratcliffe decided not to renew his instructor rating and Alistair Gilson will take up the post of CFI. Nick Peatfield returned to active gliding last year after a long period just tugging. He has also taken on the challenge of being chairman of our group in addition to being tugmaster. At the AGM we renewed the 20-year debate over whether to replace the Chipmunk. We recently replaced the propeller, and once again the outcome is to keep looking for something suitable. Plans have already been made for several expeditions this year.

Keith Field

Club news



*Alice Archer of **Wolds** went solo on her 16th birthday. She is seen with Allan McWhirter of Cayley Glider fame*

South London Gliding Centre (Kenley)

POOR weather conditions in December and January meant some of us did not get into the air as often as we wished, but summer is coming. We have had three boosts to morale that should lead to a great 2005. First, after three years of protracted negotiations, we now have a ten-year licence to operate at Kenley. Second, our club fleet has been augmented by a low mileage Sport Vega that even on non-thermic February days has had a queue of members waiting to fly it. Third, we hope that recent developments may result in significant improvements to our clubhouse and other buildings. Our next social event is our pre-season social evening when the prizes are awarded, including the dreaded "Golden Brick" given annually to the person who – in the opinion of the CFI – has had the most embarrassing incident in the preceding year. Speculation is rife.

Peter Bolton

Southdown (Parham)

THE high-pressure region to the north of Britain has brought joy to Southdown, with ridge running and local soaring for all. Linda Wagstaff soloed and visitors from neighbouring clubs joined the happy throng. Our Christmas dinner and awards evening was well attended and special mention is due to evergreen John Cook, who was honoured for his exceptional services to the club. With a view to reorganising our club fleet, we are looking for a couple of high-quality glass two-seaters. Anyone able to help please contact the secretary. The club will celebrate its 75th anniversary in June, with fun and games being planned. We reluctantly sold our club Astir to East Sussex, who will by now appreciate what a bargain they got. We were delighted to see Roger Coote back to full flying fitness in time to collect his Diploma from the Royal Aero Club for services to gliding.

Peter Holloway

Staffordshire (Seighford)

CONGRATULATIONS to Dan Yates (Christmas Day!) and Nat Hewitt for 16th birthday solos. Pete Gill has now taken over as CFI with many thanks to Andy Oultram for his efforts. Graham Bowes is now DCFI. Our annual awards dinner saw a gathering of 80 members and guests; many thanks to the organisers and helpers. Rangi de Abaffy won the 2004 Cross-Country Ladder, and Rob Lockett the most memorable flight of 2004 (508km). Chris Jones was awarded the Chairman's Cup for his sterling work as PR Officer over the last seven years, and Dave Wootton has now taken over. Bill Henderson won the Toby Jug for organising air experience evenings and the Burnt Out Kettle for getting the winch stuck to its axles in mud! Pete Lowe was awarded the CFI's Cup, and Ian Davies the Grotty Potty. Chris Fox and Alan Jolly won the Two-Seater Trophy, and Paul Crump the Heig! Early February sees us ahead of our launch target for 2005: let's hope this continues! Our annual hangar dance is on Saturday, June 11: for more information and tickets go to our website, *www.staffordshiregliding.co.uk*

Paul (Barney) Crump

Stratford on Avon (Snitterfield)

REFURBISHMENT is under way for the new season with Barry Monslow and Martin Greenwood leading the team. The main hangar lights have been replaced with halogens, giving excellent conditions for working, and the caravan is being transformed into a briefing/lecture room to keep CFI Peter Fanshawe and the instructors happy. Chris Bingham has taken over from Lee Ingram as site manager but Lee will still be around every week. Thank you, Lee, for your efforts. The Skylaunch winch has been having a major refurbishment and will be off line until some minor fettling work is completed. The diesel reserve winch has proved very successful with excellent launches. Thanks to our 'GLIDEX' computerised system masterminded by chairman John Dickinson I can report 627 launches and 77hrs 54mins flight time for club gliders from November 2004 to January 2005. This system has proved invaluable for extracting stats for Cs of A and all aircraft and pilots' figures for returns. We celebrated the club's 30th anniversary with a dinner in November and Tony Edlin has produced an excellent book with colour photographs. This comprehensive history will appeal to many current and former members. It can be obtained via the club website at *www.stratfordgliding.co.uk* or 01789 731095.

