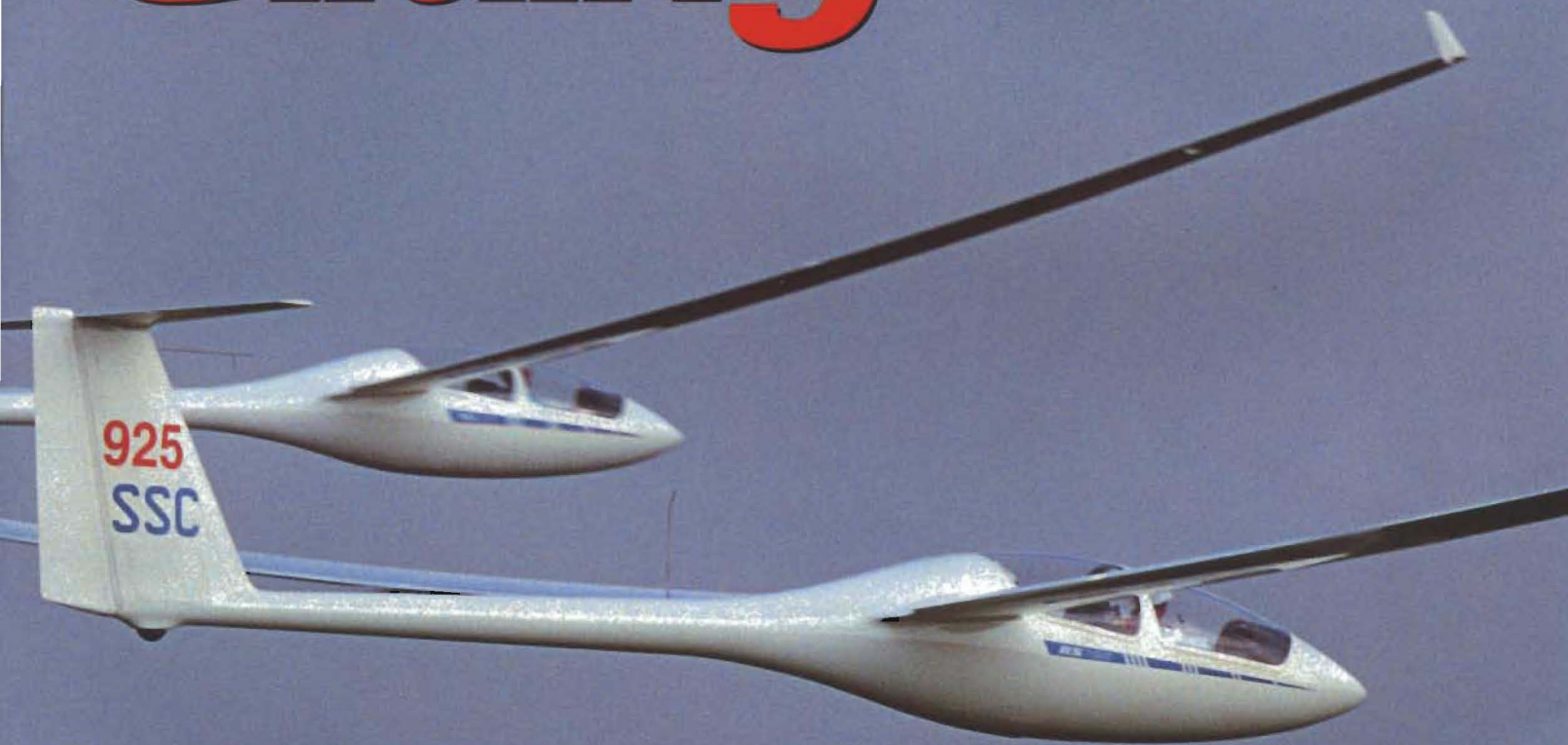


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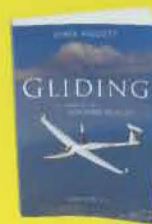


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The magazine of the  
**British Gliding Association**

August ~ September 2000  
Volume 51 No 4

**Editor**  
**Helen Evans**

6 Salop Close, Shrivenham,  
SWINDON SN6 8EN  
tel/fax: 01793 783423  
email: [helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk](mailto:helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk)

Your contributions of words or photographs are welcome. Please feel free to discuss your ideas with the editor by email, letter or phone.

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Letters		August 15
Club News		August 15
Advertisements		August 25
Classifieds		September 5

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Letters		October 17
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British Gliding Association  
(email: [bga@gliding.co.uk](mailto:bga@gliding.co.uk))

**Advertising in S&G:** Debbie Carr  
(email: [debbie@gliding.co.uk](mailto:debbie@gliding.co.uk))

**Subscribing to S&G:** Beverley Russell  
(email: [beverley@gliding.co.uk](mailto:beverley@gliding.co.uk))

Kimberley House, Vaughan Way  
LEICESTER LE1 4SE  
tel: 0116 253 1051 fax: 0116 251 5939  
[www.gliding.co.uk](http://www.gliding.co.uk)

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Two ASH 25s cross the line at the Open Class Nationals (see p38). In the foreground is the "Scottish Sports Council ASH" – 925. Behind is Robin May in 13. Platypus also flies 13, but didn't compete this year. We presume he saw the weather forecast.

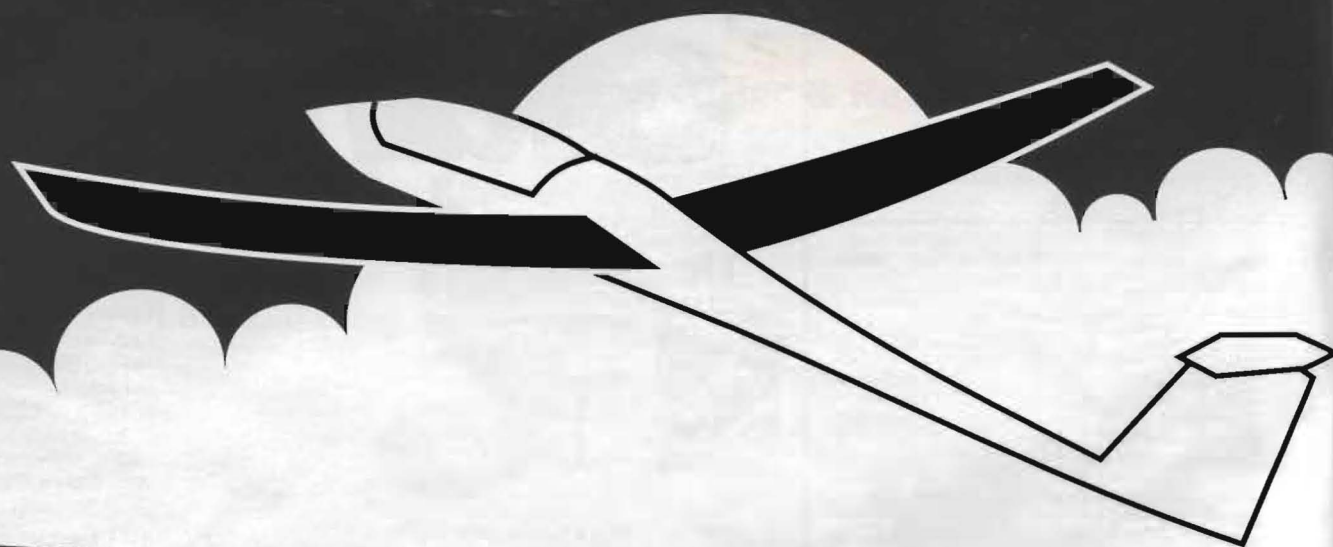
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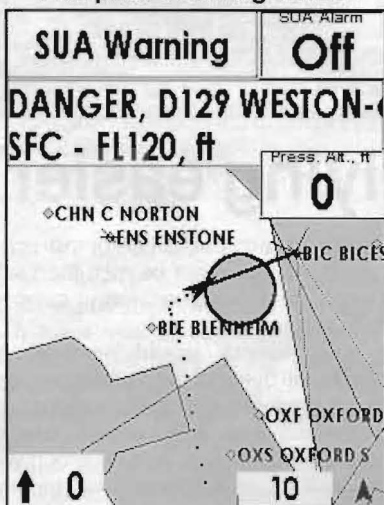


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# From the Chairman

WHAT MAKES my second job – as BGA Chairman – interesting is the variety of issues with which I have been involved. In the first four months as Chairman I have dealt with, or been involved closely in, over 20 significant policy issues. This provides me with a wide appreciation of all that goes on in UK gliding.

This last week, at the end of June, I took a rest from policy and directed the Open Class Nationals and 18-Metre Championships at my home club (Cotswold GC, Aston Down). It has been 38 years since the Nationals were held there. The weather was mostly a let-down, as it has been over most of the country so far this season, but we had great fun.

Competition flying is often seen as the shop window of the sport, but from people I talk to outside the movement the most common impression of gliding is from the club level of training and circuits. Which is where we need to build on our image to attract and keep more members. Roger Coote has something to say about this on page 12.

With the formation of the Marketing and Communications sub-committee, we have completed the study, started in 1998, of marketing and membership. Now is the time for the BGA, and its member clubs, to implement the strategies that will increase membership overall, to reverse the declining trend of the 1990s.

Recently, I wrote to club chairmen proposing an audit certificate to accompany annual club returns of membership, for the purpose of ensuring clubs were treated equitably one with another. The next stage is to refine the membership categories on which the BGA subscriptions are calculated, partly with the aim of making it more attractive to clubs to recruit younger people.

These and many other strands of thinking are being pulled together this summer and autumn in the BGA's new five-year Strategic



David Roberts, BGA chairman, at Aston Down in June

Plan, which I mentioned in June's *S&G*. We have now set provisional dates for two Chairmen's Conferences: one at Lasham on October 28 and the other at Pocklington on November 4, at which consultation will take place over the draft plan.

As this issue goes to press I have been working with our Chairman of the Airspace Committee, Carr Withall, to try to get some changes to certain clauses in the Transport Bill being debated in the House of Lords. With the help of some aviation-minded members of that House two amendments have been tabled with the aim of ensuring that non-commercial aviation – including gliders – will continue to have access to Class D airspace under NATS' privatisation.

The proposed new regulator of airspace, positioned in the public sector and independent of NATS, must in our view have the legal powers necessary to back up his responsibilities as regards access to and the sharing of airspace for all users, not just commercial or military interests.

All told then, an interesting two months. Next time your editor will be chasing me for copy from that gliding paradise, the French Alps, where I hope I shall at last see summer.

**David Roberts** [d.g.roberts@lineone.net](mailto:d.g.roberts@lineone.net)

## Could you be a Regional Safety Officer for gliding?

PETE STRATTEN, who chairs the BGA Safety Committee, is looking for four or five volunteers from across the UK to become BGA Regional Safety Officers. You would need to be:

- an experienced gliding instructor and supervisor (not necessarily still instructing);
- a current glider pilot with the tact to discuss safety issues with individuals and club management constructively and effectively;
- someone with some spare time but who still has a finger on gliding's pulse.

"These posts," says Pete, "may well suit the more mature person with some time on their hands. There are more than a few retired and bold glider pilots out there who have a wealth of experience and have probably seen it all before". If you are interested but don't have the time now, Pete would also like to hear from you with a view to planning for the future. Please send expressions of interest to him c/o the BGA office (see p3) or to [strats.peter@virgin.net](mailto:strats.peter@virgin.net)

## Photo competition

THE RAeC Trust has launched its first major fundraising event: a national Photographic Competition 2000 in June. Prizes include flights in a balloon, helicopter or 737 simulator. Money raised will help disadvantaged young people and preserve the Royal Aero Club's unique memorabilia collection. Professionals and amateurs can enter – the fee is £10 for adults and £5 for under-16s. The theme is "The exhilaration of flight". Details from: RAeC Trust Photographic Competition 2000, c/o BHPA, Old Schoolroom, Loughborough Road, Leicester LE4 5PJ; tel, 0116 2611322; fax, 0116 2611323; email, [events@bhpa.co.uk](mailto:events@bhpa.co.uk) or visit [www.royalaeroclub.org/trust.htm](http://www.royalaeroclub.org/trust.htm)

# Plans for National PPL to make flying easier

THE BASIC principles for a National Private Pilots Licence, which should allow pilots to take safely to the skies more easily and cheaply, have been provisionally agreed with the aviation industry, the CAA says.

It has worked closely with industry bodies (including the British Gliding Association) to develop the initial proposal submitted by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) for a modified licence for UK private flyers. Other parties to the talks are the Popular Flying Association and the British Microlight Aircraft Association.

More detailed requirements will now be drawn up, to include looking at how glider pilots might move across to the NPPL, and an

upgrade path for holders of the new licence to the existing and continuing JAR-FCL PPL. Requirements about other ratings such as flying at night and in IMC will be studied later.

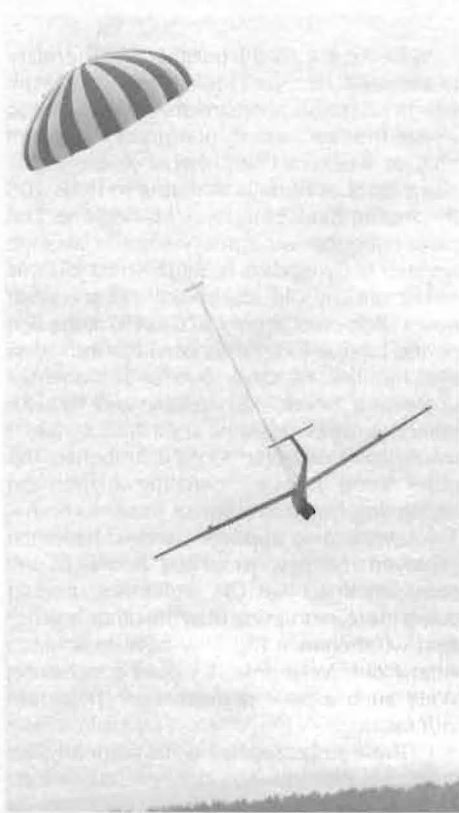
The proposals will involve law changes and so will be subject to government approval, a full external consultation and a regulatory impact assessment.

The main features of the proposed new National Private Pilots Licence (NPPL) are:

- A reduction in the basic *ab initio* syllabus to some 30-32 hours (compared with 45 hours for the existing JAR-FCL PPL)
- A proposed change in medical requirements – an NPPL holder would have to hold a certificate of fitness from a GP, which would

allow a pilot to carry passengers or instruct. If these standards could not be met, then solo flying would be allowed on Group 1 car driving medical standards.

The basic licence would normally be restricted to the flying of fixed undercarriage, fixed-pitch propeller aircraft of no more than four seats and with a maximum take off weight of up to 2,000kgs. A study group will also be looking at a 'differences' training requirement to cover retractable undercarriages, variable-pitch propellers and possibly tailwheel aircraft, unless initial training had been carried out on types with those characteristics. Pilots would only be able to operate during the day in VMC, in UK airspace only.



## Glider recovery system: tests for standards

EXPERIMENTS to establish realistic certification standards for sailplane parachute recovery systems have been carried out for the German ministry of transport so their civil aviation authority – the LBA – can develop procedures, writes *Jochen Ewald*.

The unmanned tests, conducted by Prof Wolf Roger, used a Mistral C glider (left) once damaged beyond economic repair and now certified as a “model aircraft of more than 20kg”. It is the world’s heaviest radio-controlled model glider; and an aeromodeller’s PPL is required to fly it. Recovery systems used in microlights were installed.

The first tests showed modifications might be needed to prevent the glider swaying under the chute. In the second series at 260km/h (VNE), the rocket-deployed chute hit and destroyed the tailplane. The resulting acceleration of 7g and deceleration (when the chute opened) of 10g broke off a wing; the remaining structure landed safely.

## Awards for bravery

SIX MEMBERS of 633 (Cosford) Volunteer Gliding School received Commandant’s Commendations for meritorious conduct following the fatal chipmunk crash at the airfield. Regardless of the danger, they helped fire and rescue teams to remove the pilot and prevent a serious post-crash fire. Awards went to John Bullock, Robin Willey, Barry Cartwright, Duncan Braid, Nicholas Harper and Paul Burton.

THERE is increased parachuting activity at South Cerney (SOC). Parachuting is notified to Brize Norton beforehand and its status should be found before flying near the airfield by calling Brize Zone on 119.00 MHz.

WE ARE sorry to report the death of Essex GC member Graham De Orfe in an accident at Ridgewell in June. The results of a post-mortem are awaited.

DIGITAL maps are not necessarily as accurate as BGA turning point co-ordinates. Co-ordinates (OS Grid and lat/long) from such maps may be slightly different to the BGA list. BGA lat/longs are based on the worldwide WGS84 Geodetic Datum mandated by the IGC. If querying BGA figures, please look at a 1:50,000 or more detailed OS map first, and use the free NGR84.exe grid-to-lat/long conversion at [www.spsys.demon.co.uk](http://www.spsys.demon.co.uk)

THE BGA has written to club chairmen with a view to introducing audited membership figures and reviewing membership subscription categories.

## Lottery results

Winners of the May draw were:

<b>CE Wick (first prize)</b>	£64.25
<i>Runners-up:</i>	
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## Sub-committees

THE CURRENT chairmen of British Gliding Association sub-committees are as follows:

- Max Bacon** – Development Committee
- John Bradley** – Technical Committee
- Ron Bridges**  
– Competitions & Awards Committee
- Ian Godfrey**  
– Marketing and Communications Committee
- David Roberts**  
– Staff and Administration Committee
- Strategic Planning and Finance
- Terry Slater** – Instructors Committee
- Pete Stratten** – Safety Committee
- Carr Withall** – Airspace Committee

## In brief

SO THAT the next chairmen’s conference is accessible to as many clubs as possible, two are provisionally planned for this autumn: on October 28 at Lasham Gliding Society, and November 4 at Wolds GC, Pocklington. An important topic for discussion will be the BGA’s Strategic Plan for the next five years. Draft copies will be circulated to club chairmen in advance of the conferences.

EX-UNIVERSITY pilots are invited to take part in the inter-university task week at Loughborough this summer. For details, contact Ed Foxon – [edfoxon@hotmail.com](mailto:edfoxon@hotmail.com)

HOWARD Torode is to represent the BGA at OSTIV and JAR 22 level. He has been chosen by the Executive in response to an invitation from OSTIV. The vacancies arose because of the death of Bill Scull.

THE JAA’s Flight Crew Licensing Sub-Committee has decided no further consideration will be given to “harmonising” glider pilot licensing in Europe, reports FAI Secretary General Max Bishop, so the present system of “mutual recognition” will continue indefinitely.

THE COACHING operation is to move to Little Rissington in Oxfordshire in 2002, the BGA Executive has decided. Currently based at RAFGSA Bicester, it must move because the RAF is to stop using the airfield. The change is now scheduled for 2002.

ANY GLIDER pilot can apply for awards from The Ted Lysakowski Memorial Trust, which cover cross-country and competition training in the UK, and mountain flying in Italy. Applications for 2001 should be made by the end of October 2000. Forms from your CFI, or George Metcalfe: 01489 578603 / [george\\_metcalfe@uk.ibm.com](mailto:george_metcalfe@uk.ibm.com)

THE BGA’s technical committee has set up a group to review its Technical Exposition. An initial report is due in September.

THE SALE of RD Aviation to Airplan Flight Equipment (AFE) Ltd went through in late June. The new Managing Director, Jeremy Pratt, wants to expand his business, which includes the CAA charts agency, into the gliding market. Existing staff and premises will remain. Dickie Feakes is now a part-time consultant to RD.

THE MET Office is giving free access to TAFs and METARs for UK airfields on its website: [www.met-office.gov.uk/aviation](http://www.met-office.gov.uk/aviation)

ATC CADETS in three Vigilant motorgliders are celebrating raising £350,000 in three years for charity with a Millennium Falcon Flight of more than 3,000nm to 26 UK airfields this July.

## How good are your instructors?

I read with growing curiosity Graham Morris's excellent article (*How good are your instructors?* June-July, p22). The stats are interesting as is Nympsfield's regime and one has to agree that the more current, solo flying an instructor does the better their handling (pupils have a right to expect the best).

However, perhaps Graham could be persuaded to write another article explaining how it is done. Constructive information is needed. How, when and where are these solo hours achieved? There are those of us who need to know. Would he open his log book/diary for us? Does he overwinter in Australia? Does he live at the gliding club? Does he have a glider exclusively available? Does he have a job?

Personally, I have a problem balancing married life, children (and soon grandchildren – well, it is an ageing sport), work and other interests. My glider is laid up with a technical problem and my club (Enstone) has disintegrated. The weather is not good. My arms are tired with trying to push water uphill and I would greatly appreciate data with which to compare my own medium-scoring performance so it can be improved. Judging by the figures I am not alone. Come on, Graham, tell us how it's done!

**Greg Burton, STANDLAKE, Oxfordshire**

While I like much that is in *S&G*, there are sometimes articles that, for one reason or another, are exceptional. I think Graham's is in this class because it deals with an important issue that is rarely addressed and, to the best of my knowledge, presents facts that are new to most people outside the Instructors Committee. The facts give weight to the arguments of CFIs trying to deal with this issue.

**Simon MacKintosh, EDMONDTON, Alberta**

I read with interest Graham Morris' article – so much interest that I read it twice. I then asked myself what planet this man is on. I was an instructor from 1970-1986, Full Cat for ten years and CFI for four, so I think I can speak on the subject with authority. Graham's article failed because he did not ask WHY most instructors only just achieve the minimum hours, then, having answered that, offer suggestions on how to change the situation.

*Your letters are welcome. Please mark them "for publication" and send to: Helen Evans, Editor, S&G, 6 Salop Close, Shrivenham, Swindon SN6 8EN or helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk Please keep them as concise as you can, and include all your contact details. Letters do not represent the views of the BGA or the Editor*

As he did not ask the question I will, and try to answer it. First, let's look at what affects the number of hours an instructor can achieve in a year. The vast majority of instructors instruct only at weekends and therefore the maximum number of days available to fly is 106 (excluding Bank Holidays). Having checked back over the last three years the average number of flying days is 69. The next job was to dig out my old log books and see what hours I achieved. From 1976 to 1978, the first period I did as CFI, this is what I found: average number of days flown, 27; average instructing hours, 18, represented by 133 launches; and average solo hours, 24. I would have expected to do a lot better. The other thing I found was the higher the instructing hours, the lower the solo hours. The reverse also applied. I would have just achieved the new proposed hours. If one considers that I was CFI at the time, and so doing more instructing than the other instructors, what chance did they have to achieve what I did? Very little, I would suggest. So WHY such a poor performance? There are four factors:

1. The number of flying days: ideally, an instructor should be on duty one day a fortnight giving a possible 26 duty days and 79 for solo, but in reality this more likely to be 18 instructing and 54 for solo.

## A scheme for retaining recruits to gliding

OVER MY 30 years in gliding I have seen the declining numbers of new members – especially youngsters – and poor retention rates. This is a very alarming trend. As a fully-rated instructor, PPL holder, ex-CFI, dinghy sailing instructor who teaches Scouts and, last but not least, father-of-two, I would like to propose a system which may help to reduce that decline.

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) – the sailing fraternity's equivalent of the BGA – has an awards scheme which differs from ours in that awards for dinghy sailing can be made locally, with RYA endorsement but without RYA registration. The RYA sells senior instructors pads of certificates, which are issued to students for a nominal fee on successful completion of training. The first award can be made after one day's intensive sailing training although it would normally be after a weekend or two. The RYA also runs a Start Sailing scheme for teenage and below members.

The RYA awards are purely an award to prove a level of competence and are not a requirement to go sailing.

Most (young) people want instant gratification these days and expect an award or certificate for taking part in any activity. The first one glider pilots can get is the A certificate, on first solo at 16 or older. This precludes any air-minded person under 16 from gaining a piece of paper to show to

their friends (cheap advertising some may, quite rightly, say). Until a student goes solo he has no recognition of the skills he has mastered.

Extra awards, in no way infringing the present BGA or CAA licences, would be a proof of partial completion of pre-solo training. They would fit in very well with the present syllabus and might well reduce the number of new members who disappear after a few launches. I would propose:

**Basic Pilot** Awarded on successful completion of the first seven lessons of the BGA syllabus, all the upper air exercises taught by the Basic Instructor. The assessment for this could be made by the BI, but the certificate issued by the CFI. This would also give BIs an early insight into carrying out check flights.

**Advanced Pilot** Awarded on successful completion of the above plus take-off and landing and circuit planning. Any launch method could be used (winch or aerotow endorsement). This lends itself to the abilities of Assistant Instructors.

**Solo Standard Pilot** Awarded on successful pre-solo check with a suitably-experienced instructor. This should be up to the standard of a genuine pre-solo check, without, of course, the solo if the student is under 16. Members medically unfit for solo could also gain recognition of their skills.

Such awards would give: budding pilots

under 16 a realistic training plan, with an achievable goal; pilots nearing 16 proof of their ability; those who want to try gliding, but not necessarily to go solo, an award for their efforts; encouragement during training to help retain members; cheap advertising; and extra income to the BGA.

Furthermore, if certificates were issued through/endorsed by the BGA, schools and the Scout movement would be likely to accept them as proof of ability for badges, as they do RYA certificates.

The junior RYA log books also contain an A4 pullout page which can be completed and removed from the logbook to be included in a portfolio of achievements on leaving school. Gliding has yet to take up this opportunity.

Finally, the RYA has log books which are a combination of log book, instruction record card, holder for certificates and guide to the various requirements. A similar book for gliding could be readily produced and sold: a little more glamorous than the BGA green book and more interesting to look at than a standard logbook, especially for those who are pre-solo.

In summary, I believe the gliding movement has little to offer the younger club members, and this scheme would help to address that problem. I throw it open to the BGA and the readers of *S&G* for discussion.

**Wally Grout, CLEVELANDS GC**



2. The number of instructors in the club: if a club has a large number of instructors the period between duty days will be greater – so less instructing hours but higher solo hours. The reverse also applies.

3. The number of *ab initios*: ideally, an instructor has on average four *ab initios* each duty day, but in reality this is not the case. Most clubs struggle to get and keep the few they have (Enstone Eagles is a good example).

4. Personal commitments: not every instructor can spend every weekend at his/her club due to work or family commitments. Many can only spend one day a weekend, reducing their number of flying days by 50 per cent. And they should not be penalised for that.

Yes, Graham, it is in everyone's interest to ensure our instructors come up to scratch but the answer is not to put up the minimum hours requirement. You cannot create more flying days than there are, or pluck *ab initios* out of the air. So what is the answer? CFIs. A good CFI should know his/her instructors intimately, their strengths and weaknesses (a Regional Examiner will not.) He should fly with them on a regular basis, give instruction on their weak points and as a very last resort get rid of the very bad ones.

When I was asked to become an instructor the CFI said: "John, remember that if you become an instructor your own personal flying will suffer." He was right. So, CFIs, when you select a person to become an instructor make sure that he/she is fully aware of the commitment and not just after free flying.

Remember: instructors are the backbone of the gliding movement. Without them there would be no movement or BGA. They give their time free and they work hard. What they need is help and support, not criticism and ever more obstacles to overcome.

**John Halford, WEYMOUTH, Dorset**

The recent article by Graham Morris has raised a few hackles, as expected. I have been asked if I agree with and endorse Graham's opinions, and the answer is: "Yes, I do – very firmly".

As with most skills, you can only be good at flying instruction if you practise it frequently, and your attitude is one of continually seeking improvement. Becoming and remaining a good instructor is not simply a matter of attending a BGA course, then carrying out the minimum amount of flying to maintain the rating. Constant practice, reading of the *BGA Instructors Manual* and, perhaps most of all, a fiercely self-critical attitude are vital. A useful exercise after each instructional flight, briefing or lecture is to ask yourself: "if I were the student, what would I have learned from the exercise?" All too often the answer is: "not very much," or even worse: "I don't want to fly with that instructor again." Most instructors I ask: "When did you last read the manual?" cannot give a convincing answer!

I am often asked why the BGA insists on a solo flying requirement to retain an instructor

rating. One reason is to try to ensure the instructor remains reasonably current in flying practice themselves, as I am quite certain an even bigger outcry would result if we demanded a minimum of 20hrs instruction per annum from all instructors. Another excellent reason is to ensure an instructor cannot stay current just by spending students' money! Generally, an instructor who considers instructional flying as "free" is not a good instructor, as the attitude is wrong.

So how much flying is sufficient? I will let your Instructors Committee be the judge of that, but I would like to leave you with a sobering thought: if you had a teenager about to learn to drive, and knew the driving instructor was only required to teach five lessons and drive a total of 300 miles a year, how happy would you be? Or perhaps you would let your wife or other loved one fly a trial lesson with a pilot who did less than 20 flights in the last year?

**Terry Slater, CHAIRMAN, BGA Instructors Committee**

After reading *How good are your instructors?* I wonder whether you are trying to drive out instructors from doing a very good job promoting gliding, by yet again increasing the solo hours. Or are you trying to make it an elite sport where only ex-airline pilots and bank managers can afford to fly? Don't forget the instructors who can only afford to fly three times a week and fly 1950s gliders.

I know your proposal is only a recommendation but we all know how easily recommendations become rules. The majority of instructors haven't got a sackful of £20 notes to spend on ever-increasing costs to maintain solo hours. I am a Basic Instructor at a flat site, with the English Channel and North Sea on three sides. Thermals are quickly eradicated by the sea breeze. I would love our site to have a ridge and good thermals – it wouldn't take so long to accumulate solo hours.