Harry Williams

Surrey & Hants (Lasham)

THE normal winter things have happened: all the C of A inspections have been completed and by the time you read this, Discus 397 should be back re-gelled and renamed as SH4. We have sold our two ASW 19s, partly to finance our new purchase, a Ventus 2 – due early next year. As a consequence, we have also revamped the membership structure – gone is the group 1 & 2 separation, and now all S&H members are eligible to fly any S&H glider (subject to flying qualifications), and the cost of flying our two K-8s has been significantly reduced. This means most of our members have access to more gliders this year, at a lower cost than before.

Paul Barnett

Ulster (Bellarena)

"2005 is a momentous year for the Ulster GC" is the headline in the February edition of the club's journal – *Wavelength*. This year we celebrate our 75th birthday with pride for being one of the earliest clubs to form in the UK; this is only a year younger than the British Gliding Association! The committee and CFI have been devising a programme of operations and calendar of events to keep the momentum rolling. With our new DG-505 (already commissioned with wave climbs up to 8,500ft) and to coincide with the timing of the Irish Nationals (May 28-30 and June 4-6) there are plans to run a cross-country course with Dublin GC from May 31 -June 3. Although winter has disrupted our weekend flying, essential repair and maintenance work, including the recovering of Queens University's K-13, continues thanks to the dedication of Owen Anderson and his team. Congratulations to Colm Walsh on going solo.

Seamus Doran

Windrushers (Bicester)

WE are pleased to have two new cadets and several new *ab initio* members from the Bicester area who have kept our instructors and two-seaters busy over the winter. Work on the clubhouse and hangar is in progress. The bar is looking good and serving a great selection of drinks, including real ale. We are looking forward to holding our first Regionals (July 9-17, 2005).

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Obituaries

Entry forms available from our website. Oxford University have finished renovations to their K-8, painted in Oxford Blue of course! We have several soaring weeks planned for the summer. The dates are on our website at *www.windrushers.org.uk*
Anne Mellor

Wolds (Pocklington)

CONGRATULATIONS to the lovely Alice for her solo flight on her 16th birthday, after a frantic skirmish to get her medical complete that morning. It seems that WGC now has a couple of ridges to fly on. Detailed briefings are required but already Graham Walker and Allan McWhirter got to 10,000ft in wave from the ridge. The same day Simon Barker got into a field. The hangar extension is now thumping along, due to an exemplary piece of project work by Roy Dell, with only a minimum of disruption. WGC now boasts an internet chat room for members to vent their spleen, and pick up tips from Miles.
Tony Kendall

Wrekin (RAF Cosford)

CLUB flying has been a little slack of late. The weather has not been good through January and the beginning of February. However, some intrepid members flew from Boxing Day to January 2. Local wave took aircraft up to 8000ft. Steve Briggs, our budding Silver pilot, got to this height, but without a barograph. New Year's Day delivered more wave and our first landout of the year, 500 yards from the airfield! Good decision to put in early by Dennis Maddocks – a contender already for the toilet seat, unless someone can do better! That's not a challenge either! We are all looking forward to the club wave and ridge exped to Denbigh GC, on April 2-10. We are planning to take our K-21, Discus, LS6c and the tug.
Trev Cook

Wyvern (Upavon)