My solo hours are made up mostly from five-minute flights off a winch launch of 800-1,200ft. At this rate, 12 flights per hour at £6 a launch amounts to £720 for 10hrs solo time. Your proposal would double this cost to satisfy the requirements to keep my rating current. One solution might be to visit another airfield to get some soaring flights. But for someone who has a fortnight's holiday a year and family commitments, this becomes very difficult. I have just spent a week's holiday at a soaring site: fog and strong crosswinds every day. Yet more money spent, time wasted, and nothing to show for it!

My time spent instructing for the year amounts to approximately 600 flights and 65 hours, made up from one-day courses and trial flights. For approximately 200 flights I have had hands-on all the time, as the students do not wish to take control, and I believe in not forcing the issue. I also think that my flying skill is increased as I talk the student through the flight. If I have hands-on throughout the flight, why can't I claim these flights as solo time? The student is not flying –

I am. They are just sitting there enjoying their first glider flight.

You say that if cost is the main factor in accumulating solo hours, you are sympathetic, and that the number of instructors forced to leave the sport is minimal. I believe it is unacceptable for any instructor to be forced to leave through increases in cost to him/herself. They put in lots of time and energy, often at a loss, and should be encouraged, not dissuaded from instructing.

I do appreciate that from your findings some instructors do a limited amount of instruction per year, but don't jeopardise the majority of us who do everything to meet our criteria and promote the sport we love. I would hate to be forced to leave gliding through ever-increasing costs.

**C Harwood, BROADSTAIRS, Kent**

*Graham replies: the problems of cost and time are real, but the key point remains that significant proportion of instructors is inadequate, and these usually report minimal amounts of solo flying at renewal. The critical responses to what I wrote dwell on instructors' problems, but virtually ignore the pupil's point of view. It makes no difference whether one's instructor is inadequate despite trying hard to maintain a standard or simply hasn't tried to. Either way, you have an inadequate instructor. Should we continue to accept that inadequate instructors are allowed to continue indefinitely? Should we allow any instructor to instruct regardless of standard? I think not. More solo flying will not cure all the problems, but it will help tackle poor handling. I believe instructing should be viewed as a privilege to do well, not a right to do poorly.* ➤

## Diary dates

### July

- 28-Aug 6 *Vintage Glide 2000* (Tibenhams)
- 29-Aug 6 *Regionals* (Sutton Bank)
- 29-Aug 13 *Europeans*, Lüsse, Germany

### August

- 5-13 *Regionals* (Nympsfield)
- 7-18 *Regionals* (Inter-Services, Bicester)
- 14-Sept 1 *Two-seater comp.* (Pocklington)
- 19-29 *Nationals (15 Metre)*  
Lasham Gliding Society, Lasham
- 19-29 *Regionals* (Lasham)
- 19-29 *Regionals* (Dunstable)
- 19-29 *Regionals* (Gransden Lodge)
- 26-Sept 3 *Championships (Juniors)*  
Oxford GC, Weston on the Green

### September

- 3-9 *Regionals* (Aboynoe)
- 7-10 *Glider Aerobatic Nationals*, Saltby
- 9-10 *Elliot's of Newbury Rally* (Lasham)
- 16-17 *Design your own aeroplane*, RAeS Light Aviation Gp Conference, Bath University. RAeS Conference Office 4 Hamilton Pl, London W1V 0BQ
- 16-Oct 22 *Octoberfest* (Feshiebridge)

*Provisional aerobatic competition dates for 2001:*  
Mar 31-Apr 1, Dan Smith Memorial Trophy, Dunstable  
Sep 6 - Sep 9, Glider Aerobatic Nationals, Saltby

# Middle-aged and balding? Watch out!

A FEW WEEKS ago my husband, John, returned home after gliding red as a lobster. It had been a hot and sunny weekend. When waving him off on a Friday or Saturday, I generally ask: "Have you got your hat and your sun cream?" Raising his eyes to heaven, he replies: "yes, dear". Somewhere between home and Bidford GC, where he is CFI, he seems to forget he has it. No doubt John – like any pilot – has far more pressing thoughts on his mind when he sees cumulus developing than finding his hat and sun block.

As a Nurse Specialist for Marie Curie Cancer Care, though, I'm aware of the rapid increase of skin cancer. What prompted me to write this letter is the increasing number of middle-aged men with skin cancer on the crown of their head where they are going bald. It worries me to see so many people bare-headed on the airfield in the midday sun. Perhaps they have already applied sun block, but my experience suggests not...

Skin cancer is now the second most common cancer in adults in the UK and the incidence is known to be rising among people whose skin is regularly exposed to the sun during outdoor sports. There are two main types. Malignant melanoma is particularly dangerous, most common if you have sensitive skin, work indoors during the year and then take a fortnight's holiday in the sun. It can spread rapidly via the lymphatic system or the bloodstream, though if diagnosed and treated promptly, the chances of survival are good. Non-melanoma skin cancer, far more common and generally curable, is thought to be linked with long-term exposure to the sun, often affecting people who work outdoors.

Most melanomas start in normal skin, although approximately one third develop in moles. There is strong evidence that skin cancers are linked to excessive exposure of fair skins to ultraviolet radiation. Both cumulative exposure over a prolonged period and episodic intensive

exposure are probably important, particularly if sufficient to cause sunburn.

There are recognised risk factors including: fair-skinned people who burn easily and those with a history of severe sunburn; anyone spending frequent periods of time outdoors; people with a large number of freckles or moles; young children and babies; and people who've previously had skin cancer.

So, what should you do? As with all cancer, cure is not guaranteed, so prevention is the name of the game: wear adequate clothing and hats; apply an effective sun block (eg factor 15-20); and where possible avoid unnecessary exposure between 11am and 3pm (yes, difficult for glider pilots – I know!) Lastly, any moles that change shape or colour, become bigger, itchy or inflamed, weep or bleed, must be checked by your GP. The warmth of sun on skin is a wonderful feeling. Just take care of it in the sun.

Jane Watson, BIRMINGHAM, West Mids

## Do you know about Vampyr?

Please can anyone who has details of the Martens Vampyr, from Hannover, which flew in 1921, please get in touch with me at: 32 Lyminster Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 7LB? Thank you.

John Lee, LITTLEHAMPTON, West Sussex

## Cost of S&G

Please would someone at the BGA care to enlighten me as to why the cover price of S&G is 30p more expensive, if I pay up front by subscription, than by buying it (and getting it delivered free!) from my newsagent?

AJ Padgett, [ajpadgett@lineone.net](mailto:ajpadgett@lineone.net)

Ian Godfrey, who chairs the new BGA Marketing and Communications Committee responsible for S&G, has put this on its agenda for discussion – Ed

## Images of turning points

For a while now I have been trying to locate images of BGA waypoints (the new IGC terminology for turning points) on the web. A few clubs have images from commonly-used waypoints in their area, but there doesn't appear to be any single collection of these images. A few sites provide links to images on other sites, but the usual result is a lot of searching and little success.

So I have created a site for this purpose. So far it contains only the few poor photographs I have taken myself, but other subscribers can add their own. In this way I hope to build up a collection of up-to-date and high-quality images, perhaps at different times of the year. About 20Mb of space is available, so I have limited this site to the UK only and it is necessary to submit low-resolution (eg JPEG) images. The ones I have uploaded are in the 30 to 50Kb range.

*Your letters are welcome. Please keep them as concise as possible and include all your contact details, including fax, telephone and email if you have it. Letters do not represent the views of the BGA or of the Editor*

The site is available by joining the UKTurnpoints group, to be found at <http://www.egroups.com/group/UKTurnpoints> and new images can be added through the <http://www.egroups.com/files/UKTurnpoints/page>. Individual images can be selected for viewing from this page or a drop down list at <http://www.egroups.com/files/UKTurnpoints/tplmagineList.htm>.

Links to other sites can also be defined on the links page.

Malcolm Hodgson

[Malcolm.1.Hodgson@Britishairways.com](mailto:Malcolm.1.Hodgson@Britishairways.com)

## Look out for your glider

I am writing following a recent field landing in the hope my experience may be a useful warning to other pilots.

Having landed my Skylark 4 in a ploughed field near Beckley radio mast (Oxfordshire), I went to the road to guide my crew. From there I couldn't see the glider, but went back to check it regularly.

Imagine how I felt when I returned to find that the seat back bar had been removed and used to smash the canopy. My parachute had been deployed and laid on the mud, and the headrest was missing. My GPS, camera and instruments were untouched.

I know it isn't always possible, but if you can keep your glider in sight after an out-landing, I suggest you do so.

Tony Hoskins, DIDCOT, Oxfordshire

## Website for tuggies

Perhaps all the tug pilots in the gliding movement ought to have a dedicated website for each of the types aerotowing in this country.

We could all supply information with regard to anything we find out of the ordinary when doing the DI.

Anything dangerous found on one aircraft might be spotted by a tug pilot, alerted by this web page, which, in a difficult-to-spot location, he might just overlook or miss. After all, none of us is infallible.

We could mention that such a search for the not so obvious, like missing split pins, fuel leaks, gauges not working, should be carried out with as much diligence as the pilot can muster.

If not, they could end up like me – the subject of an incident report in the last S&G. If the circumstances or the bit that fell off had been different (a main wheel rather than the tail wheel assembly) this report would have been about a fatality. Mine.

Tony Flannery, SELBY, North Yorks

## Winch hook for Standard Jantar?

Help! Are there any Standard Jantar owners out there with a winch hook fitted?

Our club has recently transferred to an all-winch operation and as the compromise hook fitted does not seem suitable for winching, our syndicate can't fly.

We would be happy to travel anywhere to examine any installation with a view to modifying our aircraft.

If you can help, please contact me on [awal@cdiesel.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:awal@cdiesel.freeserve.co.uk) or 0121 323 4647; at 3 Moor Hall Drive, Sutton Coldfield B75 6LP or c/o Needwood Forest.

Andrew Walsh, SUTTON COLDFIELD, West Midlands



# Does your club struggle to keep new members?

THE LATEST BGA statistics show a steady decline in overall membership numbers, amounting to some 17 per cent over the last ten years. The proportion of new members derived from trial lessons is disappointingly small at 1-2 per cent – but of greater concern is the high rate of loss in newly recruited members and the large proportion that gives up during initial training.

Membership turnover varies enormously but averages about 15-20 per cent of total membership. The Project 2000 Membership and Marketing task force recognised that other countries – France, Canada and New Zealand, in particular – have a similar problem and need to improve the retention of members, especially new recruits.

Retention must depend on customer care in basic terms of continuing encouragement, guidance and understanding, good equipment and facilities and shortening the calendar time to achieve solo flight. The BGA-wide survey of why people leave the sport revealed the main (inter-linked) reasons are too little

flying and too little perceived progress. This represents a huge wasted resource.

To retain members, clubs must do their best to ensure that trainees get a fair deal enabling them to make good progress in their flying – and to know how well they are doing. Suggested methods on improving training rates are:

- Maintain a fair daily flying list and give new pilot training all due priority
- Make every effort to maintain continuity of instructor, with the designated instructor responsible to the CFI for efficient, effective training and overall care of their student(s)
- Explore additional methods of training, such as using motorgliders for part of the pre-solo training
- Ensure that comprehensive records are kept, so that the student can see how he is doing and what he still has to do
- Even if very short of members, do not recruit more trainees than the club can train in a timely manner.
- Provide special training aimed at famil-

iarising the new entrant with ground equipment and safe site operations

- Ensure that the work in operating the field is shared out amongst all members and not just expected from the pre-solo trainees.
- Foster their enthusiasm by making two-seater flights available for cross-country and competition flying.
- Most important of all, make them feel welcome and part of the team.

It is appreciated that some of the above measures would involve expanding the role and responsibilities of instructors at most gliding clubs. However, if by introducing them we could save even one in four of those who currently give up, then the BGA's membership problem would be well on the way to a solution. After safety, the main aim of clubs should be for every member to leave at the end of the day thinking: "That was good! How soon can I come back for more?"

**Roger Coote**  
BGA Development Officer

## What do you think...

### ... of lowering the solo age?

THERE appears to be widespread support within the gliding movement for reducing the minimum solo age to 15 or even to 14.

This is already an accepted practice in some continental countries and could have benefits in encouraging keen youngsters to become committed to gliding before too many other distractions compete for their time. Perhaps that might even help the retention rate.

Suggestions have already been made at ministerial level, since parliamentary approval is required.

Is 14 a realistic minimum solo age? Please let us have your views.

### ... of Significant Areas for Sport?

SPORT England is promoting a new land use designation for planning purposes on sporting sites. If the initiative is successful, the designation "SASP" will demand special consideration in determining planning decisions, similar to that currently enjoyed by SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and AONB (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The purpose of the SASP designation is to protect sporting sites from development for non-sporting purposes.

Applied at a modest level, school playing fields and community recreation grounds will be protected from residential and industrial development. On a larger scale, aerodromes used for recreational aviation will be afforded similar protection. Sport England has commissioned a firm of planning consul-

tants, which has recommended qualifying criteria. A number of sporting sites, including some gliding sites, have been examined in the light of those criteria.

Even where central government is demanding the allocation of more greenfield sites for housing, gliding sites with the SASP designation are less likely to be built over. Where a gliding club owns its site, it is unlikely to apply for planning permission for industrial or residential development. Conversely, a landlord might seek to oppose the SASP designation if it is perceived as restricting the development value of his land.

Should we support SASP designations for gliding sites? Your views will be greatly appreciated.

Send your comments to Roger Coote, BGA Development Officer, c/o the BGA office (see p3)

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LASHAM members and friends sent the balloon up to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary. A weekend which was five years in the planning attracted more than 400 people to a gala dinner, where each table had its own model glider with balloon propulsion (above).

Starting with a mass take-off of full-size hot air balloons and ending with a flying display from the club's vintage glider group, the event in on June 24/5 included scale model flying, real-time cross-country monitoring, stands and sideshows, and spectacular power and glider aerobatics.

Members were heard at the dinner making assignments for the year 2050...

## Rallying round at PFA

Gliding was given a presence at the Popular Flying Association Rally and Fly-In at Cranfield in June thanks to the efforts of BGA Executive member Terry Slater (far right, with Laurie Woodage in the Scud) and members of the Vintage Glider Club and London GC. The BGA had a stand next to the combined stall of the latter two organisations, and the sight of Laurie's Scud (formerly Mike Beach's) and the Association's Discus rigged next to each other attracted much attention. Thanks to everyone who dropped in to help.



## Not a good time for climbing ladders

IN A DISAPPOINTING first half of the soaring season, Open Ladder leader Mike Young from Cambridge ignored the weather at the end of April to race around a 550km task at nearly 104km/h (true, it was in a Nimbus 4, but they all count). Phil Jeffery in third place was seen using an ASW 22 – perhaps Big Wings can win ladders after all. Most clubs are reporting smaller tasks and lower scores than would normally be expected at this stage of the season. Final submissions for the 1999/2000 Ladder season should be provided as soon as possible after the end of September.

**John Bridge, National Ladder Steward**

### OPEN LADDER

Position	Pilot	Club	Score	Flights
1	Mike Young	Cambridge	6269	3
2	Kevin Hook	Scottish Gliding Centre	5823	4
3	Phil Jeffery	Cambridge	5614	4
4	Steve Nutley	Scottish Gliding Centre	4871	4

### WEEKEND LADDER

Position	Pilot	Club	Score	Flights
1	Steve Nutley	Scottish Gliding Centre	4871	4
2	John Williams	Scottish Gliding Centre	4172	3
3	Kevin Hook	Scottish Gliding Centre	3668	2
4	John Wilton	Four Counties	3589	4

### JUNIOR LADDER

Position	Pilot	Club	Score	Flights
1	Richard Hood	Four Counties	3131	4
2	Gavin Goudie	Scottish Gliding Centre	2394	3
3	James Clark	Cambridge	1639	2

## Members and vice-chairman of the BGA Executive Committee



BGA Executive Committee members who haven't yet featured in S&G's three-part series include: Mike Jordy (above) the newly-elected Vice Chairman of the Association, from The Soaring Centre; Ron Armitage (top row, middle), Channel GC; Dave Salmon (top right), Derby & Lancashire GC; John Glossop (right), Cambridge GC; and Richard Wardell-Yerburgh (far right), Bath, Wiltshire and North Dorset GC. The other members, featured in the previous two issues of S&G, are: Claire Emson (nee Thorne); Keith Mansell (Treasurer); David Roberts (BGA Chairman); Barry Rolfe (BGA Secretary); Malcolm Sanderson; Terry Slater (who also chairs the BGA Instructors Committee); and Lemmy Tanner





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# TAIL FEATHERS

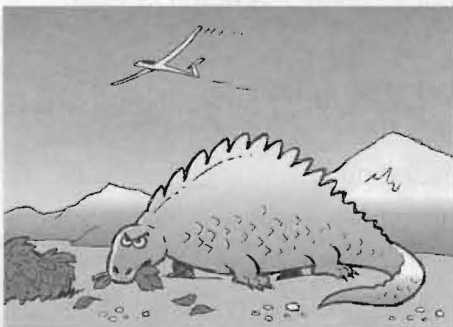


## On the prang-parity of pundits and peasants

I HAVE COME to the (statistically unproved at this moment, but powerfully intuitive) conclusion that highly-experienced pilots have just as many accidents as the ordinary trogs and probably have more really bad accidents. The list of champions at national and world level who have sadly written off entire gliders and, even more sadly, themselves, is too depressing to be ignored.

There are two alternative explanations, one excitingly psychological and the other boringly statistical. The psychological explanation says that the better pilots are, the more risks they are willing to take, so the likelihood of a disaster is unchanged or even worse. It is they, not the low-hours pilots, who will try and cross that ridge into an unexplored valley, or soar that cliff, or plunge into that black cu-nim, or final glide at low speed over high trees, or declare Booker to Belgium or Bust (I've got the alliteration bug today, I fear).

The boringly statistical argument is that pilot A, who flies four times more hours or launches than pilot B, may be a lot safer per hour or per launch but pilot A's far greater quantity of flying numerically outweighs his greater skill. So if pilot A is two or three times as safe per hour or per launch as B, he



an unexplored valley

is still more likely to have a crash, since he puts himself at risk four times as often.

What shocks me is the possibility that the statistical and psychological arguments are both valid, and that they are multiplicative. High-hours pilot A, even without a trace of dare-devilry and flying as safely as possible, is already more likely to have a ding than low-hours pilot B, by sheer force of the laws

of chance. Now compound that with the competitive urge; or with a consuming desire for records and badges; or with wild, Magellanic curiosity about far-distant deserts, mountains and oceans. Well, it's inevitable, isn't it?

The odd thing is that the more hours you fly, contests you have won, or badges and diplomas you can display, the more generous the insurance companies are to you in their quotes. Do the underwriters really know what they are doing?

*Plat, there's a very ugly mob heading this way – Ed.*

Insurance brokers?

*No, much uglier: high-hours pilots covered in diamonds, wielding large silver trophies like mediaeval maces – Ed.*

Well, just give them drinks while I climb out the back window. I've suddenly remembered an urgent appointment a long way off, like Minden...

## Bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and raring to go? No?

We have all experienced that dreary inability to do anything very useful for days after a long distance air journey. I have read and heard a fair amount of unconvincing stuff about jetlag from supposed experts, and have even bought books with elaborate diets and instructions on what are the best times of day to take off, which direction to fly and what to do to mitigate the effects afterwards.

Here is my theory about the cause and cure of jetlag.

First, the cause of jetlag has nothing to do with flying east or west. It has chiefly to do with having your eating and sleeping times totally messed about, but also to do with what faces you when you land.

Secondly the cure for jetlag is adrenaline, the long word for which is excitement, and the short word for which is fear.

I jetted to New Zealand from England at Christmastide in 1997. Three separate air journeys to get to Christchurch, followed by a three-hour solo drive in a rented car, should be enough to lay the youngest of us quite flat for days. However the scenery was so fresh and brilliant, and the Wills' hospitality so warm, that the next day this grey-haired geezer was ready for a day at

the races, backing horses that he has never managed to interview in person, with the inevitable results. The following day, less than 48 hours after arriving in New Zealand, I soared 300km through the mountains (I mean through, not over) in a sailplane I had never flown before, the lovely and surprisingly strong (as it much later turned out) ASW-17. However I did have Justin Wills in his Libelle as a guide, which reduced the stress to manageable proportions.

Just to prove this was no fluke, I repeated the experience a year later – which is where the "surprisingly strong" bit comes in. "Jetlag, what's that?" I said each time.

## The terror of Topaz

A more dramatic demonstration of my patent cure for jetlag might be the day when, only 16 hours after arriving from London, I sat down in the passenger seat of the Janus C at Minden, expecting to do nothing more strenuous than watch the Sierras slide by underneath. However, the fabled Nevada weather was uncooperative, and within less than two hours we were forced down near Topaz Lake at a dirt airport, known to pilots as Topaz International. (This title is purely ironical, as is clear as soon as you get within a mile of the place). In 1995 an ASH 25 had been wrecked



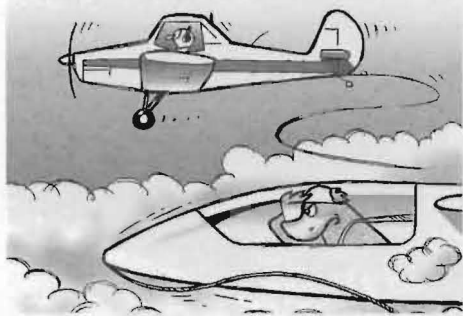
through, not over

landing there: nobody had cut the bushes that spring rains had encouraged to burgeon alongside the narrow east-west "runway" and the ASH 25 pilot had been excessively keen to land directly into the west wind that so often howls off the Sierras. A costly cartwheel resulted as the bushes seized a wing. My pilot did not make that mistake and executed a perfect landing on the



longer and slightly wider bit of north-south dirt. However when the tug arrived, my partner, who had very few hours in the Janus and high-performance two-seaters, said firmly: "I got you into this place; now you can get us out of here."

He had good cause: regardless of wind direction we had to take off southwards down the slope (I forgot to mention that for flatness of terrain, Topaz International makes Dunstable look like Heathrow) but this meant going between tall trees on the left and a farmhouse on the right, with an increasingly narrow path through the scrub further down if you avoided the first two items. By now you can imagine I was wide



out of position

awake despite an eight-hour time difference with Hammersmith.

You really needed to be airborne before you got to the point where the scrubby bushes started to hold hands. This prospect was diminished by the fact that the wind was now north-easterly. The mathematicians amongst you have worked out that this meant a cross-tailwind, with a tendency to weathercock into the trees that would have to be watched. That was my next misapprehension: I would not be able to watch anything, neither trees, nor farmhouse, nor scrub. Not even the tug could be watched, for as soon as the engine fired up the entire scene and much of the cockpit interior was enveloped in brown dust. I remembered the Australian saying about taking off in dry and desert parts: "If you can see the tug you're out of position."

For an age – say 12 seconds – I followed the string until the tug staggered off the ground and suddenly I could see it in full, roaring flight, more or less in front, while

the scrubby bushes clawed at the air beneath us, frustrated of their prey. Trees, house and jetlag had all vanished behind me; I was on local time from the moment the line went taut.

I have recently been told that Minden pilots can land at Topaz International in an emergency, but now they must be retrieved by road. A tug will not be sent. Dear me, I hope I had nothing to do with that.

### Scientific method

Notwithstanding the force of these personal anecdotes, the argument over jetlag's causes and cures will only be settled by controlled experiments. Enormously expensive tests are best: it then becomes the sort of trial that governments and foundations, egged on by academics, pour grant money into.

You take five groups of people matched by age, sex and general fitness. The first lot you fly economy class to somewhere eight hours west; the second group you fly eight hours east; the third lot stay at home, but have to sit around and read magazines and watch TV while someone else cooks for them. Finally the last, and two most important, groups don't go anywhere at all, but spend several days in sealed capsules on the ground. They are made to hang about a lot, then sit in a mock-up cabin with reduced air pressure, fed the usual airline food and watch movies on tiny screens. The "daylight" outside is manipulated to simulate travelling west and east respectively. Mealtimes follow the usual pattern of airline feeding, ie no pattern at all so far as the victims' stomachs can tell.

When they emerge from the mock-up airliner into a mock-up airport and mock-up town, the lighting is manipulated by the experimenters to look like morning, midday, evening or midnight.

My theory is that these last two groups, who never leave the ground, will generally feel lousy for days afterwards. The ability of all to perform simple tests, like counting how much change they get from a waiter or looking in the right direction when stepping off the pavement into busy traffic, is carefully measured. There might just be some variance between the groups who actually fly respectively eastwards and westwards, but I expect they would respond in

much the same way as those imprisoned in the static capsules.

The next set of tests is much more fun. A test group and a control group are flown across the Atlantic in a 767 or a 777. Suddenly the pilot of the test group announces an emergency: one engine has quit and he isn't too happy about the other. Passengers are given the full splashdown drill, strong swimmers and the medically-trained are asked to volunteer for special duties; the pilot then takes the plane low over the ocean so that everybody can contemplate a watery grave. Of course, the "problem" is fixed, the engines both roar back into life and all is well. When the passengers arrive their state of wakefulness is then compared with that of the control group. My bet is that their alertness will be very high, apart from those who have succumbed to fatal heart attacks in the cause of science. The most dangerous part of this experiment is if you are the pilot and you are anywhere to be found when the guinea pigs discover they have been used. The pursuit of knowledge does not move some people so much as it does me, and we must allow for an element of sense-of-humour failure, of which you find a distressing amount at big air terminals, even without deliberately teasing the customers.

Novelty, beauty and a stimulating challenge, therefore, are powerful correctives to the bleah-feeling of jetlag. Contrast these lag-dispellers with lag-inducers, like coming back in the drizzle at 6am to a musty house in London after a wonderful trip abroad. Here the returning traveller has to shoulder-charge the front door, which is more or less wedged shut by a pile of unpaid bills, tax demands and forms that should have been filled in and returned, under dire penalty, just one day after you departed.

That happened to me all of three weeks ago and Lord, I still feel utterly tired.

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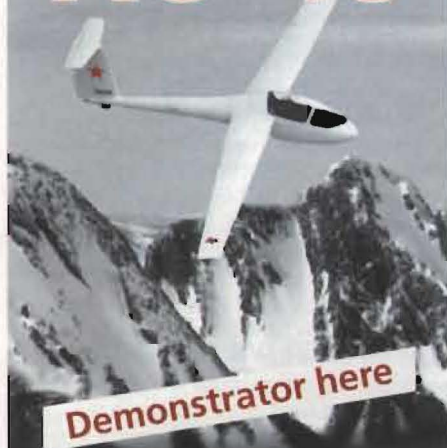
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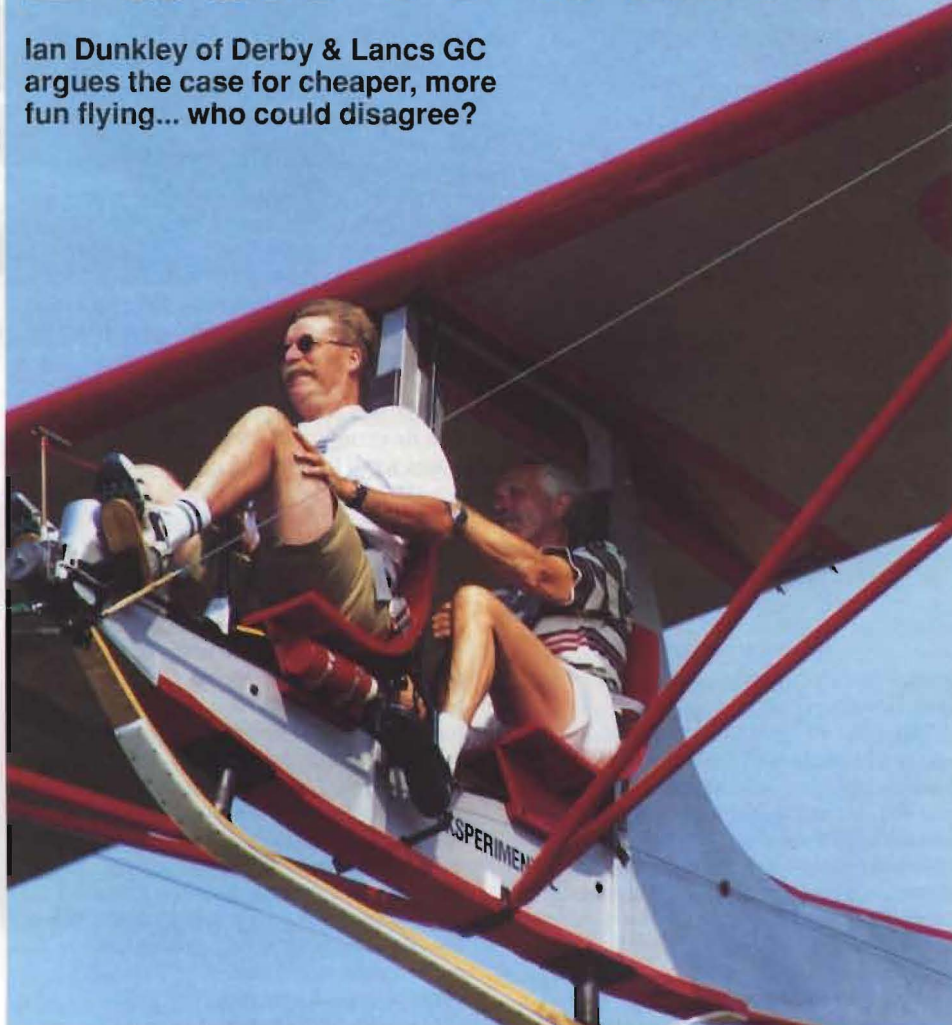
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**R**EALLY, it's a pity I have to expand on this opening, for these two adverts surely tell you something is wrong. Are we surprised that more young people don't glide, when we can happily pay more for one instrument than for an aircraft ready to fly? OK: I admit the Olympia costs more, but I know of a K-8 which went for less than £1,000, and a Swallow at £400. So, for a mere £511 more you could get a complete flying outfit – and you wouldn't need the "incomparable LNAV v5.7" if you had the skill or judgment.