IT is a challenge to find interesting news during winter! Successive weekends of poor weather do little to raise smiles, and the treasurer is depressed as expenditure exceeds income. However, work proceeds at a cracking pace on maintaining our fleet. Cs of A are complete on the K-13 and both K-21s. The Junior and the LS8 are in work, leaving only the LS4 to do before spring. The motorglider should look particularly smart after its inspection, with a spray painting of the fuselage. At the AGM David Ockleton stepped down as chairman. He has significantly improved facilities with the LS8 and later this year, the DG-1000, as well as upgrading the vehicles fleet from nearly scrap to new LPG-converted Range Rovers, which would be the envy of any club. Jamie Sage took on the chairmanship again and the rest of the committee was re-elected. Plans for 2005 include a series of *ab initio* courses, primarily aimed at training service personnel and two weeks of Exercise Wyvern Wings to provide cross-country challenges.
Andy Gibson

York Gliding Centre (Rufforth)

THE AGM made only one change to the committee with the chairman remaining Richard Smith, the treasurer Paul Hepworth and the secretary Howard McDermott-Row. The other members are Hugh Etherington, Keith Batty and Tony Lee. We are looking at providing a high-performance club two-seater for the Inter-Club League.
Mike Cohler

Sailplane & Gliding's thanks go to Debb Evans of Bannerdown GC for editing this issue's *Club News* to fit the available space. Debb, a radio journalist who is branching out into magazine work, too, has helped a great deal with the April-May issue: to find out more about her, see page 30

Rad Babic – Oxford University

OXFORD University GC mourns the passing of our longstanding member Rad Babic, who died suddenly aged 63 on December 11, 2004 of a heart attack. Rad (1938-2004) was a valued member of our club for 25 years and a great supporter of *ab initio* pilots, so many of whom had their first gliding experiences with him. As an instructor, his quiet confidence and calm enthusiasm were an inspiration to our many young pilots, and as our equipment officer his effort helped keep our gliders in the air and our lives enriched by the trips he organised. Rad is remembered by our members, past and present, as a kind man, always keen to help. In the words of his son: "Gliding was his life" – and it showed. You were a good friend, Rad, and we'll miss you.
OUGC Committee

Max Bacon – RAFGSA, Cambridge

IT IS with great sadness that I report the death of Max (1930-2005). He had a most interesting career in flying – firstly, after Cranwell, in the Jet Provost, Meteors, Gnats, Javelins and Hunters. I'm told he was the only RAF pilot to successfully cartwheel a Meteor. He was made a Life Member of the RAFGSA on his retirement from the RAF. He then joined Marshall Aerospace, Cambridge, joining Cambridge Gliding Club as an instructor and tug pilot. He was in our Kestrel 19 and Mosway syndicates – although he had the fast jet background he enjoyed vintage gliding immensely. He was director of two regional contests at Gransden and was the club's chairman from 1997 to 2000. A great administrator, he was most enthusiastic to get others into the air, but even with so many commitments he took on the presidency of the Cambridge Popular Flying Association Strut, and was involved in negotiating the new NPPL rating with the Civil Aviation Authority. Two years ago he had kidney failure, to which he finally succumbed on February 8 this year. He will be sadly missed by all of us who enjoyed his enthusiasm for flying.
Papa Hotel
For a tribute to Max from the BGA, please see p4 – Ed

Tim Bowles – Dukeries, Derby & Lancs

TIM (1928-2005), President of Dukeries GC, died on January 1 aged 76 after a relatively short illness. He was a man of remarkable character and boundless energy, continuing to play a leading role in the club till his admission to hospital. He was a founder member of Dukeries and his financial contributions purchasing gliders for the club ensured our development. Tim's selfless contribution of time and effort can never be repaid and will always be remembered. He was a kind, gentle man, a smile on his face and encouragement in his voice to new members or those having some sort of life crisis. Tim's family owned the site that is now used by Derby & Lancs GC, of which he was also a member. This spring would have seen Tim's involvement in gliding reach its 50th year. We shall miss him.
Mike Terry

David Chaplin – Yorkshire

IT WAS with shock and disbelief that we heard of David's death in an autogyro flying accident at Sutton Bank on December 15, 2004. David (1943-2004) started flying in 1959 with the air cadets and joined us at Sutton Bank in 1961, becoming a full cat instructor, tug and Falke pilot, accumulating over 4,000 hours flying. A former club director, chairman for 13 years and, latterly, senior instructor, David had a major influence over many years on the shaping and development of the Yorkshire GC. A big man in every respect, he will be remembered with affection, not only by club members but also by many throughout the gliding movement, who encountered his direct, forthright manner. Never short of an opinion, never afraid of expressing it, he worked tirelessly with good humour for gliding and his club. Whether teaching, tugging or working to improve YGC's infrastructure, his enthusiasm and commitment was an example to us all. He died doing what he loved doing – flying from Sutton Bank. For us at the club, this is a tremendous loss; he will be much missed by all who knew him. To Jean, his wife, their sons Andrew and Jeremy and to all David's family, we give our heartfelt sympathy.
John Hayes

Charles Ellis – Essex, London

CHARLES (1914-2004) passed away peacefully at home on December 21, 2004, after a gradual decline in health. His mind was still sharp and he enjoyed a good discussion with family and friends. He started gliding in 1932 at the Essex Aero Club, Gliding Section at Havering Park Farm, Collier Row, gaining his A Certificate in August 1933: Gliding Certificate no. 339. He joined the London GC in 1935, where he got his B certificate in June and his C in July. In 1937 and 1938 he travelled to Poland, where he flew numerous gliders. The war intervened. Unable to join the armed forces due to poor eyesight he joined the Volunteers, a group within the Finnish army fighting the Russian invasion in the Winter War of 1939-40. After an Armistice was signed he was interned in the country but escaped, skiing through Finland, Sweden and Norway to find a boat to stow away on. He was caught and returned to be interned again. He escaped again – this time successfully – stowing away on a boat in Petsamo (northern Finland in the Arctic Ocean, now in Russia). He remained hidden for more than a week to make sure that the ship did not have enough coal to return. His boat was intercepted by the Royal Navy and was forced to dock in Iceland; from there he returned to England. Some of his colleagues elected to go via Russia and were never seen again! He found work in the MoD, where he stayed till he retired. He returned to gliding at Dunstable after the war and was responsible for getting the club operational again; it was used as a PoW camp with some prisoners still in residence helping to rig and derig the gliders due to the barbed wire fence in front of the hangar. He gained his Silver in 1948, no. 171, and flew every nationals from 1947 to the early 1980s. He was on the BGA flying committee from 1949 to the 1960s and was LGC chairman from 1962-64. In 1954 he flew in the British B team in the alternative Worlds at Leszno with Dan Smith. The Worlds were at Camphill in that year; France was the only other western country allowed to Leszno. MI6 got in touch and asked them to take some extra photographs on tasks and report back. While he was there he met a Russian pilot, who was later to become the Air Attaché in London. This eventually attracted the attention of MI5 as Charles was employed in a sensitive position in the MoD. Charles wasn't an easy person to get along with, he saw everything in black and white, but would listen if you had an alternative view, and this caused some interesting committee meetings. He leaves behind his wife Annabel, son Rory, daughter Frances and four grandchildren. We shall miss him.
Rory Ellis

Mike Woolley – Wrekin

IT IS my sad duty to report that Mike Woolley passed away on Sunday, February 6, 2005. He had been a stalwart member of the Wrekin GC for many years. His input into the club's activities was phenomenal, raising the profile for prospective and current members, using his business acumen and his experience as a gliding instructor. The Inter-Services Regional Gliding Competitions of 2002 and 2004 would not have been the success they were without his detailed input. He was a gentleman and a thoroughly decent human being, who will be greatly missed by us all. At this time our deepest sympathies go to his wife Eileen and family.
Trev Cook

First of the season

Our anonymous contributor couldn't resist the prospect of a quick circuit on a chilly but sunny winter's afternoon...

IT WAS a cold, bright day in January so I thought I'd see if I could fly. Lots of people had obviously had the same idea; it was a busy afternoon. The slight north-east wind was bitterly cold, so I went inside to warm up. Refreshed by a cup of hot tea, I made my way to the launchpoint to help out. The queue had disappeared; everybody else had flown or left for the clubhouse and I was asked if I wanted to fly the Pegase.