Now this is going to be difficult. I want you to read this, not from the point of view of a keen, convinced, obsessive, existing, and generally older pilot, but from that of someone thinking of taking up gliding today.

Try to imagine how you would feel.

There is an alternative to the increasing spiral of cost, brought down recently only by the high value of the pound. Forget modern glass for a while and look at old wood or plastic. As I have now reached the age when, in my youth, I would have given me my seat on the bus, I can hear the shouts of: "he would say that, wouldn't he?" So, for the record, I would like to make it clear that I am not anti-glass. I own one, instruct in them and if I won the lottery would buy the biggest Nimbus self-launcher I could fit on Camphill, site covenant allowing. There is a place for glass: in competitions (a minority interest); for cross-countries; on marginal days or for pilots of marginal ability; and of course badge hunting. But we need to keep a balance, and anyway a real pilot should be just at home in a Grunau as an ASH 25. Which is easiest to fly cross-country?

What I cannot accept is that the pressure of glass is such that new pilots cannot wait to get into it, and this, I am sure, deters many recruits. It seems almost a matter of pride, when asked: "How much does a



Left: let's change direction... Above: SG38 flying at the Wasserkuppe, Germany



The heritage bandwagon makes vintage gliding marketable, says Fauvel owner Ian

glider cost?" to indicate the biggest and glossiest and say: "That one over there costs £50,000". Seldom is the T-31 or the Oly pointed out, and if it is, derogatory remarks about the aircraft and the nutters who fly them are not far behind.

How did gliding begin? Lunatics jumping off sand dunes and, eventually, hills in flimsy and relatively cheap aircraft. What does the fastest-growing flying activity today involve? Lunatics jumping off hills (they have progressed beyond sand dunes) in flimsy and relatively cheap aircraft. Who's got it right?

Ignoring cost, if you were 20 or so, where would you feel more at home: amongst an increasingly geriatric bunch of relatively well-off glider pilots, or on a hill doing your own thing, and off to the pub or hospital afterwards? I know what I would have done. Even the BBC brought in young extras for a club scene at Camphill, our members being too old to be believable.

I have tried hang-gliding and I can tell you that the initial two days are a darn site more fun than the first two days at a gliding site, cowpats notwithstanding. (Failure to lower your glider's undercarriage is embarrassing, failure in a hang-glider means you have to be ready to shut your mouth very quickly.) I am sure that when I try paragliding later this year I will again question whether a high-value fleet of gliders is the only way to go, particularly with hang-gliders of 20:1 performance

joining us in thermals and on ridges.

Now let us consider why we have glass gliders. Sure, they offer designers more accurate profiles, but even more important they offer the promise of a less labour/skill intensive production and economies of scale; a way to win competitions; and are generally pleasant and easy to fly. Trouble is, we often offer only the high-cost route.

Why do Lasham and Booker have more wooden two-seaters in their club fleets than glass? Because they are such good value, that's why. (If that isn't the reason, will Lasham and Booker please keep quiet until I have finished?)

### 'When did you last fly from a non-airfield...'

That's not all, wooden gliders go back to days when gliding was more fun, involved younger people and families – when clubs went on real gliding expeditions, not just the annual trek to Scotland. When did you last fly from a non-airfield? Why don't you? Because your aircraft are often not suitable; or because you don't know the fun that's involved. Have we all forgotten how the Cambridge club used to throw Olympias off the Great Orme, often into the sea? Now that was fun.

Why is it that we consider it quite normal to spend mega sums – I am not that out of date – on glass, and ignore aircraft that have

flown in, or won, world championships? Is it because they are not modern looking, arguably not as easy to fly, cannot rush round 100km, and do not enable less than skilled pilots to do good, creditable cross-countries? True, a few pilots are doing much faster or longer flights, getting badges quicker, but are the majority doing that much better, or having more fun, than their predecessors? Many world championships were won by gliders that today you can still buy at a fraction of their original value.

Let us turn back the clock to the 1950s or 1960s. British gliders were the backbone of our clubs, although K-6s were making inroads. Swallows and Olympias were the first cross-country machine in some clubs, and Swallows were even given as prizes to clubs with promising young pilots. Club caravan sites were occupied by cheap old tourers housing, not pilots making cups of tea, but young families who actually stayed overnight. Cross-countries were fun and every pilot had their favourite retrieve story. Did you know that between 1946 and 1957 over 53 flights of 300km were flown in wood, and on one day alone in 1958, three gliders – a Skylark 3, a Skylark 2, and (I quote from the S&G of June 1958) an "old-fashioned Gull 1" brought the total to 56? Where would we stand today? If they could do it, why can't you? How about a 1950s-style competition, gliders from that era doing 1950s tasks? That will put the fun back into gliding. Interested, then let me ➤

## Revealed: one vintage glider group's guilty secret



Weihe BNC, originally Paul MacCready's of speed-to-fly fame, is owned by Keith Green, who also has ...

Paul Haldley

When researching this article (ie, sitting on the toilet leafing through old S&Gs), I found a 1970s letter from Wally Kahn making the point that gliding was getting too expensive. Slingsby's promptly accepted the challenge and offered to build an unflapped Kestrel at a budget price "if anyone was interested". Apparently they were not, proving that the rot set in many years ago. Still got the Stemme, Wally? Which brings me to a bit of inside information: the Lasham Vintage Group are alleged to have bought an L-S8 – what do you make of that? Traitors, or getting the most out of their flying? I think the latter.



... a share in the "vintage" (well, new in 1999) LS-8, CB, owned by a syndicate of Lasham VGC members

Paul Haldley

➤ know and Camphill would organise it, an offer that will probably get me into hot water with the committee again.

In power flying, pilots who fly old aircraft are looked up to ("You have to be good to fly a Tiger") but not in gliding, where we are seen as cranks. Which leads me straight to the members of the Vintage Glider Club (VGC), 800-odd cranks in 35 countries, all with an interest in old gliders. Some own only old gliders, other have glass and wood, some have three Diamonds, others fly, or have flown, in world championships... What they all have in common is a real love of flying and not just achievement, although you can have both. If that makes them and me cranks then I am pleased to be one.

We have now reached the point when I back off a bit and say this is not intended to be a well-researched factual article, but my opinion supported by whatever facts back up my case. This means there is plenty of room for argument, which I look forward to with interest. I haven't had time or patience to conduct an exhaustive survey of prices: just enough, as you'd expect, to prove my point that gliding is much more expensive than it used to be. At this point I should thank Karen McLean and Ralph Jones for giving me prices, both old and new, which I will use to say we are spending too much with them. There's

gratitude for you. Now, I could give you a two-page table as riveting as two pages of comps

results which don't include your own name, but I won't. Instead I will pick out examples, adjusted to include instruments and trailers.

In 1960 a new Olympia 2b cost £1,000, whilst a new Olympia 419, a hot ship, cost £1,700. Secondhand, a Kite 2a was £625 and an Oly 2b was available at £775.

In 2000, a DG 303, an Olympia 2b replacement, is £30,000 and a Ventus 2C at £52,500 replaces the Oly 419. Secondhand? How about an Oly 2b at £2,000 or a K-6CR at £5,000? Standardised using the cost of a mars bar as a yardstick (a method devised by an economist with a dietary problem), if you buy second-hand, the cost of an airworthy glider is a quarter of what it was in 1960, but of course it's older, whilst a modern one will be up to three times what it was in 1960.

So what can we do? Manufacturers will not, of course, reduce their prices. It is not economical to try to build a glass Olympia, and in any event they have a market willing to pay the necessary price. Nothing will happen unless we take advantage of the ready supply of older gliders that represent extremely good value and fun flying. Go to one of the many vintage and classic glider rallies that take place throughout the soaring season. Compare the atmosphere with a competition, and ask yourself: "Who is having more fun, and better parties?"

Any change must involve what amounts to two-stream gliding, low cost and the current high cost. The lead must come from the clubs. (Many smaller clubs do, of course,

have the older aircraft in their fleets, rely on the work members do, and have flying rates that reflect this.) What could clubs do? First, have an accounting system that shows the true costs of their operations so that "what if" studies can be made on cost implications. Here are just a few ideas. Include older aircraft in the fleet and charge a flying rate that reflects the lower capital and running cost. Instead of a pure launch fee, except for private owners, revise the launch charge and include a maximum flying time – after all, it costs nothing to keep them in the air – perhaps with a penalty, too.

If that results in an increase in utilisation but loss of revenue from the glass gliders then the answer is obvious: replace them. Offer new members the opportunity to learn to fly in vintage gliders, get the wind in their hair, join the "heritage" bandwagon. You can always convert them to glass later.

How can private owners be encouraged to buy wood/old plastic? First, by example, let them see the value and fun. Here the VGC member must come out of the woodwork and preach, instead of being embarrassed. However, again the lead must come from the clubs by encouraging glass syndicates and owners to add a wood glider. The advantage to the club is increased launch income from the syndicate. As far as I am aware, only Dunstable has a policy of not

**'Who is having more fun, and better parties?'**

charging for a second glider trailer space, whilst at another large club, charging for additional trailers at the standard rate has led to old gliders being put on the market. This must happen at other clubs, or stop a second aircraft being bought. Another "what if": replace the trailer space rent with an annual private member's fee – every owner or syndicate member pays the same rate, irrespective of the number of aircraft they or their syndicate own. The sums are easy to do, and how much more does an additional trailer cost the club? The club benefits from an increase in launch income because pilots have a second glider to fly.

So there it is. Carry on as we are and gliding will become even more expensive, less attractive to the young – the preserve of the old, rich and dying out. Encourage the flying of our "old" stock, our heritage, with our other operations: a marketable concept. Make flying fun again, and above all make it affordable, not because the youngsters haven't got the money but because they have lots of other things to spend it on.

I now wait for the comments of: "what a load of rubbish," "it's not realistic," "it could never happen here," "you can't turn the clock back"... followed by further letters in S&G bemoaning the reduction in members, and increasing charges to compensate for reduced activity. So, VGC members, get out there and preach. Must go, I have a Fauvel AV36 to complete rebuilding, a T-21 to help with, and a Nimbus 2 (glass but old) to fly, plus instructing and coaching. I enjoy my gliding: it's fun.

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AT THE WATERLOO - the glider field in the foreground. In the background to the left is the airport with the towers to the right.

**Gillian Bryce-Smith, S&G's editor for a quarter of a century, recalls her time in the job and asks why it inspired such dedication**

**F**OR ALL OF eight years I loathed S&G and dreaded its appearance. It was a competitor for my husband's attention and always the winner. I couldn't see why this small, heavily-packed magazine had to be read from cover to cover, whatever the content of the articles, and lovingly filed away for frequent reference.

Then came the opportunity to be its editor and I looked at it rather differently. It's a fact of life that journalists want to be editors, whatever the subject. At least I had a love of flying – shared by most of my generation – and had spent enough time on airfields during courtship and marriage to have stored a heap of, until this moment, useless information about the handling of aircraft I knew I would never fly. It didn't matter that I had lost the battle with airsickness, or any other travel sickness come to that: a few days before Christmas 1972 Barry Rolfe rang to say I had the job. I was to start at the beginning of February.

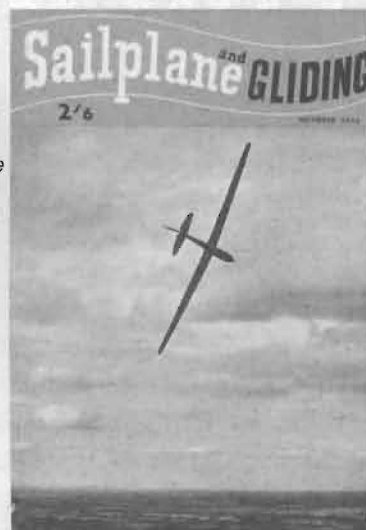
It seemed helpful that Doc Slater lived less than three miles away and the first S&G activity was to renew our acquaintance and ask for his guidance.

Doc was a world-renowned editor and, although I had met him at various gliding events, I was much in awe of this man who had given up his medical career to concentrate on the magazine. I was sure he would give me reams of advice, perhaps a lecture on keeping up the standards of the magazine which had absorbed so much of his life and even guidelines on how he

# S&G celebrates its 70th year



On September 6, 1930, hard on the heels of gliding's revival in the UK, a weekly publication was founded by Thurstan James: *The Sailplane & Glider* (far left). In 1933, Alan E Slater – universally known as 'Doc' Slater – produced his first issue. "It being 1933, I was at once launched into gliding politics," he later wrote (February-March 1983). "Gordon England's policy of trying to attract a subsidy by means of a glorified office had made the BGA bankrupt, but it raised £500 from a Derby sweepstake promoter in return for permission to use the BGA's name on the tickets, whereupon the Public Prosecutor and the Director of Civil Aviation, who were on the Council, resigned. By late summer this money had gone, too, and S&G was published monthly; but that is a later story..." A new magazine, *Gliding*, was launched in 1950, with Ann Douglas (now Welch) and Philip Wills as directors and a Charles Brown cover photo of Ann in a Slingsby Gull 4 (left). Five years later, the publications merged to form *Sailplane & Gliding* (right), edited by Doc Slater, the official organ of the BGA – a strapline dropped with alacrity by Gillian Bryce-Smith, but by which it is still affectionately known... Gillian became editor in 1973 and was succeeded in 1998 by Le Forbes. In 1974, Gillian took the decision to change your magazine's size and shape to what you see today (below)



wanted S&G to develop. But not a bit of it. Instead we spent three fascinating hours in his magazine-crowded drawing room, and I mean crowded with just about every aviation publication printed in the previous five years filling the floor and the top of his baby grand, talking about the possibility of life on another planet, steam boats and dogs – another of his great loves, especially Major, a golden labrador.

Although Doc was synonymous with S&G for so long (with a break during the war when he returned to medicine), he never imposed his ideas on anyone else. He was always willing to write, and translated for us, using a powerful magnifying glass to overcome his failing sight. Even when over 90, he still wrote with an unbelievable freshness and clarity.

This most modest man gave up so much potential for the sake of the magazine. A brilliant pianist and composer, he had in later years the pleasure of hearing his cello sonata performed. The drawing room was miraculously cleared every few months when he hosted his famous musical evenings, pulling in talent from among his friends and Cambridge University. Another great interest was astronomy and for a while before S&G got started after the war he edited the British Interplanetary Society's journal. Doc's study of weather led to many instructive S&G articles illustrated by some of the 1000-strong cloudscapes he had photographed from 1923. He died in 1988, just short of his 93rd birthday.

My next stop was the London office where Rika Harwood was the mainstay of the magazine. For some years under Doc's editorship she had given tremendous help and eventually was making up the pages as well as instigating articles. Had she wanted, she would have been a great editor.

Typically, she took on a lot of work with-

out expecting recognition. There hardly seemed to be anyone of consequence in the gliding world she didn't know and I was so grateful to have her as a willing source of help and information. She joined Doc as consultant editor and, with her husband Godfrey, who was a former committee member, she was an excellent proofreader.



And so it all started with me working from my Cambridge home. The first few issues were frantic, especially as we increased its size to A4, but in those first few months this irritating little magazine cast its magic and soon had me as captivated as its previous editors (and I count Rika in this group as she more than deserved the title). We met in London after the publication of each issue with Philip Wills as chairman and a very

young Michael Bird and equally young Roger Barrett on the committee. Michael had already turned into Platypus and all these luminaries were ready contributors and advisers, with Barry always there to give backing and appreciated encouragement. Later, Roger took over as chairman from Philip to be followed by Anthony Edwards, the Arm-Chair Pilot, which, with Doc, meant three of us coming from Cambridge. Another group member was Peggy Mieville, advertising manager from 1955 until her death in 1983. The evening always ended with supper when fascinating stories of the early years were the perfect way to absorb the atmosphere and politics of the times I had missed.

As we grew in size and British gliding expanded the magazine took more and more of my time. We increased the size from 48 to 64 pages and often, to the irritation of the over-45s who were relying on glasses (and I know how they must have felt now!), reduced the type size to pack in the information. But I didn't mind. Like the others, I was a willing slave and so grateful to have had the chance to take S&G a little further along the road. Now it's Helen's responsibility and I am sure Doc and Rika would more than approve of her professionalism and enthusiasm. Perhaps one day she will have the insight to know what it is that makes S&G so special. All I know is that it gave me 25 enjoyable, fulfilling years and brought me into contact with the brilliant cross-section of individualists that make gliding such a unique sport.

Gillian Bryce-Smith remains at the forefront of reporting the sport, editing a website for the Soaring Society of America: Gliding and Motorgliding International. You can find it at [www.glidingmagazine.com](http://www.glidingmagazine.com)



# The confidence trick



**There's no secret to blue flying, says Ray Payne: read the ground instead of the sky and give it a go**

*the white planes picture co.*

**S**ETTING off into the blue is all about confidence. Most of us are happy to soar off cross-country under clouds, but take away the fluffy white signposts from the sky and many pilots suddenly get the jitters.

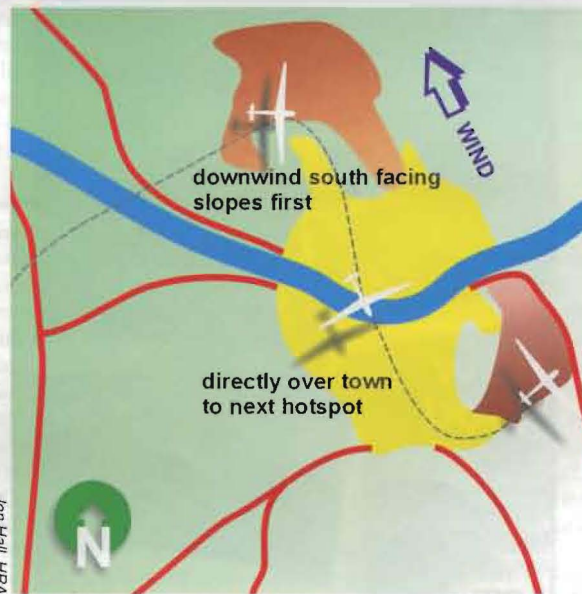
It doesn't have to be like that. Flying in the blue is fun and, approached the right way, relatively easy.

I realised in the early 1980s that most pilots at my club (Keevil in those days), were extremely reluctant to set off on declared cross-countries in the blue. That included me. As I wanted to improve my skills, I needed to master all forms of soaring, not just fair weather cu, and that meant understanding blue conditions.

Just because there aren't any clouds, that doesn't mean there aren't any thermals. Did you ever ride a bicycle before you decided to spend hours at airfields in the rain? Remember how it always seemed to be warm riding to some places and cold going to others, assuming you stayed out of the headwinds? I now call these hot and cold spots. Some can be almost a mile long.

## Hot spots

These are areas of terrain which seem to contain the heat from the sun longer and form the thermals we use. They also cause the cold spots by cooling the surrounding



Jon Hall, HRA

*Figure 1: A medium-sized town surrounded by hills. In the blue, fly over south-facing slopes downwind of the town. If nothing much happens, then fly directly over the town on your way to the next likely hot spot*

areas with the colder air that replaces the warm air they have sucked in. I'm convinced that some areas of countryside never produce thermals while others seem to constantly stream off lift. Most hot spots have trigger points, some of which may vary depending on the wind's strength and direction. These can be small hills, quarries, trading estates,

factories, and so on. Some are listed below and, for ease of understanding, given scores out of ten for their heating performance:

<b>Stubble fires</b>	<b>10</b>
Medium-sized town surrounded by hills	8
<b>Working power station</b>	<b>8</b>
Medium-sized town	6
<b>South-facing ridge</b>	<b>6</b>
Motorway service areas	6
<b>Large factories and trading estates</b>	<b>6</b>
Large brown fields with working tractor	6
<b>Narrow east-west valley, say 1 mile wide, with village in it</b>	<b>6</b>
Large wooded areas in the early evening	4
<b>Bonfires</b>	<b>2-0</b>

And so on, down to the airfield hangar! Early-evening thermals from large wooded areas seem to be big areas of gentle lift without the pulses that characterise other blue thermals. They score 4 out of 10 in light winds, and are of no use in strong winds. You might find that they contain more bugs than usual, so check your wings before setting off on a final glide.

Bonfires are also worth a try and have got me home twice, once on a 300km and the last time from a 700km flight. I believe they

act as a trigger point more than being an actual thermal. They score from 2 down to 0 – zero being the first digit of the retrieve crew phone number.

Now the clever bit: all you have to do is add up the scores and if better than 10, go for it. A south-facing hill with a working tractor would be a score of 12. (In fact, you don't really have to count, just look for anything which could give at least two scores.)

Imagine you're flying over a large town surrounded by hills – where do you go? First look for other gliders soaring in a stubble fire with a tractor in it on the south-facing slope! (If only...)

Failing that, what you really need to do is to fly over the south-facing slopes directly downwind of the town, and if nothing much happens then fly directly over the town on your way to the next likely hot spot – which you had already identified before committing yourself to the first choice. See Figure 1, left.

In other words, use the ground features as if they were clouds and cruise between them in the general direction of your goal.

It isn't unusual to go 45° off track, but try to stay upwind so you drift back on to your track line, not downwind of it, should you be forced to take a slower climb. By staying upwind you can then fly crosswind around your goal, saving height and time.

### Haze caps

To see most haze caps or very small wisps of convection cloud easily, you need a good pair of dark brown tint sunglasses (I use Serengeti Stradas) These are not normally available in opticians, but I'm sure if you asked they would order them for you.

Haze caps tend to be visible when flying south into sun, but when you turn towards the north they seem to disappear.

One trick worth trying when heading north is this: as soon as you feel the turbulence of a thermal weave the glider and look back over your shoulder into sun to see the position of the haze cap behind you. If it's visible, simply turn back and start to climb.

the white planes picture co.



Before setting off into the blue, practise locally, and develop your understanding of what the wind is doing

Never waste time at cloudbase when you're local soaring: use it to practise. Open the brakes, go down to 2,000ft and soar up again – only now do it by ground features alone. Get used to recognising your local hot spots. Go down lower to, say, 1,500ft, and see if you can still get away. Don't panic, just fly around till you find lift! Ignore the clouds above.

Before attempting cross-countries in the blue you should have practised and developed your skills in wind direction appreciation. It's probably one of the most misunderstood and unpractised skills by low-hours pilots. Work out exactly from which direction the wind is coming, so that you can learn to approach the hot spot directly up or downwind. By doing this you cannot miss a thermal – provided it's there. See Figures 2 and 3, below. If you hit lift, turn into wind and reduce speed, wait till the surge begins to weaken then turn back into the lift. If, after a few turns, the average seems to be falling, open up into wind, wait and repeat. I find that this works for me.

To make your blue flying practice easier, set your tasks up and downwind: you'll soon discover streets of reduced sink, or lift. I have noticed there's always a good hot spot along these energy lines. When you're flying cross-country in the blue, flying these energy lines is invaluable. If you're brave, you'll find that the lower you go, the stronger the lift, but the risk is all yours! Stay high for now, and I will see you all at 1,500ft next year.

To help develop your soaring skills, get used to always taking a winch/auto launch when you can – it forces you to concentrate on finding lift when low – it's cheaper, too. Most cross-country pilots at our club take winch launches mid-morning with water. It's not unusual to launch with ballast of 200-250lbs.

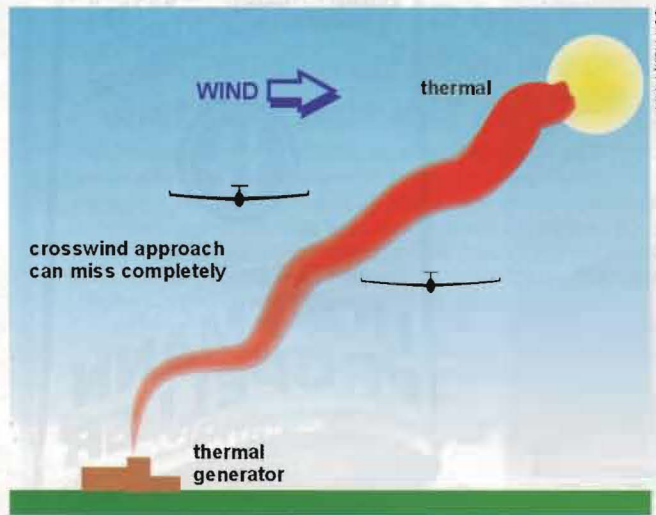
### Inside the cockpit

Always wear a soaring hat. Mine are made from towelling which, soaked in cool water, seem to retain the moisture longer than the cotton types. A self-adhesive tennis racket handle grip, also made from towelling, stops your stick hand from sliding.

Water is more important in you than the wings. Try to drink a least a pint just before you launch, and drink a little every 10 minutes (I take a mouthful every thermal). Make sure before the launch you can actually reach the water. It's of no use behind your seat or, even worse, in the car.

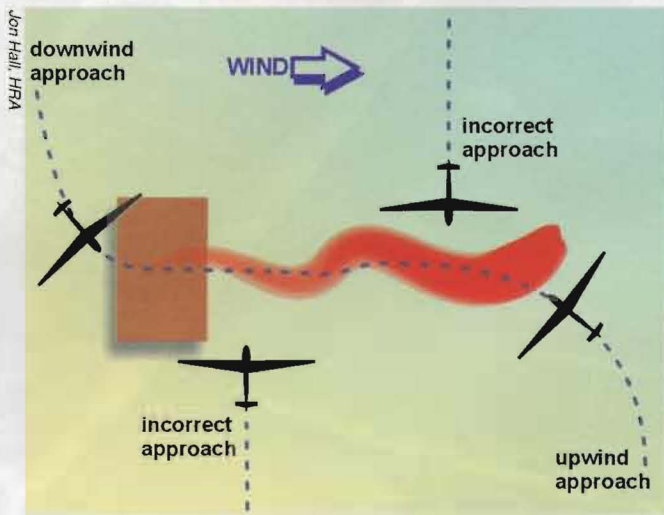
After a season of practice you will find your confidence has developed and flying tasks in the blue is a really enjoyable challenge. And keep looking for the tractor in the south-facing burning stubble field downwind of a town!

Ray Payne (right, flying in Australia) began gliding at Swindon GC, South Marston, in 1975. He has more than 2,000hrs PT, gliding and power; and three Diamonds done in a Std Cirrus. His longest flight is 700km in a Discus (28 per cent triangle) from his club, Nympsfield



Jon Hall, HRA

Try not to approach hot spots side-on: you risk flying above or below the thermal

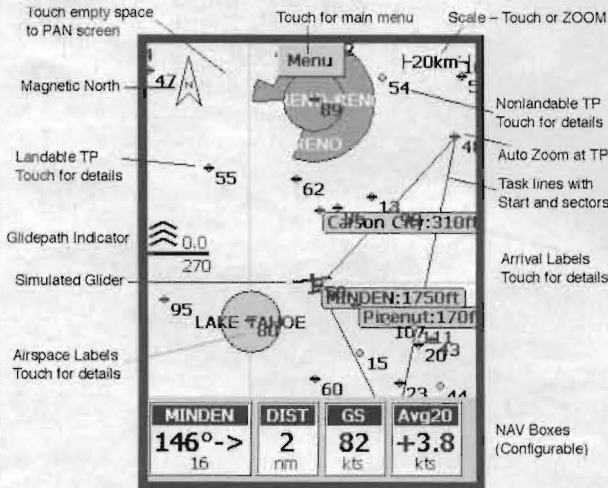


Jon Hall, HRA

It's better to approach from upwind or downwind – and weave if necessary

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# How

When an unexpected cold front deposited him in a field last year, Mel Eastburn wondered what had happened elsewhere. Thus was born the idea of recording a day in the life of UK gliding... and Tom Bradbury (overleaf) did the Met

**A**FTER a fortnight of rotten weather, the forecast for the chosen day (Sunday, April 30) perked up the Thursday before. In the south, Saturday was better than forecast and many gliders were left out for Sunday. In the north, Saturday's low cloud cleared too late, but Sunday looked on.



The Park



Wiltshire

At Bath, Wilts & North Dorset GC the first launch is at 10.15 into a blue sky, but cu and launch queue are visible by 11.40. By 13.00 all 18 gliders are airborne with good clouds everywhere. Nimbus 3DT (above, top) takes Ron and Joy Lynch to Stratford and back (245km) but gliders going east hit a line of low clag along the A34. The Pegasus lands in a sticky field near Devizes (above) which once hosted Alan Cobham's Flying Circus.

At the **Cornish Gliding and Flying Club** (below), the day starts late – 11.00, after tug trouble – and ends early, beaten by habitual enemies: the weather and low Sunday atten-



Cornwall

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# was it for you?



Steve Longland

dance. A wind of 15-22kts at 09.30 becomes 25kts from 140 by 14.00. CFI Gordon Hunter, at Culdrose for the day, phones: it's blowing a hooley up the Helford River; they've done just two flights. Last launch at Perranporth is at 16.45, to practise divergent situations on tow: the weak link is fully checked and the rings lost!

**Devon & Somerset GC's** first soaring flight is at 10.05, just 15 minutes after first launch, and prompts frenzied rigging. Cu are overhead by 11.20 but, with no tug pilot, cross-country starters are winched. Local conditions are complicated by a sea breeze



Kent

front but there are good 200km-plus flights to Salisbury, where we hit clag, and a couple of landouts. Last flight at 17.44.

Raining at **Kent GC** by 07.30. Lots of desultory fettling, gazing out of windows, and drinking coffee. Soggy Nimbus left overnight after cracking Saturday is now a source of amusement – as is this diary! Day abandoned at 12.50... even the concrete is waterlogged (see below left).

Optimism reigns at **Norfolk GC** (below) despite the grey sky. By 10.30 it is raining gently but Inter-club League tasks are set, with gliders to grid by 13.00. First winch



Norfolk

At the Long Mynd, John demonstrates how to cut off the bits of a chart you don't need. Unfortunately, he cuts off Lowestoft, which ruins Martin's chance of a 300km. Just as well East Anglia is not the best of destinations on April 30...

Philippe, a visitor to Hus Bos, asks if any instructors speak French, as his English isn't too good. "Naturellement!" Tug pilot Giselle Hibberd is French and her English instructor husband Graham parles – well, he would, wouldn't he?

Keith lands out with his mobile unusable due to high ground. Contacting his home club, **Borders**, by radio relay, he finds his wife is away in his car for the day. He is collected by motor bike – since everyone who has a towbar is airborne – and has to return later to de-rig

The day in Cornwall does at least end with a bang – literally. Just as he lies down in a hot bath, the ceiling falls in on Dick Gillow. In the bath. On top of him. And so he was cleaned out of Brownie points for gliding on Monday



Yorkshire



Loch Einich

launch is at 12.35 under an 800ft cloud-base. Competition scrubbed at 14.00. Rain stops 14.03. By 16.00 cloudbase is 4,000ft, but still the only lift is on tow.

First launch for **York GC** (top) at 10.00 into a milky sky. Thermals by 14.30 when local soaring begins, to 3,000ft. An hour later a sea breeze front is giving 4kts and three Bronze legs. Stephen Wright gets his motorglider PPL with a qualifying cross-country and a member lands out nearby having done 50km of a 100km inter-club task from Sutton Bank. Last landing, 18.30.

With a blocked culvert creating a lake at Easterton, **Highland GC** goes to **Feshie** for the first Scottish inter-club fixture. Three tasks are set: 66km, 106km and 198km, over spectacular scenery (above). By early afternoon there is 6-8kts to 4,500ft all over the valley. There is also huge sink, so only the locals with the best broomsticks did the big task. There are mutterings that they were the only ones who knew the scoring system.

A Netlon day at **Needwood Forest**: an inch of surface water, and no sun until after 10.30. The 13.00 pitch inspection decides on field fettling. In bright sunshine, holes and ruts are filled and the first of 20 rolls of Netlon is laid for the a landing strip. After attempts with ropes and hooks to tension >



Staffordshire



Hangar doors open on **Perranporth's** gliding day



An instructor DIs a Bocian at **The Park**



Wishing it was Saturday again at **Cambridge GC**

➤ the roll, a stunning Penguin-like shuffle by assembled members is remarkably effective. Gliding is more than just pitching up, jumping in, flying and going home.

First launch at 10.10 for **Derby & Lancs GC** but no soaring until 14.00. By 15.45 it's going well – but only locally – to 3,500ft. Lots of first flights, and the CFI has a fit at 18.00 when the winch unilaterally decides to head home. Last flight 19.00, and 90 minutes later 30 weary members assemble for drinks and a superb roast dinner.

After three 500km flights the day before from **Cambridge GC**, some gliders were left rigged, but low cloud persisted. First aerotow at 09.31 and first winch launch at 10.00 – from a very wet field. Flying is

stopped by rain at 11.27 for three hours and the last flight is at 16.18. We only flew at all thanks to the enthusiasm of the duty crew (who knew they'd be on record).

**Trent Valley GC's** hangar doors opened at 07.30 amidst hopes that the veil of grey clag

**'Dominic drives 50 miles to the Mynd with his wife's car keys, only to discover the trailer key for his new LS-8 is at home...'**

would burn off. It never did, but at least the rain stayed away. Training continued and we saw two big events: Barry Pridgin's first solo and the arrival of a new tractor to cut grass – deep joy for the big wing syndicates.

The Bracknell weather guessers were mainly right, writes **Bob Rodwell**: a mild,

bright day with little wind at **Ulster**. At 09.06 ten gliders are already out of our cathedral of a hangar, including those of our Dublin visitors. I follow the 10.25 first launch at 10.41 in my Jantar for a derisory 18 mins. Meanwhile Mike McSorley plans a 50km. He launches at 12.55, does Silver and only his crew hear from him again until he and trailer return (at 20.45). The DG 300 returns at 14.52 from 117km to Cookstown reporting poorer conditions further south. Many choose to wander over the beautiful countryside of the northern counties. It's a wonderful feeling to circle lazily above golden beaches blackened by thousands of groundlings. At 16.40 a squadron of 11 microlights invades, hits our coffee stocks

**Summary of weather reports for 1200 GMT. Northern Ireland:** 1/8 to 4/8 shallow cu inland, LCL up to 4,000ft, and mostly very good visibility. There were still a few fog patches over the sea. **Scotland:** The Northern and Western Isles had low stratus, drizzle and fog. Fog had been seen as far south as Aberdeen in the morning. Inland there was good visibility with 2/8 to 4/8 cu. The LCL went up to 4,000ft over the Highlands but cirrostratus dimmed the sun over some eastern regions. **Northern England:** In the east the sun was diffused through 7/8 cirrostratus and in East Yorkshire there was medium level cloud too with a region of 8/8 stratocu over the Moors around Fylingdales. Further west, away from the cirrus, there was very good visibility with scattered cu and an LCL of 3,500-4,000ft. **Midlands, Wales and SW England:** The early morning

## We picked the worst April for 244 years...

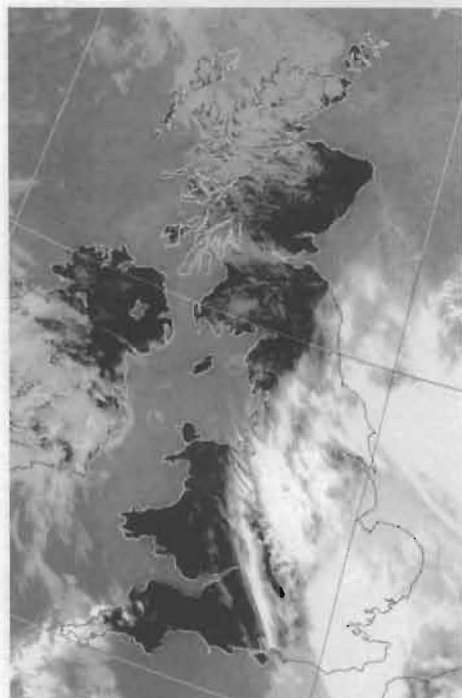
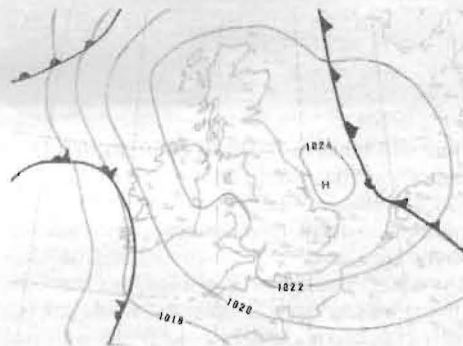


Photo A: Infra-red image for 09.23 GMT April 30, with hook of upper cloud curling round over south-east England and East Anglia *University of Dundee*

**A**pril 2000 was the wettest since 1756, writes **Tom Bradbury**. Most days had rain or drizzle, with the occasional thunderstorm. Before mid-month snow had penetrated as far as SW England. Luckily, as the final weekend approached the prospects appeared more hopeful.

On April 29 there was still a front lying across the country but as it moved north conditions improved over the south of England and a few good-looking cumulus appeared. The improvement came from an insignificant little high of 1017 mbar, which formed over Belgium at midday. By midnight the new centre had moved northwards to lie just off East Anglia and at 12.00 GMT it was 1025 mbar just off the Humber (right).

This should have given a good day over much of the UK but there was an old front rather too close over the North Sea. This front seemed to be linked to a growing mass of upper cloud just south of the surface high. Normally a building high like this makes upper cloud thin and disperse in its vicinity. However, on this occasion there was a small upper vortex south of the surface high. This made the upper cloud thicken instead of dispersing. In the absence of upper cloud the midnight radio sondes suggested that convection should start over



Surface chart for 1200 GMT April 30, showing the high

much of the country by mid-morning with high based cu tops limited by an inversion at 5,000-6,000ft.

Unfortunately radar and satellite data showed a less favourable picture for eastern England. The radar plots for 0600 and 0900 GMT showed rain spreading across the English Channel towards Norfolk. Before dawn the satellite pictures showed that a hook-shaped mass of upper cloud had developed above the radar echoes. This upper cloud extended northwards over the eastern half of England and killed any chance of thermals there.



Soaring in 3-5kt averages at **Borders GC**



Cleaning mud off the toys after flying at **Hus Bos**



A roast dinner ends the day at **Derby & Lincs**

then, in little more than three mins, re-starts, lines up and leaves. Last launch at 18.08. The hangar doors roll shut about 19.20: 57 launches, a quietly satisfying day.

I arrive at **Borders GC** for 09.30 to find the hangar emptied, writes **Bob Cassidy**, and our Four Counties visitors rigged. At 09.45 the launchpoint is set up, then moved when the wind changes. As private owners start to rig, Bill is doing site checks in the visitors' Duo Discus (someone has to!) before the thermals start to pop at around 11.00 over the Cheviot hills. By 14.00 we've done 16 launches into strong lift, with gusts of 8kts and 3-5kt averages to 5,500ft over the hills. Colin Sword does a 100km triangle and by 15.00 most of the

early starters are returning, after two to four hours' soaring. We have to move the launch point yet again, as a sea breeze moves the wind SE, and brings turbulent conditions near the hills. The last of 33 launches is at 18.15 followed by a committee meeting

**'Michael Fish raises a lunchtime laugh at Cambridge, saying: Obviously the weather didn't listen to yesterday's forecast**

(and a pint), and a message that our Inter-club League team did well at Feshie.

**Dumfries and District GC** fly every Sunday from a 600ft ridge just north of the Solway Coast, writes **Kaz Pazski**. At 10.00 it's winch to the north end and K-2 to the south. 11.17, first launch – Bob Park gives

his son his first flight. The wind develops a southerly component, so we change ends. Mostly circuits until 13.49 when my third lesson hits 6kts, so we go thermalling, then do stalls and spins. This encourages John McIver's Diamant and the club's Open Cirrus. At 15.29 John gets 7 mins. 15.54: young Robin Lyon has his first flight, his mum saying: "That's my baby up there!" But as he wants more she leaves him with us. 16.00 sees launches by Bill Gordon in his microlight – at 82 our senior member – and Richard Slack, now in the RAF, who was 10 when he began coming here with father Ian. Circuits only from now on. 17.04: wind northerly, so we change ends again! 20.36, last launch. It's still daylight as we leave. ➤

cirrostratus thinned and mostly cleared to the north allowing scattered shallow cu to form before midday. The LCL was highest in the west. It was 2,600ft at Odiham, 3,800ft at Boscombe Down on Salisbury Plain and up to 4,500ft in Central Wales. Over Cornwall and south Devon a freshening easterly breeze probably spoilt the thermals. Patches of upper cloud earlier in the day had delayed heating over Cornwall. **East and SE England:** For much of the day there was 8/8 layered upper cloud which brought a period of rain to places along and to the east of a line from Hurstmonceaux–London–Stansted–Norwich. Southend reported 0.32in. The LCL was very low for some distance in from the coast: only 800ft at Marham, 1,000ft at Honington, 1,200ft at Bedford and 1,900ft at Wittering. Conditions did slowly improve from the south but too late to be of much use.

**Photo A** (far left) shows the infra-red image for 0923 GMT. The sun had heated up the land by then so it shows up jet black. The very white cloud over eastern districts is cold topped cirrostratus and altostratus. In central England, the cirrostratus looked rather threatening at sunrise but the western edge dispersed during the morning and small cu began to form before midday. However, the upper cloud persisted east of a line from the Pennines to the Isle of Wight. During the afternoon it began to clear away from Sussex and Kent but a tongue extended to reach the extreme northeast of Scotland. **Photo B** (right) is an enlarged visual image south of Lat 55 N for 15.34 GMT, showing small cu too warm to appear on infra-red pictures. There were well-developed cu over north-west England, the Welsh mountains, the West Midlands and much of southern England except Kent and Sussex. Over North Wales and the Cornish peninsula, any cu were too small to be seen.

Location of sounding	Sunshine (hours)	Rain (ins)	Max Temp °C	Dew Pt °C	Max LCL (ft)
Aberdeen	9.8	nil	17	08	3,600
Anglesey	13.6	nil	17	10	2,800
Aviemore	10.0	nil	18	07	4,400
Belfast	12.2	0.1	17	07	4,000
Birmingham	8.2	nil	18	07	4,400
Bristol	12.8	nil	20	07	5,200
Cardiff	11.6	nil	21	06	6,000
Cromer	2.7	nil	13	11	800
Herne Bay	1.8	0.25	14	10	1,600
Leeds	7.6	nil	18	08	4,000
Leuchars	11.4	nil	18	08	4,000
London	4.4	0.06	15	09	2,400
Margate	2.7	0.15	14	10	1,600
Newcastle	8.9	nil	19	08	4,400
Norwich	2.8	0.01	15	09	2,400
Oxford	10.4	nil	18	07	4,400
Ross-on-Wye	11.7	nil	19	05	5,600
Shrewsbury	9.5	0.01*	17	04	5,200
Southend	2.0	0.32	16	10	2,400
Southport	11.0	0.01*	19	06	5,200

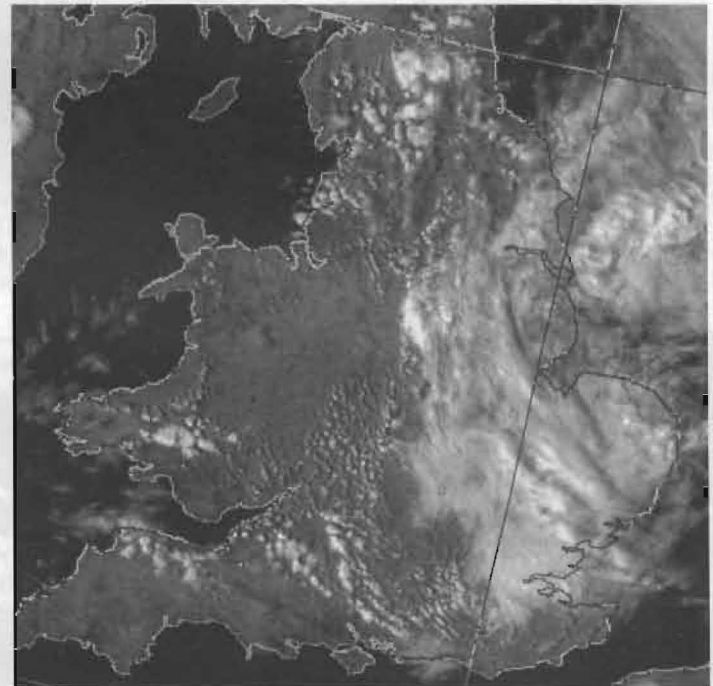


Photo B: a visual image for 15.34 GMT

University of Dundee

Left: Conditions over the UK on April 30. LCL stands for Lifted Condensation Level, the level at which air, lifted from the surface, reaches its condensation temperature. It is a useful guide to the base of convective clouds. Rain marked \* fell on Saturday night as the previous front moved away north. **Acknowledgments:** Thanks to Bristol Weather Centre and NERC Satellite Receiving Station at the University of Dundee

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

**07.00** As I leave Chester for **Midland GC** at the Long Mynd, Shropshire, the sky is clear blue and it looks good. **08.00** At the Mynd, signs announce our "Flying Start" weekend. On the top, it's spectacular – valleys shrouded in mist with just the hill tops visible, in shades of blue and grey. Mornings like this remind me why I drive all this way to fly. **08.30** Suddenly the club is a hive of activity – people eating breakfast and a queue waiting to order. Talk is of 500s but the internet forecast isn't that good... it diminishes to 300s. **09.20** The hangar is empty and club fleet DI'd. At least 15 private owners are rigging. The Pawnee is doing touch-and-goes (the duty tuggie hasn't flown it for a while). The new winch is on the way to the south end. Wind still light. **09.30** Instructors' meeting. Meanwhile, small groups

stare at the sky as sheets of stratus block out the sun (far right). An air of inevitability creeps in as planned tasks shrink again. **10.30** Briefing at the hangar. Four pilots form a mini-course with K-21 and instructor. **10.45** Cross-country briefing from Simon Adlard, BGA national coach and long-time Myndite: 110km towards Shobdon for novices; 210km (Hay on Wye – Chirk) for the rest. **11.00** First launch. Unsoarable: looking distinctly iffy. But with lots of infrequently-seen members here there's pressure for check flights. The prospective new members arrive and have priority in the second K-21. **12.15** Steady stream of visitors – everything is running smoothly. **12.20** K-13 is grounded (sheared tailwheel valve). **13.00** Normally time to stop for lunch but today we have a relief winch driver: Andy Holmes soloed >



Shropshire



Leicestershire

**07.15** With hardly a breath of wind, a hot air balloon makes the most of conditions near **The Soaring Centre** at Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire. Clear sky to the west contrasts with the thin layer of stratus above and thicker cloud to the south-east. I take the dog for a stroll. **07.35** Peter Poole, from Kenley, is rigging his Kestrel 20; he hopes to do a 300 or 500 today. **07.50** Welcome arrivals Glynis and Avril open the kitchen for breakfast. **08.30** The draw for the club gliders: Ken Stewart gets the Duo Discus. To limit damage to the wet field there will be no winching, and aerotows will be from the tarmac strip. The thick cloud is moving slowly west. Glum faces from those who didn't

fly yesterday expecting today to be the day. **08.45** Two cars and trailers head for Saltby to unpack the Benalla container (see June-July issue, p34). The weather fax predicts 3 – cross-countryable – unless the occluded front to the south-east moves in... **that** must be it, over there! **09.45** Private owners out in force; three Puchaczs and two tugs reach the launch point. But one tug is out of hours, so returns. **10.00** First launch. Morning briefing and a multiple TP task is set: Watford Gap, then either Towcester, Buckingham or Oxford and finally a Lat and Long with points for finding its notable ground feature. **10.45** Fifteen private owners have rigged but many are now planning non-gliding >

**08.30** Leave home under disappointing stratus cover. **09.00** At **Aquila GC**, Hinton in the Hedges, Northamptonshire, there's lots of grey cloud, but it's bluer to the west. Windssocks limp. I join others rigging, struck by how cold it still is. **10.12** First parachute drop of the day. Club gliders reach the launch point – at the opposite end from where we are rigging. Still unbroken cloud to the east, not what the Beeb forecast. **10.45** Ten private owners rigged, watered and ready, with more arriving. I suggest 300km to the west but to little enthusiasm and plans are more modest. **11.03** First launch. The Super Cub tows duty instructor Jeff Luck and a day course visitor in the K-21. They land 13 minutes later out of a flat sky,

so no early start! Club launches proceed. Groups of hopeful pilots debate prospects, tasks getting shorter. **12.15** Only the club K-21 and K-13 are flying. The K-8 joins them and, after half an hour, is still there so, at **12.37**, the first private owner launches, ahead of a rapidly-forming grid. Better cu to the west, but the line of the overcast a mile to the east is now very defined. Super Cub busy. **13.00** Jason, a local news reporter, arrives as planned, but has lost his photographer. Mike Oggelsby (car sales manager) briefs him in his usual enthusiastic manner ("...and it's only done 22,000 flights"). By **13.15** "Snaps" appears and photographs Jason and K-21 from every possible angle (right). Tug still busy. **13.28** There's drama as >



Northamptonshire



Gwent

**08.00** Members start emerging from caravans at **South Wales GC**, Usk, Gwent. Peter France and son Simon are first to rig. **08.40** Lots of gliders were left out last night after an excellent forecast. **08.45** Early arrivals get out the club fleet and DI aircraft and ground equipment. Duty Instructor Maureen Weaver walks the field to assess conditions. **09.00** The field is soft but flyable. There is, however, high cloud. **09.20** Gliders go to the launchpoint. **10.00** First launch – an aerotow check flight for Steve Stokes. **10.02** The first winch launch, and a cable foul-up causes a 30-minute delay. Instructional and K-8 flights take place. The high cloud burns off. It begins to look really good. **11.40** K-8 gets away from the winch and the private owners' aerotow >

Contributors of text/photos: **Aquila** – Mel Eastburn; **Bath, Wilts & N Dorset** – Joy Lynch; **Borders** – Bob Cassidy; **Cambridge** – John/Janet Birch; **Cornish** – Dick Gillow/Nigel Climpson; **Derby & Lancs** – Shirley Haslett/Anne Jennings; **Devon & Somerset** – Phil Morrison; **Dumfries** – Kaz Paszki; **Highland** – Angie Veitch/A. Carter; **Kent** – Caroline Whitbread/Sally Crowder; **Midland** – Jon Hall/Jon Lewis; **Needwood Forest** – Grant Williams; **Norfolk** – Alan/Jan Harber; **South Wales** – Maureen Weaver/Steve Stokes; **The Soaring Centre** – Siobhan Hindley/Sid Gilmore; **Trent Valley** – John Kitchen; **Ulster** – Bob Rodwell; **York** – Mike Cohler For diaries see club websites, listed at [www.glding.co.uk](http://www.glding.co.uk)

here at 16, and now flies for British Airways. The two-seaters start to soar. **14.00** First private owner's launch. Soon the sky is full of gliders. Paul gets to Hay and back, then abandons: Iain goes north and Dominic goes to Shobdon, three times, before scrubbing. No landouts, remarkably. **15.30** Lots of people want BI flights. The K-13 is still grounded. **16.30** Martin reports a thermal off the north end: 8.1kt average. Excitement as five gliders follow each other round the circuit: there's a K-21 in the middle of the runway, the retrieve driver is "resting" – the duty instructor uses words some of us have never heard before. **17.10** A brand-new Bentley cruises in and the driver asks how to join: "...details of our Diamond membership deal, Sir?" **20.00** Last launch. We recruited 18 members. Not a bad day, really. **Jon Hall**



Shropshire



Leicestershire

the DG returns (right), unable to open the airbrakes. He sideslips, overflies the launchpoint, turns at the end of 09 to land a little heavily on 33, before stopping abruptly. A flurry of cars races to check all is well (it is). Jason, the journalist, assumes this is normal. **13.40** The Super Cub goes sick. **14.15** Pawnee rapidly DI'd and launching re-starts. Local soarers are now up in force. **14.40** Dave Latimer fixes the Super Cub and helps reduce the queue. **15.10** CFI Tony Limb returns in his LS-8 from a 126km task to Chedworth and Broadway. In the next 90 mins, most of the cross-country pilots land, having done 110-150km. Chairman Richard Collings lands with Jason and reports only some local cu give lift. **16.24** A

activities: trailer washing, grass mowing and walking. Low stratus persists. **11.35** A Puchacz punctures a front tyre and is towed back for repairs. Unsoarable, but Tom Ebinger enjoyed his "Gliding Experience" – a 13th birthday present from his parents, who are with him. **12.45** Mike Larkin lands after over an hour in the club Junior. Brian Marsh is the first private owner to launch in his LS-8 but Dave Booth de-rigs his. **13.00** The sun's gone and clouds are darkening ominously – we seem to be right on the dividing line for the weather. **13.45** We change ends, and launching re-starts after 30 mins. **14.25** "Launch rage" erupts as the strain of using the narrow tarmac strip, and having to

clear it to let the tugs land, takes its toll. The Silene is a mud victim, bogged down half way to the launchpoint. **14.40** Drama as tuggie radios he can't use the flaps after a loud bang from the rear cockpit. After a flapless landing, a group gathers to give expert opinions (left). **15.20** Duo Discus returns having turned back at Watford Gap. **15.25** More drama – Silene groundloops, but is undamaged. **15.40** The first spots of rain. **16.15** Steadily-increasing rain, but we haven't given up yet! **16.40** We stop after 51 tows. **17.50** Bar chat reveals only two cross-countries: Brian (Little Rissington, 154km) and Frank Davies (Edgehill-Bicester, 137km). **18.30** Another lovely dinner in the clubhouse. **Siobhan Hindley**



Northamptonshire

Skylark 4 lands from Weston, the pilot claiming he needs a practice aerotow. **16.40** ASW 22 returns reporting better conditions west of Enstone. Concern is growing for James, our youngest solo pilot, who has been silent since leaving on only his second cross-country in the club ASW 19 at 13.37 – 102km to the west. **17.02** It's now very flat locally and de-rigging is well under way. **17.40** The ASW19 trailer leaves – we've heard from James. He's done more than 170km... but not quite via his intended TPs! **18.05** Last flight has landed, all the trial lessons completed. The club hangar is packed. Private gliders are in trailers or picketed ("tomorrow will be better"). Calm returns. **Mel Eastburn**

queue comes to life. Cigarettes are extinguished, pees taken, parachutes strapped on. **11.50** Duty tug pilot Norman Evans tows gliders into the air without ceasing for the next four hours except to refuel the tug and himself. **14.10** Ian Santos completes a two-hour Bronze leg. The first BI flight of the day. Lovely cu everywhere. **14.23** ANOTHER winch foul-up: parachute through the roller box, requiring new eyelet, and adjustment to the pay-out brake. The 30-minute delay enables duty instructor to eat a sandwich. **16.18** First cross-country pilots return: Simon France and Rod Weaver in Nimbus variants (220km, Didcot O/R) followed by six more returns, mostly from 150km tasks. Some did the 'Pylon' task, a 50km triangle handicapped so that even Bronze

pilots in two-seaters can win it. **17.30** Three Astirs return, two from Didcot and one from Camarthen (205km). Everyone had trouble with stratus at Didcot. Ian Santos completes his Bronze with launch failure checks. **18.15** More returners: Hugh Rattray's sexy wingleted Vega (303km, Enstone-Bridgnorth), Mike Dunlop's Phoebus (305km, Didcot-Kidderminster). **19.00** Last landing: Armin Gruber's LSpatz (110km, Kemble O/R). His complaints about the cold at 5,500ft receive scant sympathy. **19.01-20.00** The muddy field means the kit needs hosing down. Members sneak off to the bar but are quickly retrieved. Private gliders are left out: Monday's forecast is good. In the bar the most common phrase is "...there I was..." **Maureen Weaver**



Gwent

April 30, 2000 was a classic illustration of the British weather's ability to give widely varying conditions only miles apart. I find it fascinating that pilots under the superb conditions in the west (roughly, between the Welsh border, M4 and M40), though flying in the same area as those from clubs on its edges, generally did much bigger tasks. And May Day Monday? Certainly in the Midlands, where I'm based, pilots who left their gliders rigged were disappointed. Massive over-development spoiled what started as a good day. I wonder if it was like that elsewhere?

**Mel Eastburn**

# Time to get your Silver

**Never mind the weather: there's still time to fly your Silver this season. National Soaring Coach Simon Adlard offers advice on what to do**

**G**OOD SOARABLE weather can be difficult to predict in the UK. Even when the forecast looks poor, short periods of highly-soarable conditions can crop up unexpectedly. I have flown several hundred kilometres on days with a bad forecast, and many of my best flights so far this season have come after an unexpected late afternoon clearance. So it is essential to be ready to fly a Silver leg at short notice.

When an unexpectedly good day arrives, it's common to see pilots rushing around trying to get ready. If you've ever tried this, there seem to be a thousand things to do. Your workload on a day when a Silver leg is to be attempted can be reduced by a little pre-flight preparation, much of which can be done days in advance...

## Your trailer and glider

The trailer is likely to be important for a Silver distance attempt, but it is often forgotten. If you're lucky, there should be little to do except check the tyres and brakes

and see if the lights work. If unlucky, you will be glad you took a look at it before the arrival of that soarable day.

Fortunately, gliders are often maintained better than the trailers they live in; however, there are still a few things that need to be thought about. The first – probably the most important – is to check that the wheelbrake is working, since flying cross-country without one is inviting disaster. You will almost certainly have already flown the glider you intend to do your badge attempt in, and will have a good idea of how the instruments work. You may not, though, have had to rely on the compass. It is well worth checking it for errors.

There is now a wide variety of electronic gizmos available to pilots, including GPS and loggers. All rely on electricity, so a supply of working batteries is a good idea. Whether or not these should be used for Silver attempts will, I'm sure, be debated for years to come. One thing is certain: the time to learn to use them is not on your early cross-countries. If you do have a GPS or similar, learn to use it in flight in the back of a two-seater.

## You

Before you attempt any Silver leg, especially

the distance or five hours, take time to ensure you have everything that you need for yourself. This includes hat, sunglasses, sun cream, food and most importantly, drink. Dehydration is probably the greatest cause of poor flying and the symptoms can creep up on you unnoticed. You should drink regularly, about half a litre an hour. If you ever got home after a day at the airfield feeling exhausted with a headache, then you were probably dehydrated. If you don't have one, a camelbak-style drink system is a worthwhile investment.