I had previously given up the idea of flying but I couldn't resist the chance to take her up. It would just be a quick circuit, wouldn't it?

There weren't many people left at the launchpoint; the duty instructor had just taken off. I checked there wasn't anything untoward, jumped into the glider and did the usual checks. Eventualities? A slight tail/cross wind.

The Pegase took off behind the tug into the bright but waning sun. The air was crisp and visibility looked good, with just a few clouds around. We headed north of the airfield. I pulled off tow and turned in the slight lift of 1 up, to be completely enveloped by cloud. The instruments stopped moving and panic rose. I turned towards the airfield and lowered the nose.

I broke through the cloud; the hope that the increase in speed or loss of height would "unfreeze" the instruments evaporated (were they frozen or was something else wrong?). All the controls seemed to be working. With instruments still frozen I scanned the land below.

Where was I? I didn't recognise a thing: there was gloom all around. I removed my sunglasses, still gloomy and the canopy was heavily misted. I turned through 180° and scanned the horizon but still didn't recognise anything. There were small fields and lots of woods. I wasn't that far from the gliding site – so just where was I?

The gloom had now increased significantly and it was becoming difficult to make out ground features. The sun was obscured, cloud was above me and seemed to have spread out. I tacked north-south then east-west but couldn't find any of the usual landmarks. A sensation of being marooned in the air overcame me, but this wasn't making decisions.

A field landing was now inevitable, and the instruments were still frozen. Woods and sloping land seemed all around and it was impossible to make out the field surfaces. I didn't want to land in a frozen deep-rutted field. I spotted a big, flattish field, with a huge barn at one end, just before a steep drop. It looked suitable. On top of a hill, at least I could land into wind, up the slope, with no hedge obstacles. I scanned round, it was going to be this one, NOW. Deep breath, relax and concentrate.

The instruments were still not working so I had only a vague idea of height in the gloom but I lined up over the barn, turned on to the downwind leg and round on to base. The instruments came back to life. I made out a power or phone line on base below me, prayed there was no curlover in the dip and turned into the field. The ASI was working again – 55kts – I eased back gently. I didn't want to float over the edge and I had to stop before the barn.

Hurray: on the ground and we were OK, but it was very gloomy. I couldn't secure the glider but fortunately there was hardly any wind now. No-one in the barn; I had been hopeful but there was a light on in a house up the next hill. I ran down the hill on the

'There's no question that our welcome was considerably enhanced by the bottle of 10-year-old Laphroaig I carried'

frosty surface, down the dip into a quagmire and over the field gate. By the state of the area near the gate, this must be a cow field, although I hadn't seen any. At least it was a glass-fibre glider. Over a garden fence, no dogs visible, on to a patio. A family sat comfortably reading the papers in front of a fire – a relaxing Sunday afternoon.

I knocked on the patio door.

"Excuse me, I'm sorry to disturb you. I've landed in a field up the hill."

"How exciting". (Yes, far too exciting, and this quick flight is turning into hours of hassle).

"We saw you coming over and wondered where you were going. What's wrong? Can we help? Would you like a lift anywhere?" (Oh, guardian angels. Thank you!).

The farmer was not so accommodating: it took hours to get his number and when I finally spoke to him, he was less than enthusiastic I had landed in his field. "Gate's locked on account of people keep abusing the land and ploughing it up with cars and motorbikes". (Oh God, let's hope I haven't made a rut. It *was* a well held off landing).

"Could I come and take it out of the field tomorrow morning?"

"Maybe."

"What time would be convenient for you?"

"Dunno. I've got to leave by ten."

"Would half-past eight be too early?"

"Yes."

After protracted negotiations and profuse reassurances on my part, he agreed to let me have the key, which I would return when we were out of the field.

With effusive thanks and, having made the glider secure, I went home.

Bright and early at the airfield, with the sun shining, the frost glinting in the hedgerows and with nobody else around, we connected up the trailer and headed through deserted country lanes for the farmer's house. Yelping dogs greeted us in the deserted farmyard and we approached with trepidation.

There is no question that our welcome was considerably enhanced by the bottle of 10-year-old Laphroaig that I was carrying. The farmer visibly melted and smiled. We discussed his cats and dogs and the abuse of the countryside.

"Bring the key back anytime when you've finished," he said. "No hurry."

We scurried off to the barn. The glider glinted in the sun, with centimetres of hoar frost all over. We scraped it off and it immediately refroze. We turned her to face the sun and watched a group of deer on the frosted ground against the woods.

In the next hour I was deeply grateful that I'd been so enthusiastic about learning to de-rig the club Pegase a few months earlier: I had typed up some notes and stuck them in the trailer.

With frozen fingers we went through each instruction, stowed her in the trailer and towed her out of the field.

We were hailed further down the road by the farmer. "I'll save you the trouble of taking the key back," he said. "Are you OK? Everything all right?" With profuse thanks and reminders to enjoy the whisky, we towed the trailer back to the gliding site, to be met by a group with "Starting early, aren't you?" followed by "Can I have a word with you?" from the CFI.

Lessons to be learned:

1) Half an hour before sunset is best avoided for take-off during the winter months. The sun loses its heat, freezing clouds may form and icing occur at fairly low heights. Clouds will block out the sun and reduce visibility late in the day. Fields look very similar in low light and landmarks blend in with no light to accentuate edges and mark shadows.

2) Check the compass on entering cloud. Ensure use of the compass around the airfield. Learn all areas around the site at low altitudes.

3) All those lessons with the instruments blanked off are very useful (thanks, Charlie).

4) Stay out of cloud in icing conditions.

BGA Badges

No	Pilot	Club (place of flight if different to club)	Date
DIAMOND BADGE			
692	Mick Garwood	Soaring Ctr *(New Tempe)*	1/11/04
Diamond distance			
1-1018	Nicholas Garland	Booker *(New Tempe)*	26/11/04
1-1019	Mick Garwood	Soaring Ctr *(New Tempe)*	2/11/04
1-1020	Stephen Barter	East Sussex *(New Tempe)*	5/1/05
Diamond goal			
2-3058	Nicholas Garland	Booker *(New Tempe)*	25/11/04
2-3059	Mick Garwood	Soaring Ctr *(New Tempe)*	1/11/04
GOLD BADGE			
2360	Terry King	Wyvern *(Aboyne)*	5/10/04
2361	John Roberts	Midland *(Aboyne)*	24/9/04
2362	Christopher Huck	Cotswold *(Portmoak)*	10/11/04
2363	Nicholas Garland	Booker *(New Tempe)*	26/11/04
Gold height			
Terry King		Wyvern*(Aboyne)*	5/10/04
John Roberts		Midland *(Aboyne)*	24/9/04
Christopher Huck		Cotswold *(Portmoak)*	10/11/04
Nicholas Garland		Booker *(New Tempe)*	26/11/04
Gordon Burkert		Bidford *(Portmoak)*	7/10/03
Robin Birch		Cotswold *(Lleweni Parc)*	30/12/04
Timothy Donovan		Soaring Centre *(Aboyne)*	4/11/04
Gold distance			
Richard Watson		London *(New Tempe)*	3/12/04
Nicholas Garland		Booker *(New Tempe)*	25/11/04
SILVER BADGE			
11485	Amy Barsby	Bowland Forest	13/11/04
11486	Richard Watson	London	30/11/04
11487	Peter Smith	Fulmar	18/11/04
11488	James Hudson	Lasham	2/9/04
11489	Brendan O'Brien	Southdown	8/12/04
11490	James Ellis	Four Counties	28/8/04
BGA CROSS-COUNTRY DIPLOMA			
953	Gerald Coles	Essex & Suffolk	22/8/04
AEROBATIC BADGE			
Std Known	David Bell	Burn	21/12/04

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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
129	Grob Twin	3574	Minor	19-Aug-04	Lasham	67	None	330
2004	Acro II			1400			None	0

The glider was being used to carry out trial lessons when, during the aerotow ground run, it hit a small bump which launched it into the air. P1 over controlled and the nosewheel hit the ground, pitching up the nose and banging the tail down, so he released. Factors were low hours on type, low P2 weight and a glider pitch sensitive at low speed.