## Task planning

Some clubs have tried and tested milk runs for Silver distance, but it is still a good idea to work out several different destinations for different wind directions. You will need to consider airspace, distance and the type of terrain you will have to fly over. When working out the distance you will also have to take into account the one per cent rule. This states that the height difference from the top of the launch to the place of landing should be no more than one per cent of the total distance flown. For instance, if your home airfield is at 500ft and the destination airfield is the same elevation 60km away then you may launch up to a height of

## The elation of that first flight into the unknown

THE SPRING of 1999 saw me determined to get my Silver. But, as ever in gliding, things never go quite to plan. If a day is taken off work the weather is poor or others have the Discus and the Junior – or, more importantly, the club barograph/loggers. However, persistence led to my Silver height in July – by 34ft!

It became a standing joke thereafter that every time I got to the airfield I booked the Discus for a 50km/5hr attempt and never went anywhere. Once I took a 2,000ft aerotow... and landed at Elvington, 13km from my home airfield at Pocklington. On another – perfect – day, I arrived at the airfield to find a grid of 42 gliders waiting to launch in our two-seater competition, and had to settle for local soaring in a K-21 as the Discus and Junior were unavailable.

But finally, on September 9, my day dawned. I declared Kirton in Lindsey O/R for a total of 106km, and winched straight into a 6kt thermal. At 3,300ft I set off for the River Humber – as much a psychological barrier as a physical one. I didn't really get the decent height I wanted, but crossed anyway. Half way over I entered a strong thermal, finding it somewhat disconcerting to look down the wing into muddy water.

On the Lincolnshire bank my troubles began: none of the clouds worked. I started to

take more than just a passing interest in the fields below and realised that, before things got desperate, I should get back to my own side of the river to make the retrieve easier.

Then salvation arrived: a brilliant 4.5kt average thermal to more than 4,000ft. Now I had to overcome the mental barrier of being utterly beyond getting back to Pocklington. At this height I had no excuse, so I turned south towards Kirton. Scunthorpe slipped by to the east. Soon, though, the sky went blue and strong sink had me looking for a decent field; but once again the vario beeped merrily and we were climbing.

Half way round a turn I saw my next cause for concern: a giant smoke loop in the sky about four miles away in the direction I wanted to go. It was probably a lone Red Arrow practising over Scampton. As long as he stayed there I was happy, but I did wonder where his eight team mates were! If they were around, I never saw them and conveniently drifted towards Kirton in the thermal, elated by the knowledge that, whatever happened, my 50km was in the bag.

Rounding Kirton, I reset the GPS for home (though I was map-reading, honest). The steelworks at Scunthorpe helped me on my way. I had been told it was a good thermal source. And was it just! Bang. I thought the

wings had dropped off. It didn't seem to matter what I did with stick and rudder – the glider did its own thing.

I wouldn't exactly say I was scared and the glider was going up, but after 500ft of this rollercoaster I had had enough.

Half way across the Humber, going north, I came across a thermal I couldn't refuse, although I still didn't care much for the acres of mud flats below. Then I hit a cloud street, the first of the flight: cruising at 50kts and going up at 2kts. When the vario went off the clock I knew the last climb would take me back.

After three-and-a-half-hours in the air, I decided to try for Silver duration. But I was tired, needed to pay a visit and the sky went blue again. I must have lost concentration because, almost before I knew it, 1,500ft was lost and the circuit beckoned.

So how did I feel afterwards? Slightly disappointed I hadn't stuck with it for five hours but, overall, delighted that a flight so long in the planning had finally been achieved on one of the last days of our Indian summer. And the elusive five-hour flight? Who knows – maybe on a ridge in the winter?

For now, the knowledge I have broken the umbilical with my home airfield and flown over the horizon is sufficient.

**Graham Wadforth, Wolds GC**





Ian Easson (above) with the glider which nearly got him Silver height. See right for what went wrong

1,968ft: one per cent of 60km. If, however, your destination is only 100ft then you will now only be able to launch to 1,568ft.

Then talk the chosen destinations through with an instructor just to check that you are certain of any airspace considerations and that your choice of landing place is suitable. Mark these routes on the map in advance in waterproof pen. On the day, the ones you aren't using can be rubbed out.

## On the day

The first thing to do before attempting Silver distance or five hours is to ask permission from the duty instructor. Once given, you should prepare the glider. If this means rigging, don't rush it. Be careful and make sure you get an independent control check.

The next thing to do is to check Notams for any temporary airspace on track. These are listed in order of longitude from south to north, so rather than read the whole lot just read the Notams for the areas of longitude you'll be flying in. Then ring the freephone number for Royal Flights and Red Arrows displays (0500 354802). It is also a good idea to phone your intended destination to check your arrival won't cause problems.

If all goes well you should now be ready for your Silver distance with an unrushed, relaxed mind. Assuming the weather is going to remain fine all day, the best time to launch on task is about mid-day. Successful Silvers have, however, been done from as late as 17.00-18.00hrs.

While you're waiting, fly a circuit or two, just to get a feel for the day and the glider. Once you've decided to launch on task, have a clear idea of where you're going to go in order to climb away. Remember that your maximum allowable launch height is.

Once established in a good climb, look down track to see what conditions are like. If the sky looks the same as where you are now, then the chances are that it is going to be equally soarable there. The other thing you must do is choose at least two good-looking clouds on your route to go for, and if possible look for a route that joins these clouds together using any other bits and pieces of cloud. The decision to set off on track should not normally be made below 3,000ft but you should decide before you

reach cloudbase, since heading towards your next cloud becomes increasingly difficult as you get closer to cloud.

Silver distance is not a race, so the normal rule is to get high and stay high. There is, of course, the possibility that you will get low. If you do, it is easy to end up faffing around in the belief that you are climbing – or to fly round in circles looking for a climb – when in reality all you are doing is slowly (or not so slowly) sinking. The best thing to do, provided you're going towards a reasonably landable area, is to keep pressing on down track towards likely-looking clouds until lift is found or you land out (you would probably have landed out anyway). You will of course be current and know when to switch from trying to stay up successfully to making sure you land safely.

## Navigation

You will also have to keep on top of the navigation. It is easy to get confused by every small village and road, leading to the worry that you don't know exactly where you are. The best thing to do is to use large and distinctive features and to know that you are somewhere between X and Y. It is also important to know where you are not – that is, not too close to controlled airspace.

If you are unsure of your exact position then, provided you know you are not in controlled airspace, don't panic! See if you can find a few distinctive features on the ground and then try to find them on the map. Don't try to do this the other way round: it's easy to convince yourself that you are almost anywhere! If you have a GPS with you, don't rely on it. Always use it with a map and keep track of where you are. Then if it fails you won't be totally lost.

Eventually you will find yourself at your destination. Identify a few distinctive ground features beyond your goal to warn you if you overshoot. The decision when to land is yours but watch a few local gliders to get an idea of circuit and landing area.

Once you've landed, you need to get your landing certificate signed by either one OO or two other witnesses. Phone your club so that the duty instructor knows you've arrived safely, then sit back and wait for the retrieve.

## and how not to

IT HAD BEEN another typical Friday morning: meetings in Edinburgh. As they ended, I decided (having missed the forecast) to see what was happening at my club, Portmoak.

As I arrived, three or four gliders were on the ridge, so I put my name on the flying list. I was pleased the Junior flying was "no fuss" FUS (left). As a pre-Bronze pilot, my only single-seater experience was the club's two Juniors. I preferred the lighter-handling FUS. When my turn came, I checked the windsock and noticed a couple of blue bits in the sky.

I launched to 1,400ft and headed for Bishop Hill: six or seven beats in 2kts up got me to 2,500ft. As I turned back I could see what looked like the beginnings of a cloud behind a blue gap, almost directly above me. I had plenty of height so turned away from the hill. Almost immediately the turbulent lift turned silky smooth. Could this be wave? It was smooth, but rather weak, to say the least.

I slowed FUS down to around 40kts and tracked along the front of the slowly-building line of cloud. The vario sang happily and the lift was now 2kts. This was definitely wave and it was my very first experience of it. Oh, I'd read the books and listened to the pundits, but as far as wave flying was concerned, I was a virgin.

Unsure how long it would continue, I flew back along the same face. I was now at 3,500ft, but didn't want to venture too far. I soon discovered I could fly along the face of the now classic wave cloud (I'd seen the pictures, remember) like a "hill". To my complete surprise I managed 5,000ft, a personal best. I could see gliders 3,000ft below me (scratching away on Bishop), the Forth bridges to the south, St Andrews to the east, Dundee to the north east and, to the west, the familiar hills of Strathearn. The complete wave system was visible below me: straight lines of cigar-shaped clouds, wide blue gaps – just like the books! As the altimeter wound on 500ft, I thought how good it would be to get 6,000ft. I called the launchpoint to see what the waiting list was like. When I told them I was in wave, overhead the site, at 6,000ft in six up, I couldn't help smiling. This was supposed to be a quick flight off Bishop hill. I had been in the air for 45mins and could have stayed all day. But my bladder was beginning to protest. Of course, I wasn't prepared – I didn't expect this (isn't there a rule that says always expect the unexpected?). By now I was nearing 7,000ft, so decided to get that then let someone else have a go.

Brakes open, and a lot of gentle turns later I was back at 2,000ft with a clear view of the site: down I went. Some people were ridge soaring but I had been to the wave. They say the first time is always the best, and I'll certainly never forget this one. As I waited for a retrieve I checked the figures: flight time, 1hr 5mins; launch, 1,400ft; max height, 7,000ft; height gain – 5,600ft. Silver height. But I didn't have a barograph with me, did I? What was that about a rule that says: "always be prepared"?

Ian Easson, Scottish Gliding Centre

# A trip around Mt



**Monet Chana, an Assistant Instructor at Wolds GC, describes his second visit to the Gliding Club of Kenya**

**W**INTER was approaching – the perfect opportunity to have a break and visit relatives in a warmer climate: Kenya, East Africa. At least I could be assured of better weather; and, I hoped, have the opportunity to put my gliding skills and experience into practice in another, very beautiful part of the world.

On arriving in Nairobi for three weeks in November 1998, all I was interested in were the cumulus clouds. I could see them from the Jomo Kenyatta Airport to the end of the horizon, scattered all over the sky in whichever direction I looked. "Heaven" to glider pilots, or a dream come true.

After settling down at my sister's place in Nairobi, the first thing I did was ring the Gliding Club of Kenya, 125km north of Nairobi, north of Nyeri Town near the Aberdare National Park, and arranged a day there. I spoke to Peter, the club's owner, whom I already knew from a previous visit in 1997 when I spent two very enjoyable days there.

The club has one north-south strip, also used for power, with about 1,300m of usable length. It is 6,300ft above sea level. To the east of the strip is Mt Kenya, which stands there proudly and looks beautiful. To the west are the Aberdare Mountains, a wonderful sight. There is wave from the Aberdares in westerlies in the early morning (until about 09.00hrs) but this hasn't yet been taken advantage of by the gliding club and thermals break it up as the day progresses.



*The T-21 used by the Gliding Club of Kenya. Other club gliders are a K-13, Tutor and Std Jantar*



*Above and right: Mweiga, the base of the Gliding Club of Kenya, from the air. The longest glider flight from here is an out and return to Lake Baringa, about 300km – "no mean feat," says visitor Ted Norman, "when you look at the countryside below..."*

To my surprise, when I got there Peter had the K-13 ready and waiting at the launchpoint. After having a check flight with him, I first took my brother-in-law flying. We had a winch launch to 1,200ft and looked for a cloud to fly under... but no matter where I looked, there were cumulus clouds – talk about spoil for choice!

I decided to turn east and straight under a super cumulus cloud. The vario went off the clock, we turned in and we could not believe the rate of climb. One thing about the thermals, I had to turn a lot

tighter than we do in England. I did try turning wider but did not climb as well. So I went back to the Kenyan way of thermalling.

In no time at all I was at 14,000ft, and of course at that I straightened up and decided to go on a small trip around Mt Kenya and back, which is about 150km. With the scarcity of roads and absence of outlanding possibilities I stayed high at all times.

We came back and landed, then I flew with my sister: another winch launch and, again, clouds were everywhere. I went straight into an off-the-clock thermal and this time decided to go west towards the Aberdares. We climbed to a sufficient height, straightened and headed



for them. Again there was lots to see: Masai settlements, Nyeri Town, the famous Tree Tops Hotel a little further on. You can find yourself soaring over wildlife, including elephant and buffalo. Although there were clouds every-

where in the sky and the cloudbase was between 10,000ft and 14,000ft, I played very safe and made sure that I had enough height all the time. We

never got below 10,000 feet and were always in reach of the field. There are some farmer's airstrips on the north side of the airfield and a few to the east, west and south. At the time Peter did not have a trailer or a tug to retrieve the K-13 I was flying, but now he has.

I really had very good flights and enjoyed every minute of it. My sister and brother-in-law both enjoyed it so much as they had never flown in a glider before.

Now a bit about the gliding club. It can be reached by car, bearing in mind some of the road is very rough. It is also possible to reach the club by private plane, which would take about 35-40 minutes flying time from Jomo

**'I went back to the Kenyan way of thermalling and in no time at all I was at 14,000ft**

# t Kenya

Kenyatta Airport, Nairobi. Both means of transport can be arranged through the owner of the Gliding Club of Kenya, Peter Allmendinger and his wife, Petra, who are happy to arrange transport to and from Nairobi if necessary, provided that prior arrangements have been made.

The Allmendingers offer accommodation at their Sangara Ranch. This is set in the middle of the vast open space of Aberdare National Park with lots of game to see, and transport is provided to and from the gliding club. If this accommodation is full there are several very good options near the club. The nearest, the Aberdare Country Club, is about five minutes in a car. There is also the Outspan Hotel in Nyeri, which is about 20 minutes in a car.

To experience the best soaring conditions for soaring, the time of year you should go is between Christmas and April, when the average heights gained are between 14,000ft and 18,000ft. September and October can also be good, although cloudbase during these months is nearer 12,000-13,000ft.

Mweiga is a very interesting site to fly from. When flying from here you must obey every bit of briefing given by Peter, especially on circuit planning (final turn no lower than 500ft), otherwise you will give Peter a heart attack! Fly and at the same time see the game when in season. I have been here twice and done some good flights and enjoyed every bit of it.

To share my experience of heaven a trip to the Gliding Club of Kenya, ideally between December and April, is an absolute must. Not only is the wildlife a sight not to be missed, but the whole experience of a totally different world has to be seen to be believed...

Airfield tel: + 254 171 55040  
[www.innowebtive.de/kenya.htm](http://www.innowebtive.de/kenya.htm)



Peter Allmendinger (right) briefs Ted Norman of RAFGSA Bicester before a K-13 flight at Mweiga

Gill Pennant and Norman James, from The Soaring Centre, visited the Gliding Club of Kenya in January 2000. Norman (right) takes a winch launch in the club's Tutor. In the foreground is the K-13. This photo, and the view through the club T-21's windscreen (left) were taken by Gill Pennant

Other photos from Ted Norman



## Club operations at Mweiga airstrip

AS PART of my job I recently had the good fortune to go to the Gliding Club of Kenya, writes Ted Norman. It is based at Mweiga, a small grass airfield on the edge of the Aberdare National Park. The scenery is, to say the least, impressive. Peter and Petra Allmendinger have been running the club for a number of years. Peter, who did his instructor training in the UK in 1992, has some 2,500hrs/10,000 launches.

The standard of instruction was excellent. Peter gave me a comprehensive briefing on site and conditions. The thermals were narrow and strong: even at 16.00hrs we were getting 3-5m/s to 4,000ft AGL (10,000ft AMSL).

The club operates four gliders (a K-13, Tutor, T-21 Sedbergh and Jantar) in good condition considering their age and the availability of spare parts. They are maintained by Peter and his staff.



Launching is normally by winch (when I flew we got to 1,000ft with little wind). There is a 300HP American truck winch, U/S awaiting spares, and a 200HP diesel winch. Both use stranded wire. There is a PA-25 Pawnee for aerotows. Cable retrieve is with a VW Beetle and gliders are towed

with a Mini Moke. Local staff carry out all ground handling, including signalling. Parachutes are worn only in the single-seaters and the club has no third party insurance. Medical and fire equipment is in the hangar; the local hospital 10km away has, says Peter, excellent facilities.

The club appeared a very professional operation and I was impressed by its hospitality. If you are in Kenya, I recommend a visit. The aircraft might already be in your logbook, but where in the UK – apart from London GC – would you get to soar over such exotic wildlife?

# Minsk to Mombasa

**To see one of the world's largest lead-and-follows, visit Istanbul for a few days around August 25, says David Rhys-Jones**

**E**VERY August, storks that spend the summer in Russia and Central Europe start their long journey to overwinter in Africa. The mountains of Eastern Anatolia form a natural barrier, and there are no thermals over the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Most birds, therefore, make for the Bosphorus – in some places, only a few hundred yards wide.

For a day each summer, the sky is full of storks, hundreds of thousands of them, in slowly rotating spirals, as far as the eye can see. The next day, there are none.

Their numbers are swelled by the year's offspring: early solo pilots. All are born with the ability to execute perfectly-banked turns and equipped with various more sensitive than money can buy. However, this alone will not get you more than a few fields downwind. Hence the lead-and-follow.

Of 100,000 storks, some will find thermals. The rest can leech. Youngsters need only follow and pick up the theory as they go along. With cloudbase at 10,000ft, huge natural obstacles *en route* are just breathtaking scenery.

However, things can go wrong. August is normally a month of cloudless skies and no rain. But in 1997 it rained all summer: rivers flooded, hillsides collapsed and ancient locals said they'd never seen anything like it.

The storks crossed the Bosphorus and continued up the Gulf of Izmit, occasionally trying to soar in the few intervals of sun. From here they would normally take a thermal to 7,000ft and head south – over the coastal mountains on to the high, dry plains beyond. But there were no thermals and the mountains were in cloud. Some explored the many steep valleys that cut into the side of the plateau. Some experimented with wave, and hill lift. Others sat disconsolately in the fields, hunting for a diminishing supply of small invertebrates, grumbling or reading back numbers of *S&G*.

I came across one group of about 500 storks in a narrow valley, clustered in a patch of damp pasture. As I watched, two were dispatched to investigate some mild turbulence. They flapped up to 300ft and attempted to scratch. After 20 mins they admitted defeat and came back. The rest of the group digested this fact for a few minutes then, with one accord, lumbered into the air and flapped dolefully up the valley.

On the following weekend, the frontal system cleared north-western Turkey and I went to try to glide at the Turkish Flying Association, İnönü (at 2,600ft up on the road to Afyon).

Ataturk set up the TFA at much the same

time as the Germans did their gliding movement, probably for much the same reasons. It has a stone-built control tower, briefing rooms and dining halls. For aircraft it has 20 Puchacz, several Jantars, a Romanian aluminium sailplane, and a Ventus.

There was an inversion at 2,500ft AGL: I scraped for an hour below it. Looking up, I saw that the sky seemed a strange texture. This resolved itself into thousands of tiny specks some 2,000ft above. All moving in a straight line, south. It was the storks – at 7,000ft in wave above the inversion.

**To Westerners, the stork is a large bird with a long beak that delivers babies in a cloth sling, thereby contravening a raft of IATA regulations. This myth has probably arisen because storks tend not to visit US and English suburbia. They can't or won't cope with the airspace restrictions. Instead, they fly in the lands of the big horizon: wintering in southern and central Africa, and nesting in Turkey, Russia and Eastern Europe. Here, they are looked upon as symbols of good fortune. A stork's nest on your chimney will bring luck, which far outweighs the inconvenience of an inoperable heating system. Above all, the stork has total control of its life. It spends the winter soaring in the sun without toiling for a lifetime to pay for the privilege. It can travel from Minsk to Mombasa with hardly a wing beat, in a series of beautifully-centred thermalling turns and skillfully-directed glides that make it the ultimate cross-country pilot**

How did they know it was there? How did they get to it? They have flown this route since the last Ice Age, say 10,000 years. That's a good deal longer than we have been trying to stay airborne in southern England. So they have the experience, but how on earth do they communicate the permutations of wave lift produced by different topography and meteorological conditions?

The answer is that they perform the very cerebral act of soaring very much better than we do and can hardly be described as bird-brained. They are, like glider pilots, very sociable. If you imagine the endlessly-repeated gliding stories of the *turned-Membury-with-200ft* variety, handed down from generation to generation, you begin to see how it's done.

*When the storks flew up the Gulf of Izmit last August, they must have seen a picture of terrible devastation. This article is dedicated to the charming, resilient and resourceful people of this corner of the world. Any glider pilot visiting Turkey would be made welcome at İnönü. Gliding doesn't seriously start until May. Contact Tarik Gökdemir/Taner Erdem: Fax (October to May) 00 90 312 278 0744 or (May to October) 00 90 222 591 2114 mobile 0542 8156155*



**Bernie Morris sings the praises of a competition where you fly after purists would have landed**

**T**HE AVERAGE age of pilots at the Bidford Regionals must have been well over 50. Perhaps we've done our share of landing in fields and can now afford the luxury of not having to. In six racing days, 35 landouts were scored without a single outlanding (35 happy farmers?). Lots of good flying followed "landouts" – and we were all in the bar before the evening meal.

**Saturday, June 3 (Weather 1 - Pilots 0):** Woken early by the rain beating on the caravan roof. 09.30 briefing included an explanation of assigned area tasks (AATs) followed by rebriefings. Sacrificial tugs and Puchacz were regularly thrown into the sky to appease the cloud gods while first launch times came and went. At 16.40, director Persistent Pete (Pete Freeman) finally conceded defeat, so Justin Wills gave an excellent briefing on flying AATs.

**Sunday:** Woken early by the brilliant sunshine. Prompt gridding and repeated rebriefings ended in a 201.7km quadrilateral (Aston Down-Towcester). Cloudbase was 2,500ft AMSL and on the first leg the Cotswolds rose to about 1,000ft AMSL. Increasing upper cloud added to the fun. All very character-building. After some low scrapes we went west to get more space between the ground and us (a decision welcomed by my co-pilot, Jeff Warren). The second leg, with cloud streets, was fast but the last looked far less inviting and my caution and misunderstood computer resulted in five miles of final glide at 120kt, unable to get below 700ft to cross the finish line (30 minutes before the next finisher). We won the day at 82.3km/h.

Ian (Podge) Cook had to deploy his engine at our first low scrape to fly downhill to lower ground. He scored a distance of 16km and no points. He then restarted and flew the task at a speed which would have given him second place. Would that happen in non-turbo comps? Ralph Jones exceeded the start height by 51ft and got a 100-point penalty. He wasn't amused but we were. Bill Inglis scored no points: his logger software upgrade had changed the presets.

**Monday:** Newly-arrived captain John Young outsnored me. Awoke to glom. Scrubbed at 15.00 but launched anyway as John hadn't flown for seven months.

# Bringing your own thermals

**Tuesday:** Earplugs gave me a good night's sleep. Awoke to an approaching front with the promise of a ridge behind, and launched at 13.45hrs on a 170.1km polygon with the cloudbase rising to 4,500ft. A great romp down the first leg into a 24kt headwind. Then the wave interfered from the Welsh mountains and the cloud spread out and lowered. Very sporting – for 13 pilots, too sporting, and iron thermals were used. We all found the down of the wave but Dave Findon climbed to 9,000ft to beat five other finishers home at 76.2km/h. Ian Cook would have been second but for loading wrong co-ordinates for the first TP. Ralph Jones also had a co-ordinate problem and flew back to the TP to get it right but missed the usable weather to spend two hours ridge soaring near Ludlow before starting the engine. Tony Moulang came a very well-deserved second for getting home from the second TP entirely below 2,000ft. John and I were pleased to finish. If only the under-carriage had not collapsed on landing it would all have been very satisfactory.

**Wednesday (Director 10 - Met office 0):** I outsnoored John but hadn't woken myself up – great earplugs. Soaring forecast for 1kt thermals gradually dying, approaching high cloud and a wind of 25kt moderating to 12kt. A three-hour AAT was set. Cloudbase

went to 4,500ft with thermals of 3.5-5kt and one reported 7kts. We did 246km in the Nimbus and got back 25 mins too early. The scoring was debated well into the night. Reworked provisional results kept appearing in the bar: we found we had made fourth place and taken the overall lead by six points. Justin Wills and Alan Broadbridge won the day, but *hors concours*.

**Thursday:** Woke to high cover and strong winds. The forecast was optimistic although the Director was sceptical. We launched on a 200.5km triangle (Andoversford-Olney). The first leg was straight down the cloud-streets but crossing them on the second leg with the flying wind of 22kts was less fun. It all then turned blue before the second turn but it was more soarable than it looked and the brave did well. Ian Cook was the bravest at 77km/h and cleaned up in his Ventus 2 whilst Bill Inglis was second at 68km/h in his Ventus C having cured all his earlier software problems. We struggled over the Cotswolds and couldn't get away from Ventuses – back to second overall.

**Friday:** Heavy rain. The day was scrubbed at 12.00. My captain left to go sailing.

**Saturday:** AAT of four hours featuring Olney. Quite challenging, with repeated cycling and difficult-to-find broken thermal cores. Every turn seemed to be the wrong

way! Ian Cook won by going south of the Wash. I went north and managed 330kms in four hours, then faced another 100km in strengthening wind and weakening thermals – total time 5hrs 40mins, landing at 18.15 in time for my co-pilot to get to the theatre in Stratford for 19.00. Andrew Reid did 475km of a 500km which fitted the areas. Only half the field finished. Ralph Jones started his engine after 125kms and went to the Severn estuary to play with the sea breeze fronts.

**Sunday:** Blue skies, a strong westerly and a promise of upper cloud and deteriorating conditions. Task: 154km (Tewkesbury-Heyford-Charwelton). The unpromising-looking flattened clouds gave good lift but the second leg had much poorer climbs, which I recognised too late. After the second turn, things improved. The race home against Dave Findon and Ian Cook from the third turn into wind was non-stop. Ian won at 93.3km/h. Dave and I crossed the hedge together for a spectacular finish to the comp.

Pete Freeman did a fantastic job of directing and task-setting to get six racing days. Bidford has outstandingly attractive, well cared for facilities and a very friendly, sociable environment. What a great week!

*Results: 1, Dave Findon; 2, Tony Moulang; 3, Bernie Morris/John Young; 4, Ian Cook; 5, Frank Ieynes. Full results in the December-January issue.*

## Great weather, for ducks

### Perhaps S&G shouldn't have asked the pilot of glider H<sub>2</sub>O to report the Eastern Regionals...

**T**HERE'S a land-yacht at Norfolk GC, and for the Eastern Regionals this year it seemed strangely appropriate. In spite of news of drained fens and lost habitat, eco-warriors were clearly reclaiming swathes of airfield for the Norfolk Broads.

The first challenge was pitching a tent. Much of the camping area was a duck pond – complete with ducks (see photo, p55). Fierce storms on the first night blew down tents and marooned caravanners; by Sunday the Hus Bos crowd were recruiting for an Ark. Tibenham is a huge, well-drained WW2 airfield, so naturally our thoughts turned to the state of the surrounding fields.

The first two days were scrubbed – Met men Graham Parker and Geoff Haworth forecasting bravely. With no tasks to distract us, they tried explain why the weather was like this and why we should be tourists, not pilots. In addition to forecasting well, they entertained us royally. Norfolk is the only place where the Met briefing gets a rousing round of applause on a scrubbed day.

Monday had blue class setting off to their

respective fields – John Wilton triumphant – while a large cu-nim prevented most of the white class launching and shot down all who did. Eventful retrieves included a Twin 2 in a wheat field and a Discovery stuck in the mud. Tuesday had tasks into unsettled weather, with the added entertainment of a large twister in the start sector. Prudence overcame competitive spirit with no one taking advantage of the strong lift! More than half the field didn't get away, and of those who did, all but one landed out. Terry Slater won blue class, landing just 5km short, and Mike Throssell won white with epic cloud climbs. In his howidunnit speech, phrases like: "just took the cloud to 11,000ft," "didn't see ground till way down task," and "when the ice fell off and the glider flew properly again..." tripped from his lips, leaving us agog. We are not worthy!

Wednesday was the best day albeit with an approaching front: a perfectly-set task allowing even stragglers to get back. Day winners were David Williams (blue) and Oliver Ward (white), at humbling speeds.

Friday and Saturday were grid squats as we waited for the cold front, alleviated by Saturdays' barbecue where the competition director, Woody, did a stand-up routine of local songs and jokes. Other diversions



*From left: John and Tess Whiting; Mike Miles and Simon Whittaker. Tess and Mike, from Sherington GC, covered the contest for S&G*

included night-time model aircraft flying and Husky dog racing (no, it wasn't the new bad weather retrieve method).

Sunday promised much but collapsed soon after launching. We set off on 247km expecting to land out – but so soon? Most landed at or near the first TP, and the few who completed the task have our deepest admiration, with Oliver Ward and Dave Masson the class winners.

So that was it: just three flying days for my class, as in 1999, but we had fun. A couple of novices enjoyed Norfolk hospitality and learned much from fellow competitors and the weather(men). We'll be back.

*Blue: 1, John Wilton; 2, Leigh Hood; 3, C McInnes. White: 1, Ollie Ward; 2, Mike Throssell; 3, Jack Luxton. Full results in the December-January issue.*



# Big wings race the weather

All photographs: the white planes picture co.



**This year's abysmal English weather didn't relent for the Open and 18-Metre Class comps at Aston Down. Jane Randle reports**

*Above: the ASH 25s of Robin May (13) and Mike Foreman (the Scottish ASH, 925) finishing. Of 28 Open Class gliders, there were nine ASH 25s, two ASW 22s and ASW 22BLs as well as Nimbus 3s and 4s, and Duo Discuses. In the 18-Metre Class, with 37 entrants, 20 flew LS-8 18s. This included its agent, Martyn Wells, who came second. The next most popular type was the Ventus, flown by its agent, Steve Jones, in 15-metre mode as practice for the European Championships*

*Left: Competition Director and BGA Chairman David Roberts, on the grid on Tuesday, June 27*

**A**STON Down last hosted a nationals nearly 40 years ago, when it was still an RAF operational airfield. That contest, in 1962, proved to be one of the best ever, with ten soaring days in a row. In June 2000, this site in the Cotswolds again hosted national competitions – not one, but two. Together, they managed six days. The Open Class Nationals had four days and the 18-Metre Championships had two.

The competition was opened by the local MP, Geoffrey Clifton-Brown. He wished everyone good luck, and in particular, the British Team – some team members were using Aston Down to practise for the European Championships. He inspected the sailplanes, despite the wet weather, and sat in the cockpit of an ASH 25.

Several previous Open Class championships were taking part, so a keen contest was anticipated, and some very good pilots had entered the 18-Metre Class. There had been problems finding a venue for the 18-Metre championships, and Cotswold GC stepped in and agreed to host it alongside the Open Class when it became clear that the only other option would be to cancel that contest this year. The Open Class, as a nationals, would take priority of launching over the championships.



Above: Keith Nicholson, from Cambridge GC, won the 18-Metre Class in his LS-8 18, SK1

Right: PZL-104 Wilga and Bellanca 8GCBC Scout tugs launching the grid



Above: Pete Harvey, former British National Hang-gliding Champion, won the Open Class in Nimbus 4T N1 – just six years after deciding to concentrate on racing sailplanes

### Sunday (Day 1, Open Class)

After a clear, cold night, hopes were high – but the unstable airmass soon filled with low cloud. Before long the air felt warmer and cumulus formed, but the clouds spread out and blocked the sun. Although the tasks were placed in a small patch of good air, it was 15.00hrs before there was a large enough clearance to launch the Open Class and start the 201km quadrilateral task (Wantage, Kingsclere and Bath Racecourse). There were, however, no relights and 13 of the 28 competitors finished.

The day winner, Pete Harvey, flying a Nimbus 4T, set off early because he thought this would be a day to lose, rather than one to win. He was soon cloud flying, and when he emerged he saw a grey mess near Kingsclere so diverted to sunlight near Rivar Hill where he got enough height to go round Kingsclere, then back to climb again into cloud... and he had enough height to finish the task. It was a day for good luck – to miss a small thermal at a critical time was enough to put you on the ground. Those

pilots who survived and who persisted were rewarded; the finish rate lent respectability to a somewhat agonising day for task-setters and pilots alike. Modern-day retrieve stories were related unhappily; and the finishers looked mightily relieved. Pete, at 87.1km/h, gained a useful 53-point lead from Robin May in the ASH 25. Ken Hartley (Nimbus 3) came in third.

### Monday (Day 2, Open; Day 1, 18-Metre)

There was a definite improvement in the weather and clever task-setting ensured that there would be a proper test – for the 18-Metre Class it was good racing round a 241km quadrilateral set in the Welsh Borders. The winner, Martyn Wells, just beat Keith Nicholson. The top eight pilots – including New Zealand Champion John Coutts, flying *hors concours* – exceeded 100km/h. All but one of them were flying the LS-8 18.

The Open Class, which had been set a 313km quadrilateral (Cirencester church – Ironbridge – Hay on Wye – Broadway and

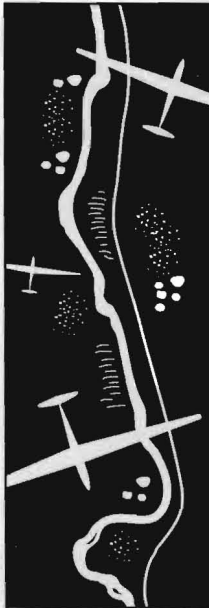
back to Aston Down) found conditions more testing near Telford and large gaggles formed, but as things improved towards the south, the early pilots raced to Hay. By the time the later aircraft got there, the gaps had become large, which slowed them up. Pete Harvey, winning again (at 102.9km/h), took a more easterly path to Hay. Once round there, it was a simple question of bouncing off the thermals before joining a line of lift from Broadway along the Cotswolds to Aston Down. At the airfield, the sky was nearly black to the east, providing a dramatic contrast to the racing sailplanes. Russell Cheetham, in his ASW 22BL, E2, was close behind Pete, at 100.1km/h.

The 63 finishers from both classes converged on the site. In one period of just 24 minutes, 46 gliders crossed the line.

Having congratulated everyone the next morning on the high standard of their airmanship, director David Roberts drily observed that it was a good thing the Cotswold club had purchased an extra 24 acres of airfield. ➤

Below: Simon Housden (LS-8 18, 628) finishing, with Denis Campbell (ASW 27 370). Sixty-three finishers arrived at Aston Down on Monday – 46 within less than half an hour





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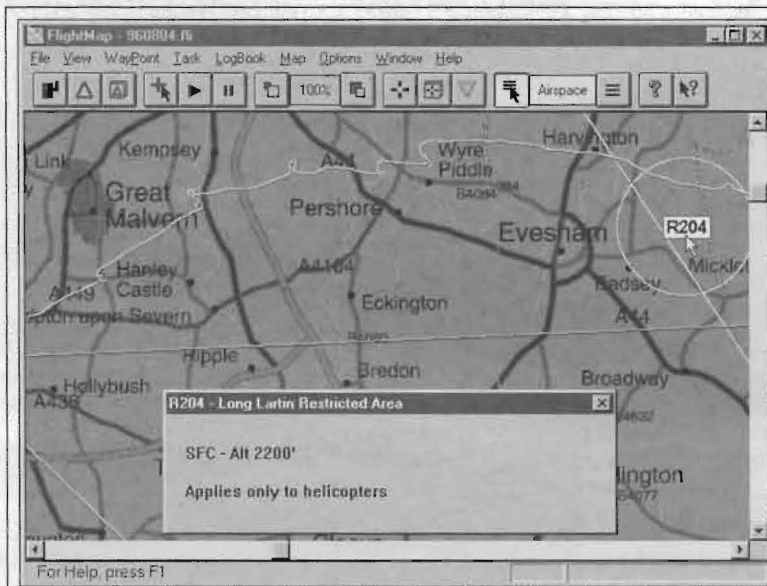
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Brian Marsh, third in the 18-Metre Class in LS-8 18 D7



Chris Rollings, third in the Open Class, in ASH 25b 711



Russell Cheetham in ASW 22BL (second, Open Class)

➤ **Tuesday (Day 3, Open; Day 2, 18-Metre)**  
Still better weather meant much larger tasks were set, but it was midday before the thermals brewed properly, so both classes flew fallback tasks: 392km for the Open Class and 355km for the 18-Metre.

Conditions proved spectacular in places. Russell Cheetham just beat Pete Harvey but they both exceeded 100km/h, and 26 of the 28 competitors completed the task. Keith Nicholson, in an LS-8 18, won the 18-Metre Class comfortably, 3.5km/h faster than Howard Jones in a Ventus, at 87.8km/h. Leigh Hood, also in an LS-8 18, was just beaten into third place. Keith took the lead from Martyn Wells, the 5km/h difference in their speed putting him 160 points ahead. Because of the poor weather and late starts, there were no more contest days for the 18-Metre Class, so in due course Keith was the overall winner.

The next few days proved frustrating: poor visibility and low cloudbase prevented any contest.

On one day, Mike Randle, sniffling in David Roberts' ASW 20, got a prize for staying airborne for two hours in very weak conditions. His soaring ability first came to prominence during the first Nationals in 1962 when, early on one of the more stable days of that contest, he had already flown a Skylark 2 from the Mynd down to Aston Down, only to watch competitors towed up past him then sink past him to land.

### Saturday (Day 4, Open)

Straws were clutched on this day as the rain poured down. The satellite picture showed a clearance in the South West and, on the synoptic chart, there was a cold occlusion with a cold sector possibly arriving at Aston Down by mid afternoon. Aircraft were put on the grid and the waiting began. The snifter launched, cloudbase went up and the Open Class launched. It started at 16.00 on



Part of the grid at Aston Down – an airborne view towards the clubhouse and trailer park (photo: Ray Brown)

the 162km, five-leg, alternative-TP task routed round the Lyneham CTA.

Outlandings began soon after the start. Swindon claimed several, then there were more at Membury... but no news from the leading pilots. Then, as the sky went blue to the south, landing messages came from Colerne. Soon after, there was a five-minute call from November One and the graceful Nimbus 4 raced across the airfield.

Once more, dark clouds had gathered along the Cotswold edge but this one produced a downpour and from it emerged 82, Ralph Jones' Nimbus 4, with little in hand when he crossed the line. Valiant efforts from Russell Cheetham (21km short) and Chris Rollings (31km short) came to nothing. Ten sailplanes landed at Colerne which shows that if only the day had lasted another half hour, they too might have returned. Tugs were dispatched to launch the Colerne fraternity for a glide back in time for the party, hog roast and dancing. Those gliders with engines started them on aerotow to save tug time and fuel – Dave Findon had the interesting experience of pulling the release knob instead of the

engine start but got back without mishap.

Yet again Pete Harvey won the day, increasing his lead over Russell Cheetham to 214 points. He told us he had found it hard to stay airborne before the start but was grateful to Simon Adlard in the Duo Discus who marked a stronger thermal giving him enough height to join a group sauntering to Swindon. Suggestions to pair fly were met with curt refusals! Once more, cloud flying proved useful getting him away from difficult conditions near Membury, then, on the third leg, the sun shone and the run home was fairly straightforward.

For Ralph Jones, it was different. While others were landing at Colerne, he managed to reach the hill near Bath on to which an oblique wind blew. He was later heard to say he'd been unable to find the turning point with GPS and, disgusted, used the map to locate it

instead. He then soared northward along the edge at 300ft, looking at a line of cu just to the east and wishing he had more height. Eventually the line of cloud coincided with the hill lift and he climbed high enough to finish.

Although every effort was made, Sunday had to be scrubbed and Pete Harvey became Open Class National Champion.

Cotswold GC provided an efficient organising team of some 50 people, ably led by David Roberts, task-setter Paul Gentil and scorer Mike Pirie.

Full results in the December-January issue

### Open Class: top ten pilots

1	Peter Harvey
2	Russell Cheetham
3	Chris Rollings
4	Pete Sheard
5	Ken Hartley
6	Robin May
7	John Gorrige
8	John Giddins
9	David Allison
10	Jed Eadyvean

### 18-Metre Class: top ten pilots

1	Keith Nicholson
2	Martyn Wells
3	Brian Marsh
4	Andy Hall
5	Pete Coward
6	Howard Jones
7	Leigh Wells
8	Gav Goudie
9	Ian Cook
10	Richard Browne

# Comparing tug types

Jochen Ewald concludes his two-part series for prospective buyers

For potential purchasers of a motor-glider tug, there is a wide range of types to choose from – as well as the possibility of upgrading your existing ship.

Scheibe Falke have been well known for more than 35 years as light, reliable and robust “pack mules” in club fleets. The universal Austrian Samburo has now been modernised and put into production again by Nitsche. (A modified, Rotax-powered Samburo first aerotowed in Germany.)

The top end of the market has elegant, but heavier and more expensive, types built from composite materials: the Super Dimonas and the G-109b. These can also offer an excellent cruise performance, comparable to “real” aircraft.

Korff offers an upgrade for the Grob G-109b, which is no longer in production.

Scheibe and LTB Nitsche offer upgrades of the Falke and the Austrian Samburos. In France, Loravia at Yutz offers upgrading of old SF-25 Falkes and SF-28 Tandemfalke with Limbach L-2400 engines for towing, but these are not yet certified for Germany.

Whether an upgrade makes more sense than buying new has to be discussed with the makers. It depends on the version and condition of the aircraft. The remaining payload may be a problem.

Tests and two years of widespread use show that motorgliders are safe, reliable and economic tugs for gliders in the weight category they are certified to tow. But still, of course, high temperatures, density altitude, wind conditions and runway surface affect any aircraft, and it is the tug pilot's responsibility to stay within the limits.



Above: Nitsche Avo 68R 115 Samburo. The older, Austrian-built Avo 68s can be upgraded (Jochen Ewald)

The table shows details of motorgliders available in Germany as of spring 2000, which are JAR certified or in certification for aerotowing. The prices are for the basic, certified towing version, ready to tow, based on factory price lists.

Manufacturer	Diamond Aircraft		Korff & Co		Nitsche Flugzeugbau		Scheibe Flugzeugbau	
Address	N.A. Otto-Strasse 5, A-2700 Wiener Neustadt Austria		Dieselstrasse 5 D-63128 Dietzenbach-Steinberg, Germany		Streichenweg 21 D-83246 Unterwossen Germany		August-Plaitz-Strasse 23 D-85221 Dachau Germany	
tel	+43 2622 267 00		+49-6074-4006 33		+49 8641 6900 26		+49 8131 720 83 / 84	
fax	+43 2622 267 80		+49-6074-4006 46		+49 8641 6900 27		+49 8131 6985	
email	sales@diamond-ac-nd.co.at		ltbkorff01@aol.com		Samburo@t-online.de		SFFlugzeug@t-online.de	
Type	HK 36 TS (TC) Super Dimona	HK 36 TTS (TTC) Super Dimona	Grob 109b L-2400 EFIT (Upgrade)	Avo 68R 80 Samburo	Avo 68R 100 Samburo	Avo 68R 115 Samburo	SF-25C Rotax Falke 80	SF-25C Rotax Falke 100
Materials	Composites	Composites	Composites	Wood & Steel tube	Wood & Steel tube	Wood & Steel tube	Wood & Steel tube	Wood & Steel tube
Span (m)	16.33	16.33	17.4	16.68	16.68	16.68	15.3	15.3
Wing area (m <sup>2</sup> )	15.3	15.3	19	20.67	20.67	20.67	18.2	18.2
Wing aspect ratio	17.43	17.43	15.9	13.5	13.5	13.5	12.8	12.8
Empty weight (kg)	555/560	560/565	620	545	545	550	450	450
Max weight (kg)	770	770	850	750	750	750	650	650
Max wing loading (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	50.3	50.3	44.7	36.3	36.3	36.3	35.7	35.7
Engine type (all fluid-cooled)	Rotax 912 A3	Rotax 914 F	Limbach L-2400 EFIT	Rotax 912 A3	Rotax 912 S	Rotax 914 F	Rotax 912 A	Rotax 912 S
Engine performance (Kw/hp)	60.4/81	85.75/115	96/130	60.4/ 81	73.5/100	85.75/115	60.4/81	73.5/100
Fuel capacity (l)	55 (opt. 80)	55 (opt. 80)	100	80	80	80	55 (opt.80)	55 (opt.80)
Stall speed (km/h)	80	80	73	51	51	51	65	65
Max. cruise speed (km/h)	205 (200)	225 (220)	220	180	180	180	170	180
Best glide ratio	28 (27)	28 (27)	28	27	27	27	23	23
Max. weight of towed glider (kg)	370	600 <sup>i</sup>	650 <sup>ii</sup>	c. 600 <sup>iii</sup>	c. >700 <sup>iii</sup>	c. 750 <sup>iii</sup>	560	600 <sup>iv</sup>
Price (DM) of basic equipped tug version incl. towhook, basic instruments, excl. radio & VAT	198,600	208,600	used G-109b + 85,654	164,350	188,850	195,350	170,320	163,620
Price of Extras (DM)								
Const. speed prop, electric	Not available	Not available	Standard	Not available	Not available	Standard	Standard	10,080
Const. speed prop, hydraulic	Standard	Standard	Not available	19,600	Standard	Not available	5,730	15,810
Towable retrieve winch	2,000	2,000	2,500	7,950	7,950	7,950	5,620	5,620
Three-wheel undercarriage	3,000 (=TC)	3,000 (=TTC)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	5,100	5,100



SF-25C Rotax Falke 100, towing glider (Jochen Ewald)

i) higher weights of towed glider are planned for certain glider types

Upgrade is possible for all G109b motorgliders

ii) Still in certification at time of writing

iii) Still in certification at time of writing

Old (Austrian-built) Avo 68s may also be upgraded with 80hp Rotax 912 A3, certified for towing 600kg. Price depending on condition

Towing equipment can be easily removed. Available with single central-wheel undercarriage & winch-hook  
Upgrade of some 650kg AUW versions to 80hp 912 A3 possible  
iv) With constant-speed prop still in certification

Prices and data as given by the manufacturers, January 2000

# The craftier way to win contests

**D**O YOU REMEMBER how you reacted when you last heard about a problem with something you owned? The brand of tyres on your car is rumoured to throw treads and you hear thumping noises every time you drive. An article discusses radiation problems in a brand of TV you don't even own and you move your chair across the room. Sometimes you don't even need a story to think something's wrong. You fly a power plane over water and the engine goes into automatic rough. The situation alone makes you pay attention.

Distractions like these don't matter when you're watching TV. But in a competition sailplane they can break your concentration enough to make the difference between winning and losing. Here are some subjects and techniques the crafty competitor might invent to unsettle his opponents. The craftier competitor will, of course, use it to spot the same ploys being used on him.

- Mention the newly-discovered delaminating properties of any furniture polish commonly used on sailplanes. Emphasise its ability to attack fibre-glass substrates at the epoxy-gelcoat joint. Speculate on what that could do to wing surfaces at high g loadings.

- Link catastrophic canopy implosions at speed to a popular canopy cleaner. Set the story in Eastern Europe to make it harder to verify.

- Blame the next ambulance going by on a case of dysentery from the water in a local pub, ideally after one of the competitors had peppers on his pizza the night before.

- Leave copies of a circular for a male strip joint in a visiting pilot's crew car.

- Be overheard telling your broker to get rid of your shares in a company that sells sunglasses. Cite a secret study of cataract growth in Finnish Air Force pilots using different-coloured visors. Make sure that you identify amber as the worst colour.

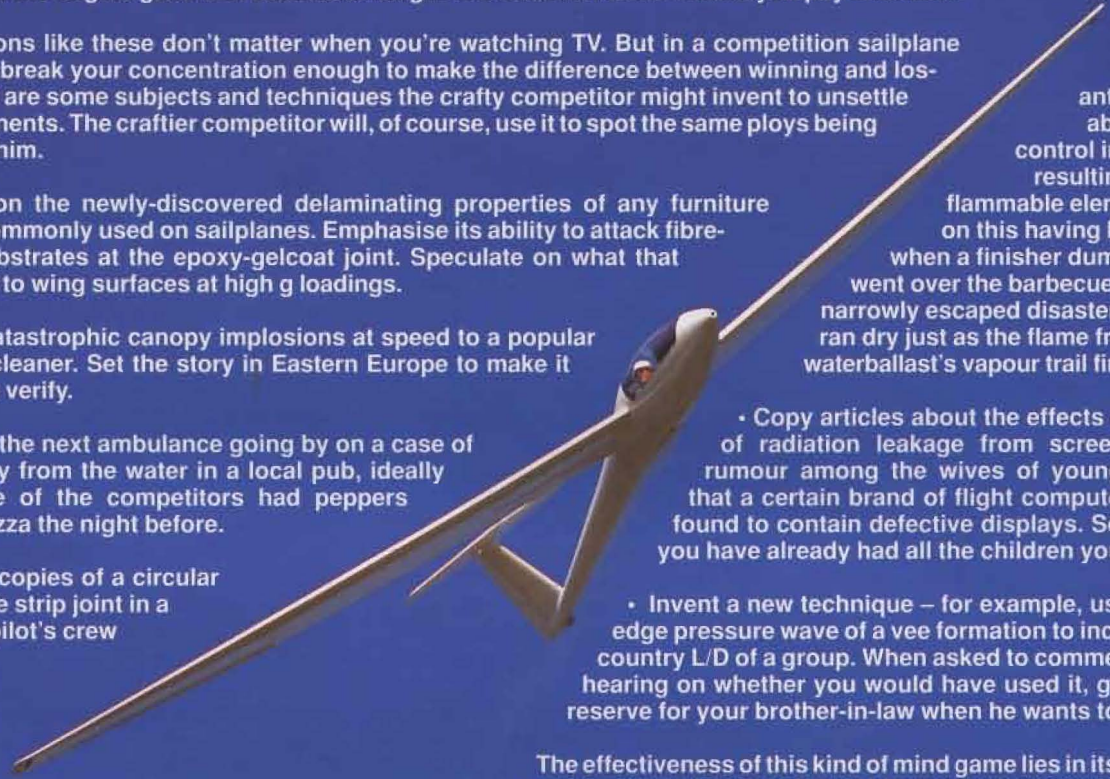
- Buy a new anti-freeze and talk about poor quality control in your old brand resulting in an excess of flammable elements. Elaborate on this having been discovered when a finisher dumped ballast as it went over the barbecue area. The glider narrowly escaped disaster when the tanks ran dry just as the flame front climbing the waterballast's vapour trail finally reached it...

- Copy articles about the effects on reproduction of radiation leakage from screens. Spread the rumour among the wives of younger competitors that a certain brand of flight computer has just been found to contain defective displays. Sound happy that you have already had all the children you wanted.

- Invent a new technique – for example, using the leading-edge pressure wave of a vee formation to increase the cross-country L/D of a group. When asked to comment at the protest hearing on whether you would have used it, give the look you reserve for your brother-in-law when he wants to borrow money.

The effectiveness of this kind of mind game lies in its subtlety. You're trying to spread seeds of doubt that will alter the way someone flies, not cause direct examination of your story. Too many stories at the same time will make none of them believable where one could be taken at face value. But it will only be as credible as its delivery. As the saying goes: "Sincerity is everything. Once you can fake that, you've got it made". Inventing stories like this can add immeasurably to the fun and suspense of a competition. Used sparingly, and told with a straight enough face, you might even get someone to believe one of them long enough to make the tale worth the telling. Enjoy.

Peter King



the white planes picture co.

## Never mind the quality, feel the weight!

Literary worth is a matter of taste, but there is no arguing about bulk. The reaction of all those who pick up *The Platypus Papers, Fifty Years of Powerless Pilotage* is, 'Good Lord, I never knew it was a coffee-table book!'

It is that. I briefly thought of providing screw-in legs so that people could rest their cups on the four-colour glossy cover while entertaining visitors; however, furniture carries 17.5% VAT while books are untaxed. At 0.9 kilograms *The Platypus Papers* represents a lot of heft for the price, with hard covers (8% bigger than S&G!), 160 pages and over 100 illustrations including 94 cartoons by Peter Fuller.

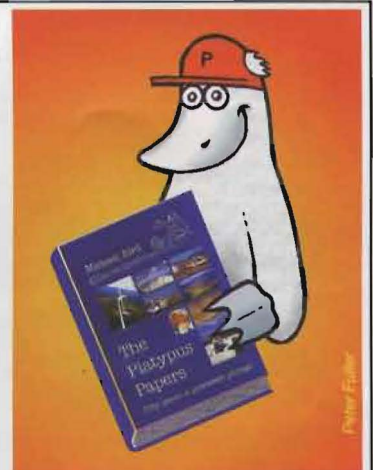
*'I always read Platypus because he has the same puerile sense of humour as my husband'. (Mrs Jack Harrison, wife of the celebrated online weather forecaster).*

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# All the young dudes

**Youthful pilots stole the show at the Club Class. Bob and Jean Fox, of Wolds GC, report**

**T**HREE young pilots are hoping that success at the Wolds will lead to places in the Worlds. The Club Class Nationals at Wolds GC, Pocklington, was won by some of its youngest competitors.

Richard Hood, aged 25, successfully defended the Club Class Champion title he first collected last year at Nympsfield, when he was the youngest pilot in the contest. This year, he was joined in the top three by the 1999 Junior National Champion, Peter Masson. Just two points separated first and second places, while third-placed Afandi Darlington, also until recently a Juniors pilot, was only 17 points behind. Now they hope to get on to the team for the Club Class Worlds in Australia this winter.

From four 1,000-point contest days, the competition was very close, resulting in only approximately 300 points separating the top ten pilots.

**Day 1:** Director Allan McWhirter got the formalities out of the way quickly because the sky and the forecast, by Tony Kane, promised a good day. There was time to present a bottle of bubbly to Cris (Oxford GC CFI) and Claire Emson (BGA Executive member) to celebrate their wedding a week before. This week was their honeymoon. The task set was 277km (Pocklington, Grantham, Wetherby and back). The results were interesting, with seven landouts and 27 finishers. Conditions were quite good but the strong breeze slowed everyone down on the first leg. Last finisher Jack Stephen crossed the finish line at 18.45hrs.

On Sunday, June 11, lots of overcast cloud meant the day was scrubbed. Afandi

Darlington took a non-contest tow to the wave and completed a 250km flight, landing at 20.30hrs.

Monday's forecast predicted no thermals and this day was scrubbed, too.

**Day 2:** High winds were the predominant feature but were forecast to decrease later. In the event, this didn't happen, but a task had been set and the sniffer, Andy Thornhill, reported 4-5kts lift, so we launched on a 153km triangle (Pocklington, Tontine, Wetherby). Many pilots who did well used the Pennine wave. The fastest completed in just over two hours. Nine pilots landed out. Some pilots flew the whole task in wave, which could be found right over Pocklington town to 10,000ft and more.

Wednesday was scrubbed: it was overcast and a front cleared too late.

**Day 3:** Some pilots had difficulty getting away because a front was hovering over the airfield. Eventually this cleared to the south and conditions improved. Andy Melville set a 266km task to the north (Barnard Castle, Lanchester Mast, near Gateshead, then Masham). Occasional 5-6kt thermals were found and cloudbase went up to nearly 6,000ft. There were nine landouts and 25 finishers. Some good barbecues were seen during the evening.

### Club Class: top ten pilots

1	Richard Hood
2	Peter Masson
3	Afandi Darlington
4	Gordon MacDonald
5	Bob Fox
6	Andreas Jelden
7	Peter Sheard
8	Jack Stephen
9	Mike Cuming
10	John Williams



Richard Hood, who flies at Four Counties GC, scooped the Club Class title for the second year in a row. Now he's hoping to fly for Britain in the Australian worlds

**Day 4:** Conditions were forecast to be good, so a task of 364km was set (Saltby, Pontefract and Chesterfield). The weather was in fact very mixed, with spreadout in the south, which wasted a lot of time, and so leading pilots landed near the last TP at around 19.00hrs. Most pilots flew for six and a half hours.

Saturday was very windy. The thermals were being broken by strong winds – too strong to make headway in unballasted gliders. The task was eventually scrubbed when the wind did not decrease. On Sunday, although temperatures went up to 25°C, this was not enough to produce usable thermals and the day was scrubbed.

At prizegiving, Richard took the trophy and a colour TV, Peter, a CD player, and Afandi, a cased barbecue set. The competition was judged to be a great success, with a sigh of relief from the organisers at Wolds of its first national rated competition. Now the club's getting ready for August's two-seater competition.

Full Club Class results in December-January issue

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# Family fortunes in Spain

**The Overseas Nationals featured a winning combination: father and son Martyn and Leigh Wells. Martyn describes what they did**

**S**PAIN can be a great place to fly, as we had found out during our Juniors training sessions at Ontur. So this year Leigh and I decided to try the Overseas Nationals at Ocana. Whilst not the Ontur region, it was obvious that given reasonable conditions the flying would be excellent. We were not disappointed.

Ocana itself lies about 50km south of Madrid on the high plateau of Spain, some 2,400ft above sea level. It's a flat area and there are reasonable fields. There are also some minor mountains and hills within the task area. The airfield itself is large and well maintained with good accommodation, a swimming pool and so on. It's a good base even though locally there are some minor airspace limitations.

So the Friday evening of May 12 found us on a ferry with other competitors. The comp started on the Monday. Because we were travelling together with only one trailer (the other was already at Ocana) we decided to drive overnight, taking turns, and by 3pm Saturday, under a great sky, we were rigged and ready to go. A quick 180km triangle and I, for one, was ready for a meal and bed – but a great start and worth the trip already.

Sunday practice was ideal as director Brian Spreckley set one of those newfangled Assigned Area Tasks. It was a first try at this new form of task and a chance to work out how to approach them. The task was interesting but there seemed to be a number of things that would take a while to sort. It was still much better than the old doomed-to-land-out type of tasks.

The comp started on Monday with an



*Martyn, a British Team coach, has a gliding family. As well as son Leigh, his daughter Anna flies comps. Here he offers her last-minute tips at the 1999 Cotswold Regionals*

ordinary speed task in locally-weak blue conditions, which became much better further south. Leigh won the day, and one of my main thoughts whilst trying to climb out of a hole was at least I had a crew – Leigh – if I had to land out. As it turned out Kim Tipple and a few birds saved me and I made it back at a lowly speed.

We had nine comp days, and actually flew on 11... a good hit rate. On the other two days, Brian's decision to fly but not task was sensible: we would almost certainly have landed out in fields soaked by the one wet day, making any form of retrieve a nightmare.