130	SZD Junior	4138	Substantial	20-Apr-04	Portmoak	56	None	3.25
2004				1922				

The pilot had a weak link break on his second flight on type so recovered and started a circuit. It appears that, worrying about a possible spin, he flew rather too fast and lost height and the glider touched a wing during the final turn causing a severe impact and a ground loop. More spin and type conversion training will be given.

103	K-13	3584	Write Off	06-Aug-04	Booker	58	Minor	452
				1745			Serious	0

An item relating to this accident was published in the Feb-Mar edition. We wish to make it clear that no conclusions have been reached about this accident, which is the subject of an AAIB investigation.

001	K-7	2851	Substantial	05-Oct-04	Kenley	52	None	1067
2005				1502		46	None	232

After a general briefing to the experienced European pilot about winch speeds and recovery attitudes, P1 arranged for the winch driver to cut the power 5 seconds into the launch. When this happened P2 pitched the glider down then pulled the stick fully back and the glider stalled into the ground. P2's club did not practise but only briefed this high risk test.

002	ASW 27	4407	Substantial	08-Oct-04	Camphill	60	None	171
				1340				

The glider was being winch launched with a slight crosswind. As the downwind wing runner relinquished his hold, the wing dropped and the pilot tried to lift it with aileron. The nose yawed to left then rose and rotated about the left wing tip. It came to a rest facing the launchpoint with a smashed canopy and a snapped fuselage.

003	K-7	2320	Substantial	13-Oct-04	Nr Talgarth	45	None	279
				1500		65	Minor	150

The two visiting pilots were flying in difficult ridge lift conditions when they could not return to the airfield. In sinking air, they attempted to land in a small field, which sloped laterally and downhill. The glider killed a sheep and ran into a wire fence, injuring the ex-solo P2. P1 had not attended the morning briefing on the conditions.

004	PW-5	–	None	–Oct-04	Incident Rpt	–	None	41

During the landing roll the glider ran through an indentation on the runway, pushing the nose up and banging the tail on the ground. The shock released the canopy emergency lever and the canopy lifted about 2 inches before the pilot restrained it and brought the glider to a safe stop.

005	LS4	–	Minor	–Oct-04	Incident Rpt	–	None	

After retrieving a glider, the visiting pilot parked the tractor, applying the brake before getting down. When someone started shouting he saw it was rolling towards gliders so he dashed back and applied the footbrake. It stopped the tractor but not before it struck the LS3. Inspection showed the tractor brakes were in good working order.

006	N/A	–	None	–Oct-04	Incident Rpt	–	Minor	

A winch cable was being pulled in after a launch failure practice in crosswind conditions. The cable was blown across the runway and snagged on a mini tractor waiting at the side of the runway to recover the glider. The cable pulled the mini tractor over causing injuries to its driver.

007	K-21	–	None	–Nov-04	Incident Rpt	–	None	45

After launch the pilot turned left then tried to reverse the turn but found the stick would not move right of centre. He flew a left-hand circuit and landed in a large field next to the runway. A full inspection, including boroscope viewing of the aileron bell cranks, revealed no obvious problem. Some screws and washers were replaced to be sure.

008	SZD Junior	3842	Substantial	10-Nov-04	Kitson Field	56	None	29
				1400				

After a check flight the pilot flew in the single-seater. He found he was too low and had to land across the airfield. He touched down, bounced and then landed heavily 25 metres from the airfield hedge. The pilot ground looped the glider, which entered the hedge backwards. Improvements are being made to logbook checks prior to solo approval. ➢

Accident/incident summaries *(continued)*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	BGA No	Damage	DATE Time	Place	PILOT(S) Age	Injury	P1 Hours
009	K-8	3850	Minor	25-Nov-04 1516	Kenley	65	None	80

Before making a hangar flight it was agreed that the pilot would land on the cross runway into the wind. Distracted by thinking of his landing close to the hangar, he landed downwind and ran into the perimeter fence. The pilot suspects that the probable reason for such a basic mistake was tiredness after a full, busy day on the airfield.