## Overseas Nationals: top ten pilots

1	Martyn Wells
2	Stephen Crabb
3	Leigh Wells
4	Justin Wills
5	Phil Jeffery
6	Paul Crabb
7	G Dale
8	Gary Stingemore
9	Paul Shelton
10	John Tanner

Most days seemed to alternate between speed and area tasks, so we got lots of practice. Leigh was showing his old dad how to lead a comp and my position was gradually improving. One of the major things, other than the amount of flying, was how enjoyable the scenery was, especially over the Toledo Mountains where we would often soar with groups of eagles, vultures and hawks. There was often a convergence over these hills with 50-plus km runs straight and level at high speed. Conditions over the plains were equally good with cloud bases of the order of 6,000-7,000ft with 5kt averages – much like Texas!

Towards the end of the comp, Leigh and I were finding it difficult to hold our overall positions mainly due to excellent flying from the Crabb brothers. So it was to be a fight: the Wells vs the Crabbs. It was obvious that Paul and Steve were great at area tasks, in particular with the precision of their finishing times, so the fight went to the final day. As is so often the way, half-way around on the last day things were not going well for us. Still, Leigh found a really critical 4kt climb in the poor area that neatly put us on a shaky final glide under a booming sky. Good enough to give us 1st and 3rd for the comp – phew!

So, an enjoyable friendly meet with an interesting mix of tasks. Perhaps the next evolution of the area task is to use its scoring philosophy and apply it to speed tasks so there is a uniform scoring pattern. This could well address the unkind landout situation on speed days. The other point which seemed to come out was that multiple starts, whilst helping to stop gaggles forming, can be a bit unfair – but not enough to affect most tasks.

Let's hope we have the same weather next year!

*Full results in the December-January issue*



## Like father, like son:



### Martyn Wells

UK agent for LS sailplanes, British Team Coach

### Leigh Wells

Graphic art student, Cheltenham



Previous competitions won

**Years in gliding**

How they got into the sport

**Age**

Glider flown at Ocana

**Hours in the last year**

Total Hours

**Previous competitions entered**

UK comps still to fly in 2000

**Home club**

4

**33 years**

Dad interested in aviation

**He's not saying...**

LS-8, registration 321

**100hrs**

4,000hrs

**lots**

Standard, 15-metre

**Shenington, Edgehill**

0

**4 years**

Dad interested in aviation

**20 years**

LS-8, registration LS

**160hrs**

500hrs

**10-ish**

Standard, 15-metre, Juniors

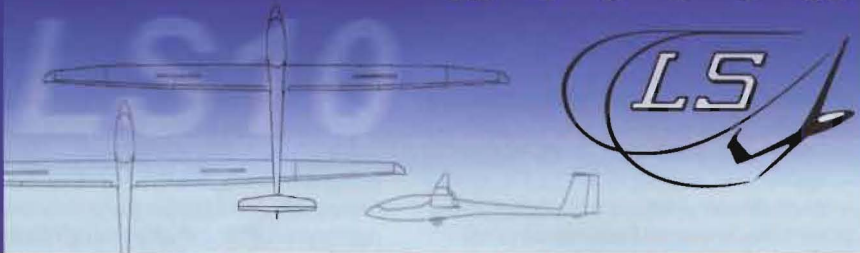
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**Which version?** TaskNAV is available in two versions – see details in S & G June/July issue: v1.2 is optimised for the majority of pilots and is suitable for clubs and general competition use with single start line (from 8 start line types) and standard speed tasks. v2000 contains all of v1.2 plus advanced support for the latest SC3 rules, eg, Assigned Area Tasks (AAT), with fully automatic analysis for Multiple Start Points, AAT, TDT (aka cat's cradle) and PST (pilot selected) tasks.

**Updates:** Existing CDs older than v1.1.772 require complete CD update. Send five pounds for cost price replacement at latest v1.2.844. CDs at v1.1.773 and later can be updated by new CD, or free by Internet.

**New inclusive price list:**

- TaskNAV v1.2 for Windows £69
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- DOSTN4 upgrade to Windows v1.2 £55
- TaskNAV 2000 for Clubs/Competition organisers £198 ... this is a 3 licence pack for the price of two. Full credit given for previous Windows version (club) purchase. Suggested use: CFI personal licence, Office PC and Members PC.

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**MET ON THE NET**

**B**EGAN to develop my website in summer 1999, ably advised by my computer-literate 12-year-old son. I see myself as an interpreter of weather forecasts rather than as a forecaster and would prefer you to treat the site as a painless way to self-brief. The ratings I give are no more than my own ideas. I hope you will look at the information available and draw your own conclusions. With luck, they will be broadly similar to mine.

The soaring potential of a particular day – its star rating – is given up to five days in advance, revised daily. It's at the top of the web page (see right). Preparing ratings is a continual task: 5 is superb; 1 indicates local soaring; 0 is obvious. I enjoy doing it, and am delighted when I get it right. I'm slightly upset when I make a mistake, but often the professionals get the same day wrong, too.

**Daily routine**

The weather section of the page (plus radio and TV) provides all the information needed to produce the ratings. I do have a personal web page as well, laid out in a compact, less attractive, manner, but it has no hidden links.

**Morning**

I already have a good idea what to anticipate when I start checking the various sources at 05.30-05.45hrs (I am an early riser). In no particular order, I look at:

**Satellite pictures (satpics).** Polar Orbiters give the highest resolution, but are only available at certain times of day. Meteosat images from geostationary satellites have lower resolution but are available throughout the day. Visual satpics – in effect photographs – can be more useful than infra-red, but are not of course available at night. The best of the polar satpics are from Quick France (resolution can show individual cumulus) and Dundee. The most useful Meteosat images come from the US Military sources. These have been corrected for the slant angle and therefore look more realistic.

**Metars** (actuals from airfields) and **Tafs** (forecasts for airfields) The "fast" ones from LFV Sweden give a representative selection and are very quick to download. An alternative method is to use the list of airfield codes given – this covers the "England Playground". If you cut and paste all or a section of the list, Metars and Tafs for an appropriate area can be obtained. This is slightly slower, but it is possible to make up a custom list of places within, say 200km of a club. (My site gives help with Metars/Tafs.) **Webcams** have enormous potential use, but are woefully inadequate at present. Many do not open until 06.30hrs – at weekends, not until lunchtime. Quality is often poor, but they can be useful for clarifying reports of, say broken cloud – the type of cloud might just be discernible. The best are at London, Leeds, Cambridge and Norwich.

**Soundings** (graphs showing atmospheric profiles) are a vital tool for assessing expected cloudbase and type of convection. I look at two or three representative ones, with special attention to stations upwind. A technical

# Jack the weather star



**In 1998, S&G asked if anyone could predict weather windows for glider pilots. Jack Harrison describes how he has responded**

understanding is required to be able to get the best out of them, and a short tutorial is linked on another web page. It is not a dissertation for a BSc in Meteorology and will not stand up to expert scrutiny. The **Low Level Aviation Briefing Chart** (Form 215) is a UK Met Office (UKMO) aviation chart that divides the country into

Update for	Forecast evening update (00-0600 UTC)					Morning update (06-0000 UTC)				
Mon	Monday					Monday				
2nd of Jul	The weather is likely to be in the forecast range. Act on the word 'not' in the same					Some gaps in upper level clouds and below, but otherwise very damaging				
25 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2
26 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2
27 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2
28 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2
29 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2
30 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2
31 Jul	SE	4	3	2	2	SE	4	3	2	2

areas. I normally look at this last. I will have already drawn some conclusions about the day's expected weather, and the F215 (hopefully) confirms what I think. The forms are available by fax, or from the commercial source linked on my web page.

**Radio and TV** – I occasionally watch the News 24 TV forecast at 05.55hrs, but often this is not updated with developments over



the past few hours. I listen to the radio forecast at 06.05hrs. Again, these should confirm my thoughts. Broadcasts also give the outlook for the next five days and I will, in any case, have had a provisional look at the charts the evening before. My table of charts has a comprehensive list of sources, and it is easy to compare different models. Sometimes various sources are unavailable. The **UKMO** has familiar charts, and is the first port of call. The 12.00hrs charts for the next five days are available via many links, and I include a choice of three in case a particular site isn't working. **ECMWF** (European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting) has the midday charts to six days ahead. I compare days 3 to 5 with the UKMO charts. If there is a significant difference, I then look at other models, such as NoGaps.

I then upload to the web site at around 06.15-06.30hrs.

It is often quite easy to pick out the very poor days with their frontal systems and rain. It is also relatively easy to identify the really good day with a cold high or transient ridge. It is important to distinguish between cold highs (good) and warm highs (probably poor). A look at air trajectories is useful, as are soundings in the source area of the airmass. The middling days are hardest.

Apart from anything else, conditions might vary markedly between different parts of the country: low stratus and fog near the East Coast, say, but very good in Southern England. To anticipate just how far the North Sea clag will spread is impossible. Will the wind be 20kt or an unusable 35kt at flying heights? Will there be spreadout, showers, or sea breezes? It is unrealistic to try to determine these features at four or five days' range. I can give only an overall view: detail has to wait.

## During the day

I sometimes feel like an expectant father, waiting for the cumulus to pop at the right time. I make a few quick internet checks on Metars, satpics and webcams. Radar images help me estimate the onset of rain. Indeed, a friend of mine involved in amateur motor-racing accesses my website via a mobile phone and laptop to make a last-minute decision on whether to use "wet" or "dry" tyres. If possible, I watch the lunchtime TV forecast, pencil and paper in hand. I am often busy with other interests such as bird-watching or gardening, or even chores such as school runs – I have a young family.

## Evening

At 18.00hrs (cheap internet time) I check afternoon satpics, especially those from the University of Dundee. If they show interesting features, such as approaching fronts, I will copy or link to them. The 18.55 TV forecast is a must. I always try to watch this. I then comment on how the day turned out and assess the next day, and usually upload this information to my site.

New charts become available sometime after 20.00hrs. The earliest source of midday forecast models is the US Military in Germany (based on UKMO). The producer's name is at the top of the chart. My favourite is Master Sergeant Nitro, whose charts are ready a good two hours before his colleagues! I can usually get the charts for days two and three, sometimes four and five, by 21.00hrs, and so post my thoughts. I usually call it a day then.

I spend about 1.5 to 2 hours a day on the website. There are occasions when I cannot update. But that isn't quite such a loss as it might seem. Quite often, the prediction I publish four days before is better than at two days' range! I feel mean being satisfied when I correctly predict a dreadful day: you are the losers, but at least I got it right...

*Jack Harrison was an airline pilot until retiring in 1998 after more than 40 years in aviation. He is also an ex-glider pilot, at Aboyne, with three Diamonds and some competition experience. He has always had a particular interest in gliding weather, especially wave soaring, and says he is indebted to Tom Bradbury for the many fine articles he has written over the years.*

## Glossary of weather terms

**Charts** are similar to the familiar ones seen on TV. Isobars (lines joining points of equal pressure) and fronts are perhaps the most important features. Some have "smiley" suns. If you really want this type of presentation, then use my "peasant's weather" web page (sorry, "layman's" page).

**Metars** are reports from airfields giving the actual weather conditions. They are in code, but it is relatively easy to learn. For example, 240/15 means wind from 240° at 15kt. Time is UTC.

**Satellites** are either polar orbiters at about 800km (orbital period ~1.40 hours) or geostationary at 36,000km over the Equator (period 24 hours).

**Soundings** (also known as **ascents**) are graphs that show temperature and wind profiles as measured by a radio sonde unmanned balloon. These are launched several times per day from many locations worldwide. The complicated graph is perhaps a challenge, but well worth it.

**Tafs** are forecasts for airfields presented in a similar code to Metars.

**Trajectories** enable you to trace the path that the air follows over a period of days. Air that has originated over say, Greenland, will be cold (and possibly give good soaring). If the air has come from the Sahara, it will be hot (at height) so good soaring is most unlikely.

**UKMO** is the British Met Office based at Bracknell, arguably the best in the world.

**UTC** is Universale Temps Co-ordinate (or something like that): the French way of getting their own back for not being allocated the Prime Meridian in the 19th century, or whenever. It means good old-fashioned Greenwich Mean Time.

**Visual images** are, in effect, photographs. Infra-red shows the heat radiated from the cloud tops, or the surface (if clear of cloud). Infra-red images do not show low stratus and fog very well.

**Webcams** are operated by various organisations and show traffic jams, building sites, or shopping malls. A glimpse of sky is sometimes possible.

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# Where do you want to go...

Use this new and not entirely serious cross-country calculator – created by Grenville Croll – to assess how far you might soar on any given day. Start with 0km, adding or subtracting kilometres as directed

#### About you. If you:

own 100 per cent of a glider	+150km
part-own a glider and it's your day	+135km
part-own a glider and it's not your day	-125km
are good at negotiation/bribery and it's not your day	+75km
are prepared to steal a glider when it's not your day	+50km
have pre-booked or otherwise obtained a club glider	+75km
have borrowed a friend's (decent) glider	+115km

#### About your glider. If it:

is out of C of A, not insured or not airworthy	-300km
has a handicap of less than 90	-125km
has a handicap of less than 95	-50km
has a handicap of more than 105	+50km
has a handicap of more than 110	+125km
has dusty, dirty, unpolished or bug-splattered wings	-25km

#### About your experience. If you are:

about to have your first flight	-750km
not yet solo	-500km
not yet Bronze with Cross-Country Endorsement	-300km
not yet Silver	-150km
a Basic Instructor	-25km
an Assistant instructor	-50km
a Full instructor	-100km
the CFI	-200km

#### About the weather. If:

you're at a wave site and it's waving	+75km
you're flying from an exotic location, such as Australia	+125km
it's raining persistently	-200km
the cold front passed through last night	+150km
the cold front passes through at lunchtime	-50km
the warm front arrives at lunchtime	-100km
your planned final glide is through sea air	-25km
the overnight low/daytime high difference is more than 10°C	+150km
the weather is much better than forecast last night	-100 km
the wind is not in the NNE-SSW sector	-50 km
the wind is NW	+50 km
the wind is more than 10kts	-50 km

#### About club operations. If:

it's your turn to instruct, drive the winch or fly the tug	-300km
you're in the top third of the flying list	+100km
you're in the bottom third of the flying list	-100km
the launch marshal cares for the needs of cross-country pilots	+75km
the launch marshal is insensitive to everyone's needs	-75km
it's a winch-only site and launch height is less than 1,200ft	-50km
you've perfected postponing your launch to the perfect time	+50km
an aerotow is available	+100km

#### About your lookout and flying skills. If you:

have heard of speed to fly	+25 km
or do speed to fly	+100km
or fly by instinct	+150km
induce thermals by appeal to a Higher Power (especially if low)	+50km
have ever baled out following a mid-air collision	-100km
have ever had a Class A near miss	-50km
have had any other class of near miss	-25km
can't read a number plate at 25 yards	-100km
never leave a thermal until you've entered cloud	-100km

#### About your circumstances today. If you are:

in prison	-1000km
at work	-450km
at work and can feign an immediate sickie	-350km
on your way to work and can turn back	-250km
supposed to be at work	-100km
on a gliding holiday	+100km
on a non-gliding holiday	-200km
supposed to be getting married today	-500km

#### About your health. If you:

have got your leg over within the last 24 hours	+46km
have eaten and retained a good breakfast	+47km
have a teensy-weensy hangover	-75km
have a hangover	-100km
would rather not discuss whether you have a hangover	-300km

#### About your reliability

For each time you have forgotten each of the following in the past year:	
barograph, camera, GPS, logger, map, money, phone	-5km
sunglasses, hat, final glide calculator, charged batteries	-10km
sufficient food and liquid, where you are going	-25km
tailplane, mainpin(s), minor structural member	-50km
DI, positive control checks, fuselage, wing or whole glider	-100km

Your total (see below for how you did):

+/-

**1,200km-plus: Gliding Hero/Heroine** You have masterfully positioned yourself in the right place, on the right day, with the right glider. Experienced, fully prepared and with no heavy baggage you are about to take the skies by storm. If you have any friends, they all hate you already or will do by the end of today. **Try** anything.

**900 to 1200: Pundit** A truly dedicated pilot, devoted to cross-country flying. You eschew the mundane aspects of everyday life in pursuit of the nearly impossible. Not known for your manners (if you have any at all), or your restraint at the launchpoint. **Try** harder.

**300 to 900: Average Pilot** A keen aviator hampered by having a job, a family and/or not quite enough money. It is your abiding

## Interpreting your score

wish to be in the right place at the right time, but you are forever troubled by these niggles. **Try** divorce or self-employment.

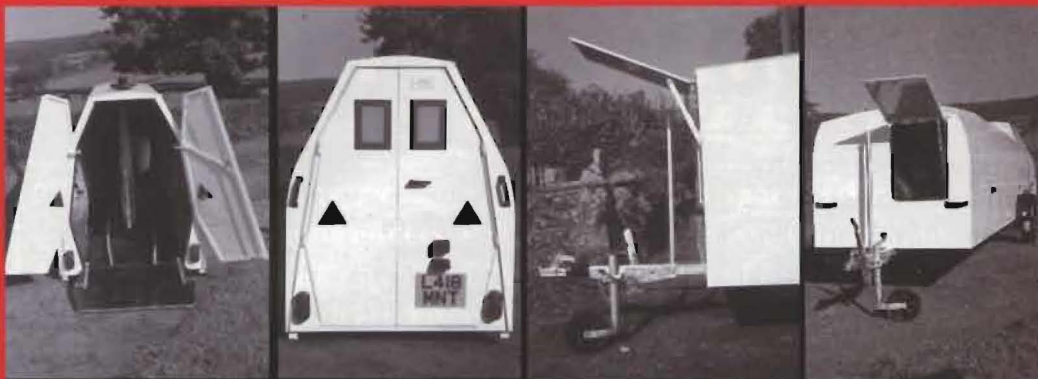
**0 to 300: Beginner** You are a hapless initiate, confused by the technology, the weather, your instructors and the principles of flight. You have yet to realise that flying a long way without an engine is almost impossible. Get your act together by carefully reviewing the detail contained in this valuable calculator. **Try** staying up.

**-300 to 0: Poor Unfortunate** You are disadvantaged by experience, weather, capability and ambition... and your story touches all our hearts. Without people like

you, we'd have nobody to take the Michael out of in the bar after flying. **Try** golf.

**-300 or worse: Desperado** You are paying the penalty for a life of misdemeanour, felony or sheer bad luck. Constrained by circumstances, your primary concern should be how to escape. **Try** tunnelling.

*Grenville flies a Nimbus 2, has 650hrs, Gold and two Diamonds. He frequently appeals to a Higher Power when low. His calculator is based upon direct experience or observation, with thanks to his gliding friends. Suggestions for improvements can be sent c/o Rattlesden GC, Nr Felsham, Bury St. Edmunds, IP30 0SX. This calculator is abridged: the full version is available on request*



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*Above: The Loire from over the Chaumont TP (John Herring)*

*Below: Portmoak, by John Dimond, is one of four gliding paintings shown by the Guild of Aviation Artists this year. Others were by Roy Garner, Mary Meagher and David Ellwood*



*Top right: This is what your wings look like if you cloud climb to 18,000ft. Dr Brenig James says his Nimbus 2 flew like a brick till the ice melted. The thunderstorm he used was in Spain*



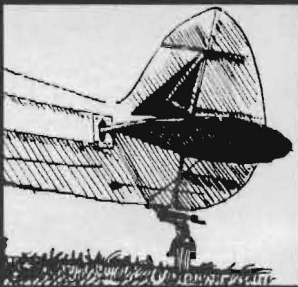
*Middle right: Disneyworld's Magic Kingdom, on a flight from Seminole Lake by Mark Rushton*

*Below: Ian Strachan saw this wave cloud, and the turbulence on its right, in Switzerland*



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Yesterday was the first time I used mine in anger and I was mighty impressed. It was faster than the cockpit vario. More accurate. I was getting 2 up, when the cockpit vario read 1 down. I thought for a novice like me to get 30mins (off a 2,500 foot launch in windy conditions), is pretty good. Laurie.

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# Club news

## Andreas (Isle of Man)

FLYING continues most Sundays, weather permitting. At the AGM Tom Wiseman stepped down as chairman and Derek Ballington as secretary. Our thanks for their past efforts. They were succeeded by John Fisher and Bob Fennel respectively. Derek continues to look after our ground equipment, expertly. Bob has put together the club's new website: [www.manxgliding.flyer.co.uk](http://www.manxgliding.flyer.co.uk)

BG

## Aquila (Hinton-in-the-Hedges)

THE K-21 is now doing regular cross-country training flights and enthusiasm for cross-countries is high. We have a full team for the Inter-club League; this year we can even provide crew. We have been joined by a number of members from Enstone, now sadly closed, who have brought gliders and enthusiasm. Mike Butler is solo, Mick Love has his Silver distance and John Batch and Phil Dolling are Basic Instructors. We've had three days that suggest this year's weather won't be all bad!

Mel Eastburn

## Bannerdown (RAF Keevil)

HAVING been useful in the feeble start to the soaring season, the powered Janus, BJ, has now left. Sacha Large completed Silver with 50km, and next day found herself in the Inter-club. Chris Lear did five hours after several attempts and is now longing to make the most of his motor-Discus. Soaring in Bank Holiday week was a bit patchy until wave set up late in the day; following a mad rush for the hangar, several lucky members got to around 10,000ft. In the two Inter-club League meetings to date our gliders led the day in pundit and then intermediate classes. Steve Ayres did the first of the season's "biggies" with 504km for his Diamond distance. A full programme of evening trial lessons is under way.

Derek Findlay

## Bath, Wilts & North Dorset (The Park)

A SUCCESSFUL flying week – we flew every day – began on Sunday, June 4 with the Inter-club League. Mike Edwards won pundit class, putting us in the lead so far. Simon Adlard ran a BGA soaring course for six members: two did Silver distances (Norman Hill and Mark Dexter); Mark Joyce completed his Silver with five hours during a 170km triangle. On the Wednesday, our Pawnee launched 28 gliders; 22 completed 3,500km between them. Julian Reynolds made sure of his five hours and Silver the following Saturday. Nick Bowers is organising our annual three days in July for local schoolchildren. Two joined our cadet scheme last year and now await their 16th birthdays to go solo. A new briefing room has been constructed by Graham Callaway in what used to be three storerooms making it easier to hold lectures and meetings away from the clubroom and bar.

Joy Lynch

Please send your entries to [helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk](mailto:helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk) or Helen Evans, 6 Salop Close, Shrivvenham, Swindon SN6 8EN, to arrive by **August 15** for the October-November issue (October 17 for December-January). Photographs – slides or prints from film – are welcome

## Bidford Gliding Centre (Bidford)

THE RECENT turbo comp saw a record number of entrants and the weather allowed great flying (see p37). A big thank you to all involved in making it such a success: even bigger and better next year, perhaps? Well done to Bill "Ventus" Inglis, who flew 300km cross-country in his new toy, just managing to beat my first 50km flight on the same day. Congratulations to Paul Turner for completing the Assistant Instructor's course. Unusual weather in early June proved that Bidford can also offer wave soaring as well as the thermal variety.

Nigel Howard

## Booker (Wycombe Air Park)

IN SPITE OF the terrible weather, we have had some decent flying. Paul Brice achieved 650km of a 750km attempt, failing to make one turning point in Wales in his LS-8 18. Geoff Lyons flew his first 500km, and those Parrymore twins completed a Silver between them on the same afternoon: Neil with five hours and Sean with height and distance. Malcolm Field has soloed. The expedition to Ontur with the Duo Discus achieved a total time of around 75hrs, with weather improving as time



The Scottish Inter-club began at Feshiebridge, with pilots from Aboyne, Portmoak, Milfield and Easterton – whose CFI, Robert Tait, was photographed with son Ian before launching at Feshie (L M Middleton)

progressed. Jed Edyvean has nearly got his Nimbus, and Zulu Glasstek have experienced a delay with the demonstrator ASW 28. We have the opportunity to take a club Discus to South Africa again this winter, and are hosting the 15-metre Nationals next year.

Roger Neal

## Borders (Milfield)

OUR ANNUAL awards were handed out at the AGM in April: Ernie Mills got one for achievements (solo and Bronze legs all within a month); Andy Bardgett for height (Diamond); Roger Cuthbert for 100km in wave; Brian Brown, for service to the club (the President's Cup – he devised a bonus launch scheme which led to increased flying at no loss to the club). Some members took part in the Inter-Scottish league at Feshiebridge, organised by Andy Henderson, and had good soaring. The next round will be at our site. Our five-year plan was completed in two years, and we are now reviewing what to do next. One option might be a private members' hangar to maximise winter flying time. The motor Falke is to get a factory zero-houred engine fitted. Our wave weeks are fully booked. Gordon Pledger climbed to 13,200ft in wave in May for Gold height. James Neil has soloed.

Bob Cassidy

## Bristol & Gloucestershire (Nympsfield)

TREASURER Paul Leonard and secretary Chris Osgood got our cadet scholarship scheme under way. Caterers Ken and Sylvia Coppin started dispensing food and beer and offered to cater for birthdays and special events. Don't forget juniors can fly the Rolex Western Regionals (August 5-13) for half price.

Bernard Smyth

## Burn (Burn)

THE NORTHERN Inter-club League was at Burn in May. Alan Jenkins won the pundit class in his Libelle after a very windy and rainy weekend. Thanks to Matt Ellis for his organisation and Bob Baines for the task setting. Dave Peters is now CFI and Bill Thorpe club chairman. Our thanks to Bill Jepson (ex-CFI) and Derek Wilson (ex-chairman) for their years of service and dedication. Bob Boughen flew 50km to Gamston for his Silver Badge and Alan Hopkinson has Bronze. June 10 gave us some good cross-countries with many pilots flying 200km-plus tasks. Our hearts went out to Bill Jepson who just missed his 300km, landing at Rufforth on the way home. The white winch's chassis has been swapped and the club Cirrus is now fitted with waterballast, many thanks to all involved. It is with great sadness that we report the loss of Danny Mc Neil. Danny, who headed the winch maintenance team, was a huge contributor to the club. Our sympathy to his family and friends.

Oilly Peters

## Cairngorm (Feshiebridge)

BACK IN April we hosted and won the Scottish Inter-club League. Special mention must go to intrepid Milfieldites for venturing into areas of the Cairngorms not usually frequented by us: the fearsome Glen Einich, the "Glen with teeth". Our May task week had fantastic soaring weather with many 300kms flown during the week (five in one day – a first for Feshie). We welcomed visiting pilots to the Highland Aero Club fly-in, with some flying back in on Sunday for a second helping of Aberdeen Angus steaks and aspirin. Our thanks go to Alister Robertson for running a very successful course week which also enjoyed marvellous weather and gave some new members an enjoyable introduction to mountain soaring and a good kick-start to solo. We have bought a Robin Tug from Austria and thank Aboyne for the interim loan of their Pawnee. By the time you read this, our winch will be back on line, its new paintwork looking very smart courtesy of "Bernhard the Brush". Visit our website at [www.gliding.org](http://www.gliding.org)

Chris Fiorentini

## Chilterns (RAF Halton)

THE STATION publicity campaign is paying off (thanks to Kerry Mulvey and Dave Sale), introducing gliding to a steady stream of service recruits during their basic training. Most go on to postings elsewhere and progress with other RAFGSA clubs. Despite morning mist, a great deal of flying was achieved in the early May *ab initio* week. A couple of lapsed brethren resoloed. Thanks to supporting members led by Derek Jones. The LS-6c and Discus have been doing 100-200km milk runs awaiting better weather. The new Skylaunch winch is a boost both for launch rate and height, particularly on our short runs. Thanks to Gordon Howarth, we have a comprehensive manual and trained drivers. A syndicate LS-7 came from Germany through cyberspace. A Spitfire came the traditional way and posed in front of our gliders for photos. Weather permitting, a group of regulars flies Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

Tony Gee

## Cleavelands (Dishforth)

OUR CLUBHOUSE complex is almost complete. We now have water and electricity, although sewerage is proving a little more difficult. Grateful thanks to all those members who have given up their time to help. Special thanks to Kevin Kiely and Terry Potter, whose unflinching enthusiasm and hard work made this project a success. A hastily-arranged AGM was held in the new bar, with prizes going to James Prosser and Kevin Curtis. Our notorious c\*\*k-up trophy was awarded to a consortium, headed by our CFI, for taking part in the retrieve from Hell. Further details from the participants... for the price of a pint! The footings are down for our new "Glider Storage Facility" – building should be complete by the start of August. All we need now is some good weather. Our competition pilots have had little practice so far this

# Club news



Actress Kate Winslet (front), daughter-in-law of outgoing Cranwell president Ted Threapleton, with Bobbie Lee

year, but we hope for good results. Congratulations to Mark Tolson on his Assistant Instructor's rating.  
**Polly Whitehead**

## Cornish (Perranporth)

ONCE AGAIN, the annual task week was washed out. It is only a rumour that our new CFI, Gordon Hunter is being blamed for the weather – although now, when he approaches the launchpoint, umbrellas are quietly unfurled. A syndicate has been formed within the club. The EGGS (Elderly Gentlemen's Gliding Syndicate) is restricted to pre-Bronze members over 60 – but those between 60-65 only qualify as Juniors! The CFI and Tugmaster Pip Phillips are honorary senior members. The club said a sad goodbye to a valued and popular member, Rex Vinson, who died on May 25, following a series of strokes (see obituaries, p59).