010	2 x K-21	KDP	Substantial	17-Nov-04 1358	Challock	–	None None	3245

This accident occurred when a active winch cable caught on a landed glider. P1 radioed "stop" without effect before he got out of the glider and was struck by the rotating wing. As the glider was lifted tail first into the air P2 jumped out over the side. Unknown to the launch crew the cable had been laid with a large bow in it.

011	K-13	1565	None	19-Nov-04 1415	Eyres Field	70	None	2.25

After turning on to his final approach to the airfield the low hours pilot started to undershoot so, to avoid over-flying the boundary hedge, diverted into an adjacent field. On the approach the glider's fin severed a telephone line but a safe landing was made. The glider's airbrakes remained at least half open throughout the approach.

012	DG-100	2402	Minor	12-Dec-04 1415	Currock Hill	42	None	811

While wave soaring, weather conditions at the airfield closed in with low cloudbase and poor visibility. The pilot was initially unaware of the change and, having committed to returning, found that the cloudbase was very low. After descending through a slot, he hit strong sink and curlover on his base leg and made a heavy landing in rough ground.

013	ASW 15	4713	Minor	19-Dec-04 1317	Lleweni Parc	–	None	

This was the pilot's second flight on type. At the high key point he lowered the undercarriage, doing a visual and physical check that it was locked down. However, after a gentle touchdown the wheel retracted and the glider settled on to its fuselage. It is possible that the locking spring was not fully engaged and the mechanism is being examined.

014	Grob Twin Acro II	3024	Minor	11-Dec-04 1130	Kirton in Lindsey	–	None	0.25

After a slightly heavy landing the glider was checked for damage before the very early solo pilot made a second flight. During these checks the rear canopy was opened by another club member and it appears was not locked shut. During the next launch the canopy flew open and smashed but the pilot successfully completed an emergency landing.

015	DG-505	4690	Minor	05-Dec-04 1550	Auchterarder	44 50	None None	2675 287

On a cross-country flight the pilots decided, as previously discussed, to select a field early before the light failed. Having chosen a very large field the glider made a normal landing. Unfortunately, due to the overcast conditions the light was poor and they did not see how undulating the field was and the glider was damaged in a ground loop.

016	PA25 Pawnee Tug	G-BAUC	Minor	10-Nov-04	Parham	–	None	3550

The tug pilot misjudged his final turn and the rope rings hit a glider parked awaiting the next launch. He was probably distracted by the tug's engine, which had a tendency to stop when the throttle was fully closed. This was compounded by a crosswind blowing towards the parked glider and a somewhat narrower than usual clearance to the aerotow strip.

017	PIK 20B	–	None	–Jan-05 0930	Incident Rpt	–	None	0

During a daily inspection the flap operating handle was moved to +8degs. When the grip on the handle was released the spring loaded mechanism fell apart and several pieces were ejected around the cockpit. If this had occurred during flight it could have caused control difficulties. The failure was due to internal wear in the mechanism.

018	Grob Twin Acro II	–	None	–Dec-04 1157	Incident Rpt	58 30	None None	563 0

This incident occurred when, at about 250ft in the winch launch, the rear canopy flew open. P1 quickly pulled it closed and the flight continued normally. He believed he had locked it but may have caught his arm on it as he did his straps up. The wing tip holder did not see a raised (unlocked) handle or gap and no fault was found with the mechanism.

019	K-21	4614	Substantial	23-Jan-05	Cosford	23 17	None None	78 0

During operations in a 10 to 15 knot crosswind, P1, flying from the front seat, made a full airbrake, side-slipping approach. After a normal final approach a rapid descent ensued with the nose dropping as the glider crossed the boundary trees with associated turbulence. The glider impacted sideways and was substantially damaged.

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