**Mike Sheedy**

## Cotswold (Aston Down)

A VERY WET April hampered early season flying, but members are now starting to enjoy good cross-country soaring with one 500km and an abundance of 300s from the pundits. Mike Frost flew his Silver distance from Aston Down and, on reaching Enstone, continued to Hinton-in-the-Hedges (73km) in the club K-8, followed by an aerotow retrieve. A fine performance indeed! We welcome several new members including some pilots from Enstone Eagles and hope that they enjoy flying with us. Doug Gardner and Oliver Ward competed in the Eastern Regionals. Congratulations to Ollie for coming first in his Discus 2. We normally fly three evenings during the week. Our courses continue to do well with some first solos. Final preparations are being made to ensure that the Open Class Nationals go smoothly.

**Frank Birlison**

## Cranwell (RAF Cranwell)

UNDETERRED by frequent thunderstorms and rainy days, Zeb Zamo created local thermic activity as chef for an enjoyable club barbecue in early April. We have acquired a new bus which is being refurbished under the hands-on management of Ged McNight and Mark Hesselwood. Movement of the launchpoint will no longer be heralded by dense clouds of diesel smoke. Graham Dixon has now taken the reins as president and Richard Walker is secretary. We have enthused potential glider pilots ranging from scouts to members of a local operatic society – a new way to reach the high notes?



T-21 and special effects at North Hill's open day. Run by Simon Leeson and helpers, it was a spectacular success

Stephanie Davies, Liam Hoddy and Simon Johnson of the Air Training Corps have joined our ranks under a scheme funded by the Geoffrey De Havilland Foundation. Angus Farrelly achieved solo flight and Arthur Docherty Silver height. At the time of writing the club is third in the Inter-club League. Cranwell is also preparing to man an RAFGSA stand and support a glider aerobatics display at the Waddington Air Show.

**Paul Skiera**

## Deeside (Aboyne)

COLIN Wight has returned to us as second instructor until the end of October. Marc Shulten, from Holland, is the new tug pilot. We were sorry to see Bryce Herkert return to the United States. He revitalised the Aberdeen University GC, and gained his Silver and BI rating. Richard Arke achieved 500km and Dave Holdsworth Silver height. Visitors from the South are enjoying wave and thermal flying. The week of June 11 saw wave flights to 10,000ft and 14,000ft. Six pilots are doing this year's Solo to Bronze course. Wave and mountain soaring championship bookings are going well.

**Sue Heard**

## Denbigh (Denbigh)

DENBIGH'S branch of Age Concern held a raffle during May, air experience flights being the prize. The lucky winner at 91 years old declared it was: "no sort of a prize a prize for older people". That did not stop grandmother Gladys Dyster from Abergele, at a mere 93 years: "I'm not nervous one bit. I am really looking forward to it. People think I'm potty, anyway, this probably confirms it!" she said, settling into the cockpit. Gladys completed three flights in all and promised to be back for more later in the year. The occasion was broadcast by HTV Wales and made all the local papers. Nice one, Gladys! Congratulations to: Keith Butterworth (solo); James Nicholls (re-soloing after a 30-year break); Geoff Royle (Bronze); John Watkinson (Bronze and Cross-country Endorsement); Martin Jones (Silver duration); and Mike Sanders and Steve Wright (SLMG rating).

**Martin Jones**

## Devon & Somerset (North Hill)

SEVERAL members, including Kay Alston and William Hope, have resoloed; Steve Bushell and Steve Westlake have Bronze; John Burrow and Phil Morrison are Assistant Instructors and Peter Stapleton is a Tuggie. On June 18, while much of the country sweltered in the blue, 15 or more North Hill pilots enjoyed gentle wave soaring to 8-10,000ft across the width of Devon and Somerset. One pilot reported zero sink and small pockets of lift four miles upwind of the coast into Lyme Bay! A new view of wave soaring. Next flight Deauville O/R?

**Phil Morrison**

## Dukeries (Gamston)

MAY'S ANNUAL dinner dance saw cups presented to: John Swannack for a remarkable height gain in excess of 7,500ft – not bad for a flat site off a winch launch; Mick Burrows for the most outstanding cross-country; Nick Ashton for achievement and Steve Simpson (chairman's cup). A tractor complete with grass cutter has been bought for the club relieving the workload on the local farmer and others who in the past kept the runways at a manageable length. Thanks go to Glen Barratt for running another successful flying week, the weather was unkind but the social activities made up for it.

**Dave Hall**

## East Sussex (Ringmer)

OUR IN-HOUSE magazine, *Grapevine*, has come to the end of its current run and we thank Ron Simpson for such a consistently excellent product over such a long period. We welcome Gerry Gair and Randall Williams as Basic Instructors; Graham Bowring has both Bronze legs; Sasha has gone solo. Nick Pearson's SF 27 is back from the workshop and many members had an opportunity to



First solos and instructors at Kent (from left): Bob Lloyd; Keith Knight (in glider); Peter Hambrow; Tudor Williams; Anne Ruglys and Tim Carlye. David Waldrop also soloed

sample the PW5 on loan to the club. Thanks to fellow fliers from Southdown, Lasham, and Kent for helping us celebrate the first Inter-club competition we have hosted for many years. A lovely day with a great atmosphere, it was made all the more enjoyable since the only person to complete a task was our novice.

**AWL**

## Essex (Ridgewell/North Weald)

THE CLUB flying week at Ridgewell went well after we gave a pair of ducks clearance to take off from a flooded area of the field which they had regarded as their own private airstrip. The BGA's Puchacz proved very popular, giving some members their first experience of flying in glass. Congratulations to Bob Cassels on completing Silver with a five-hour flight at Ridgewell. We wish Cathy Dellar well in her new role as club secretary.

**Peter Perry**

## Essex & Suffolk (Wormingford)

NOW IT has finally stopped raining perhaps we can get down to some serious flying. We have two new aircraft on site: Keiran Boost has bought a Discus and the club has added a Mistral C to its fleet, bringing our total to eight aircraft, four singles and four twins. Husband and wife Lynn and Neill Morley both soloed on consecutive days at the end of our first flying week. Congratulations to Pete Nicolls on his full instructor's rating.

**Steve Jones**

## Four Counties (Syerston)

THE CLUB'S mini-expedition to Milfield over the May Bank holiday weekend was enjoyable. It was a pleasant change and we were made very welcome. Back home, the weather during our Easter week was very wet but we managed to fly most days between showers. Two of our bursary cadets soloed at the end of the week: well done to them. The recent poor weather does mean that plenty of progress is being made on our new bus! Al Craggs now has two Bronze legs and is looking forward to flying P2 in the Duo Discus in the Gransden Regionals. We hosted the first meeting of the Inter-club League, with pilots from Dunstable, Cranwell, Hus Bos and Saltby.

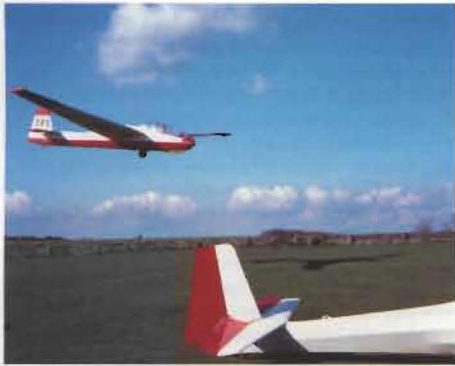
**Sue Armstrong**

## Herefordshire (Shobdon)

WE'RE STILL gliding here at Shobdon, albeit with only a tiny band of 20 or so pilots. Dewi Edwards went solo last



Prizewinners at Dukeries' dinner dance: Mick Burrows, John Swannack, Steve Simpson and Nick Ashton



Paul Croote sent Les Saker for his first solo at Mendip. Despite claims it was a toss-up who was more nervous, two flights later Les got a Bronze leg (Doug Mills)

month and we have a new syndicate Nimbus 3DT on the airfield. If you need to drop in one weekend, could you announce yourself during downwind on 123.5 MHz – the power boys will be grateful – use the grass or runway as you require, then clear to the rough edge, cheers.

Mike Dodd

### Highland (Easterton)

WE WELCOME Fulmar GC who have decided to move their operations to Easterton. We hope their move will strengthen and benefit both clubs. Angie Veitch ran a very successful course in early June when Ted Murphy and Martin Birse resoloed – congratulations to them both and to Andy Anderson for successfully completing his Assistant Instructor course. Our new hangar is reaching completion and has already had two Astirs in it despite not yet having any doors. Martin Knight has worked hard on our new website, [www.highglide.co.uk](http://www.highglide.co.uk) We have recently had some good weekends with thermals to 6,000ft and wave to above 12,000ft. Our next flying week will be August 5-13 with Enterprise-type tasks, so if you are venturing north do come and find us.

Teresa Tait

### Kent (Challock)

FIVE NEW solo pilots from the recent *ab initio* course run by Bob Lloyd and Tudor Williams are now on one of the regular Bronze C theory courses, which use Microsoft PowerPoint presentations and training by an interactive confuser. We always welcome visitors to these courses: we will be pleased to hear from you. In the summer, they run on Saturday evenings so valuable soaring time isn't missed – in the winter they tend to be over an entire weekend. Talking about soaring, Richard Schofield and Teddy Raw have Bronze legs while Brian Tansley has done his first 100km. One Sunday, lucky members were soaring an exceptionally scenic sea breeze front with wonderful views of sunshine on clouds and the English Channel. Isn't gliding magic!

Caroline Whitbread

### Lakes (Walney)

WE HAVE had a new addition to the private fleet, a DG 800B, with its own pop-up thermal. Heads turn when it takes off and climbs at 800ft/min. We have had good soaring in both wave and thermal and managed to fly every weekend so far. Some notable events: Ian Keay has gone solo, and we have recruited seven new members, the youngest being Robert Morris at 14.

Peter Seddon

### Lasham (Lasham)

We welcome Nicola Claiden as staff tug pilot, Gordon MacDonald as senior flying instructor and Jim Duthie and John Simmonds as seasonal flying instructors. Peter Mancini is our new winch driver. Reading University Students' Union have formed a gliding club with 30 members who will fly at Lasham, thanks to the efforts of Anna Wells. Despite bad weather, the traditional Easter

competition gave two flyable days. The 180km triangular task was won by Paul Kite and John Simmonds flying our Duo Discus 775. The Assigned Area Task – that foxed them! – was won by Chris Starkey in his ASW 20. A service will be held at Lasham parish church on September 17 at 09.30hrs to mark 50 years of flying at Lasham. Reasonable airspace restrictions for the period of the Farnborough Air Show have been agreed due to the work of Graham McAndrew.

Tony Segal

### Lincolnshire (Strubby)

ONCE AGAIN the British summer has played its usual tricks. Yesterday was always the best soaring day that you ever saw. We have a good crop of youngsters coming along. They have brought a fresh atmosphere to the club and we now have a marvellous blend of youth and experience. The Super Dimona demonstrator visited us recently and the sight of this pretty little motorglider lugging the K-7 skywards two-up was a sight to behold. Patricia Ridger has joined the ranks of Bls. Gerry Bloor has his first Bronze leg.

Dick Skerry

### Mendip (Halesland)

THE CLUB'S "pilot of the month" has to be Les Saker who followed his first solo with a Bronze leg on his third. The flight was a double first: he was the first pupil sent solo by instructor Paul Croote. Other achievers have been Derek Simpson (Bl Rating), George Lodge, who has completed his Silver, and Adrian Ruddle, who keeps flying Bronze legs. The Long Mynd expedition emptied our trailer park, although Dave Hatch ended up at Hus Bos. We have contacted all our previous CFLs and hope they will provide a unique photo opportunity at our 25th anniversary celebration.

Keith Simmons

### Midland (The Long Mynd)

SUMMER came to the Mynd on a Saturday: Liz Tusard and David Darcy flew Silver distances whilst at Minden Dominic Houghton soared to 30,000ft on his check flight. His next check was a rope break. At the Eastern Regionals Rose Johnson and Paul Stanley led the K-21 team which won the two-seater trophy. Sarah Butler and Colin Calderhead both flew and swam with the ducks (their tent was seriously flooded). Paul's confidence later extended to setting off on a 400km on the eve of the Duo's departure for Euroglide 2000. He didn't make it and the ensuing late-night retrieve completely fused the chairman's pacemaker. The resurfacing of our tracks continues and don't forget there is 30 per cent off our courses for members of BGA-affiliated clubs.

Roland Bailey

### Needwood Forest (Cross Hayes)

AROUND half the membership attended the AGM, with all committee places being filled and good news from the Inland Revenue. The field has been fertilised, a land drain repaired and our first visiting glider landed (from our Staffordshire neighbours, Seighford). We selected four new cadets to start in July from a shortlist of 14, with applicants from local schools. Our first flying week this year was a success; others are due in July and August.

Grant Williams

### Nene Valley (Upwood)

WE LOOK forward to the return of Martin Reynolds from the Falklands. The clubhouse now boasts a carpeted committee/briefing room, treasurer's office, storeroom and kitchen. We are also improving the sanitation system. The hangar, with an excellent system of overhead strip lighting, is now a first-class, all-year-round facility. Thanks to the grass-cutting efforts of Brian Palmer, our flying strip is in good shape. Our Friday flying sessions, for various groups of the public, have started well. We have firm bookings for the rest of the summer. Our task week is from July 29 to August 6. In



In spite of the difficult weather, the Eastern Regionals at Norfolk got four days. Spot the ducks! (Tess Whiting)

October, Taff Turner and Roger Morrisroe intend to carry out the guillotine modification, which proved to be so successful on the first winch, on the second.

John Pike

### Norfolk (Tibenham)

FORTY hopeful competitors arrived at Tibenham for the Eastern Regionals (see p37). Congratulations to John Wilton and Ollie Ward, winners of their respective classes, and thanks to the hard-working team who serviced the comp. We had an enjoyable task week over Easter, earlier than usual, finishing with our leg of the Inter-club League. Andy Smith and Peter Lancaster have gone solo. Peter also has a Bronze leg, as has Carl Barber. Two major improvements are the arrival of our second Robin, giving us excellent launch capability, and mains water. We can drink our mugs of tea and coffee down to the bottom without getting a mouthful of grit.

Bonnie Wade

### Oxford (RAF Weston on the Green)

IT WAS with some sadness that we said goodbye to Norman and Gillian Hedge, though by the third goodbye we were cheering up a bit, as they leave the club to enjoy a quiet retirement in the West Country only an hour's drive from the nearest gliding club. Pete Brooks presented Norman with a "home-blown" glass Pilatus (*shurely shome mishtake? – Ed*) in recognition of all the hard work he and Gill have put into the club, and on the understanding he can come back only if he doesn't rejoin the committee. The DG is now fully integrated into the club fleet and everybody appears to like flying it, even if they can't understand the Atari video game we seem to have in the front cockpit. And now people are stretching their wings, with Tony Hoskins and Simon Walker both zipping to Hus Bos for Silver distances.

Steve McCurdy

### Peterborough & Spalding (Crowland)

AFTER a wet May, June started with plenty of soaring. The club celebrated its 30th anniversary on June 2 with a well-attended hog roast: thanks to Joan and Annie for



Norman and Gillian Hedge with a small reminder of flying at Oxford GC – a glass model of a Pilatus

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spending all day cooking it and to Manny for making the spit. Congratulations on first solo to Bob Neal, to Gerry Pybus on gaining his PPL – we all look forward to him starting tugging – and Al (Big) Flintoft on converting to the Pawnee. We welcome a new junior member, Marcus Gale, who is making a promising start on his Duke of Edinburgh Award. June's open day was a great success with lots of good publicity from the local media – well done and thanks to all who made it possible. A flapped Vega has arrived on the airfield from Talgarth – its new owners are Paul Goulding and Adam Laws. The clubhouse work has been completed thanks to all those who worked tirelessly over countless weekends and evenings. We have replaced a dead dumper truck with a Land Rover which has proved a big hit with the cadets. There is now a brand new sign outside the club entrance so we shall not be hard to find.

**Pete Goulding**

#### Portsmouth Naval (Lee on Solent)

THE RECENT invasion of our airfield by 13 Spitfires and assorted flying boats led us to find pastures new. Successful club expeditions were undertaken to Yeovilton and Keevil. The first of our three *ab initio* courses saw the emergence of five new solo pilots. Our new canteen bus is now complete: many thanks to John Hale for all his efforts.

**Pete Smith**

#### Scottish Gliding Centre (Portmoak)

AFTER excellent weather at the start of the year, we have had somewhat mixed conditions in April and May. In spite of this, Adi Vongontard has become a BI, and several other people are close to completing instructing qualifications. Congratulations also to Guy Hall (Gold height and Silver duration), Andrew Bates (Bronze and Silver duration), Tim Sands (Silver height and duration), and Doug Tait (Bronze). Alex Rougvie and Ray Roberts (on his 16th birthday) have gone solo. After many years of service to the club in several different capacities, Hamish Witherspoon has retired, and we wish him well for the future. We are sad to report the death of Bill Stark.

**Neil Irving**

#### Shalbourne Soaring Society (Rivar Hill)

OUR CFI Liz Sparrow has been hitting the headlines again. After television coverage of our April open day, Liz appeared on the front page of the *Newbury Weekly News'* monthly magazine. We hope the publicity will help our plans to increase from 100 to 150 members over the next three years. We welcomed the National Coach, Simon Adlard, for a soaring course at the end of May. The weather was not very kind but we all managed flights in the BGA Discus and DG 500. There is another privately-owned Pegasus 101 on the site (and a third of it is mine!). Some cross-country flights have been achieved despite the poor weather, including 200km by Kay Draper which didn't please husband Dave who couldn't get away after three attempts. To avoid divorce, Dave now intends to get his own glider. Dave did get his own back by doing a 300km in seven hours on June 10 while the rest of us abandoned the task due to a 17kt headwind on the final leg. Keith Lovesy and Dave Morrow have completed Bronze and Jerry Pack has a BI Rating. There is some resistance to our application for occasional aerotow permission. We are sorry to report the death of Vern Adams (see obituaries, p59).

**Clive Harder**

#### Shenington (Shenington)

THE FLURRY of good weather has brought some achievements: Jane Jervis, Elaine Crowder, Roger Tyrrell and Roger Andrews completed the Cross-country Endorsement; Ian Thomas went solo; Simon Whittaker, Tim Parker and George Haye have been galloping through Bronze; Phil Strangward completed his Silver with five hours at Talgarth; while Jane Jervis and Roger Tyrrell flew Silver distances. Members are competing in



the local Inter-club, and various competitions. The BGA Soaring course was greatly enjoyed – thanks to Simon Adlard for all his hard work and enthusiasm. Plans continue for the task week in August (14-18). We are expecting our annual expedition from Bowland Forest in August. Midweek flying continues with both course members and visitors welcome to join us – call the office for details. See our news at [www.glidering-club.co.uk](http://www.glidering-club.co.uk) or <http://freespace.virgin.net/fisher/m/sg/>

**Tess Whiting**

### Shropshire Soaring Group (Sleep)

LIKE EVERYONE we have suffered from the recent poor weather at weekends with more local soaring than cross-countries, but we do have the advantage of operating from tarmac. Largely thanks to Colin Ratcliffe, we now have hitching posts on hard standing. The Chipmunk's new engine and propeller have improved serviceability and we plan more weekday flying. We welcome Paul Stanley and Chris Harris (both Midland GC) to the tug roster. In May Simon Adlard held a very successful BGA soaring week with three good flying days: on the Monday, the Duo Discus went round the 100km task three times. On Tuesday's 165km the going was patchy and, apart from Simon, even those who recognised the convergence zone failed to connect. Thursday and Friday were lecture days. Even the barbecue had to be held indoors. We welcomed visitors from Stafford during the week. Your scribe is now chairman and has moved from an Open Cirrus to an ASW 20L.

**Keith Field**

### Southampton University (Lee on Solent)

ANOTHER successful academic year has seen five new solo pilots, most of whom are well into their Bronze Badges. A summer trip is planned to the inter-university task week to gain cross-country experience.

**Pete Smith**

### Southdown (Parham)

THE MEREST hint of a decent forecast has produced a full turnout of the cross-country squad. Wednesday, June 7 yielded a crop of Diamond declarations from the ambitious. The less intrepid declared Lasham in search of the fabled mega rock cake. The CFI was not amused to record the shortest cross-country flight of his career, the direct result of your humble servant's efforts in the front seat. The Super Cub unexpectedly lost a pot but the BGA's Jim Hammerton has completely rebuilt the Pawnee and it is going strong. We continue to support local events like the Parham Steam Rally with glider displays, and gain useful publicity. Joan Snape recorded her first outlanding at Thakeham in a club K-13 while John Wilks is back in top cross-country form after a knee operation. Congratulations to Paul Barker, one of our youngest tug pilots, who has joined BA City Flyer. Also to Gez Hasluck on her first solo.

**Peter Holloway**

### South London Gliding Centre (Kenley)

OUR EASTER expedition to Sutton Bank was a washout, barring one day when Philip Skinner managed to go solo: congratulations. Appalling weather has seriously affected our launches, and like everyone else we are hoping for an improvement. Our annual charity day, however, was blessed with sunshine for a change and more than £3,000 was raised for Marie Curie Homes. Our newest recruit to the ranks of Assistant Instructor, Paul Hayward, certainly earned his wings that day. We have two new gliders on site: Alan Seear and Simon Smith have recently taken delivery of a Standard Cirrus and Colin Fretwell an Astir CS. Numerous members have taken and passed Bronze, one way to pass the time while watching the rain.

**Tricia Pearson**

### South Wales (Usk)

IMPROVEMENTS to the site continue with a new trailer park and a drainage project, to let us fly throughout the

year. We now boast a large, all-weather barbecue, which has let us extend the famous Usk barbecues into wet evenings and even to breakfasts. Ian Santos and Shane Dinsdale have Bronze Badges and Shane has his Cross-country Endorsement. Mike Dunlop has Diamond goal; Maureen and Rod Weaver are tug pilots.

**MPW**

### Staffordshire (Seighford)

THE CLUB'S open days in early May were a success, resulting in many new members. Thanks to Chris Jones for his sterling PR work. The display in Stafford Guildhall resulted in a great deal of interest for our next open days (August 27 and 28). The next event takes place on Saturday August 12 in Crewe. Thanks to tugmaster Roger Bostock the training programme is well under way; soon we may have more tuggies than winch drivers! The last few weeks have seen better conditions following the rather indifferent weather of early May (rain and more rain). Paul Hodgetts completed Silver with a flight of over five hours. He has also completed a 100km

(Std Cirrus), as has Paul Cooper (Sport Vega), and Simon Watson (Kestrel). Nick Rolfe has his Bronze Badge. Graham Burton has his Cross-country Endorsement. Congratulations to Graham Bowes and Mark Burton on their BI Ratings. Thanks to Peter Wills for supervising Friday flying. CFG (K-13) is flying following a complete rebuild by Ian Davies. The K-8 (JQJ) is looking well following restoration work on the fuselage. Bob Fraser continues to organise the highly successful Air Experience evenings. Following a five-week course presented by Kevin Edmunds, a number of members successfully obtained their R/T Licence.

**Paul (Barney) Crump**

### Stratford on Avon (Snitterfield)

CONGRATULATIONS to Richard Waring, Liz Pickett, Nick Jaffray and Peter Lines on solos, plus Humphrey Yorke on resoloing some 20 years after Long Marston days. Courses and evening bookings look healthy with separate weeks for club flying. Lee Ingram now has an Assistant Instructor rating. Phil Pickett is full-time course instructor, with Martin Greenwood and Barry Monslow on the winches. We have three fully-serviceable winches and plan to sell one of the diesel winches, either of them capable of launching to heights comparable to our SkyLaunch in most conditions. The two showers are installed, enabling course students and members to stay overnight in the bunkhouse caravan, with catering resumed by Mary Benton. A new licence negotiated with our landlord Richard Hobbs gives us full use of the airfield plus a 50 per cent reduction in sheep.

**Harry Williams**

### Surrey & Hants (Lasham)

FLEET utilisation this year has started well, attributed mainly to the growing experience of existing members and a good take-up of unlimited flying deals. Another Grob 102 was acquired in late 1999 and has been enthusiastically flown on every opportunity. We have also taken delivery of a Discus B. Yours truly flew it on the first official club ballot day, won fair and square! (OK, the chairman flew the day before but that doesn't count: it was a test flight.) The fleet now stands at: one Ventus, DG 300, DG 101 and Junior; two Grobs; two K-8s and three Discuses. We are also decking out all our gliders in our new logo and numbers SH2 – SH9 so when you next see a S&H glider in the air it's: "SH you know who!" Congratulations to Michael Rubin, Mike Fordham and Larry Mark on their Silver distances.

**John Simmonds**

### The Soaring Centre (Husbands Bosworth)

THE AIRFIELD has finally dried out after the exceedingly damp spring, and the soaring season is now under way. We are running courses till October – contact the office if you are interested. The motorglider has been very busy

doing field landing and navigation checks. Our Duo Discus is back and doing lots of cross-country flights. We have a new, interesting-looking aeroplane: Phil Mark's recently-acquired Wilga. Dave Booth did the first 500km from the club this year on June 10. Gordon Ward, Ashley Collins and Martin Townsend have soloed. Roger Castle-Smith has completed Bronze, and Keith Hampson Silver distance. Father and son Alan and James Hiley, have soloed and done five hours respectively. James also has his Cross-country Endorsement. The latest newsletter *Hot Air & Thermals* is out and can also be seen at [www.thesoaringcentre.co.uk](http://www.thesoaringcentre.co.uk) Many thanks to Lindsey Astle, Alan Fretwell and Norman James for organising a very successful evening of dual aerotow training. We are doing a special membership deal for a limited period: if you are interested, please ask the office. Good luck to Paul and Stephen Crabb in the European Gliding Championships, to Jenny Leacroft in the Junior Nationals, and all club pilots in their soaring endeavours this summer.

**Sibhan Hindley**

### Trent Valley (Kirton in Lindsey)

GORDON Bowes has a Cross-country Diploma, Simon Grant Silver height and distance and Geoff Davey Silver duration. Bronze legs go to Paul Daubany and Richard Gray. Andrew Turk has a Cross-country Endorsement and Barry Pridgen has soloed. Carole Baxter and Bob Kmita ran a successful flying week with many hours and some cross-country flights achieved in spite of the indifferent weather. We have a new tractor for grass cutting so if the season does not improve we can play bowls at the launchpoint.

**John Kitchen**

### Ulster (Bellarena)

AN INTRIGUING mystery: wonderful archival material including 600ft of 16mm cine film, in two sealed canisters, of the club's operations off Downhill and Benone Strands nearly 70 years ago, together with contemporary year books and other early 1930s publications, were quietly left in three big boxes on Jim Lamb's front doorstep recently. The priceless, undamaged nitrate film is being transferred to video for the membership to view. Our two tugs towing the K-13 and Capstan, followed by the Venture, K-14, DG 400M and Turbo Discus under power for Derry's Battle of the Atlantic commemoration in early May were such a hit that we repeated the flypast, unchanged, at Derry's annual air show. Selection of two cadets from a short-listed local six for free training to solo was made in May and the winners are now well embarked. Many more youngsters will be exposed to gliding in late July: we are contracted to fly 60 over four days from a youth camp taking place at Derry's Magee College. Mike McSorley flew Silver distance in May and Stephen Johnson completed his Bronze. John Lavery, meanwhile, on a trip to Oz for a family wedding managed to visit four sites, Benalla and Stonefield in Victoria and Waikerie and Gawler in SA. His wife, Pat, was understanding.

**Bob Rodwell**

### Vale of White Horse (Sandhill Farm)

AS HAS become the custom over the last few years we held "Ed's Week" in late May, when Ed Foggin opened the club for the entire week. We managed to fly three days out of the five, with a small amount of cross-country flying being done. We are holding two task weekends this summer, one in June and one in July, and plan a barbecue for at least one of them. Although it has been rather a quiet summer for us so far, we are at least pleased to note that flying is up on this time last year.

**Graham Turner**

### Vectis (Bembridge)

EASTER did not produce the hoped-for weather for long flights, but we did get airborne. New syndicate members took the opportunity to fly their toys. Exceptionally wet

# Club news

weather disrupted training and ratings renewals. Several members visited Lee on Solent in May, which provided them with soaring and experience of another site. The best day so far came just before the late May holiday: 17 launches and nine flights of over one hour were made. Peter Tuppens and Terry McKinley stayed airborne for more than three hours; three others flew for more than two hours. The next weekend was the inevitable washout. Flying was possible only on Monday. The Sutton Bank trip was also washed out: the only long flight was Mike Squibb's. June saw a long-awaited improvement, with flying until dusk most weekends and two-seaters at last able to use the grass runway regularly.  
**Peter Seago**

## Welland (Lyveden)

WITH THE sun shining on our May open day we were a little disappointed by the numbers who actually turned up. However, we do now have a number of new members who were perhaps fooled into thinking every flight can be a soaring one. Our two new BIs, Phil Edgar and Terry Kendall-Tory, will no doubt claim the upturn in membership is entirely due to their charm! Well done to Dave Chisholm, who soloed during the May course week, when much repair work to the field was also done. With the flying season finally under way (we hope), cross-country successes are starting to appear. Paul Cronk hopes to have achieved 50km, despite not having quite reached Hinton, and Phil Edgar hopes for his 100km diploma, photographs permitting. We held a very successful games evening when social member Judith managed to out-skittle even the most competitive pilots. We have now taken to holding barbecues at the end of Sunday flying, at which tall tales can be exchanged!

**Jane Cooper**

## Wolds (Pocklington)

The Club Class Nationals were a great success with everyone enjoying some excellent flying weather and Yorkshire hospitality (see also p46). Bursary member Robert Kendal has soloed at the age of 16. We are weighing up the options for a new glider but apparently we all need to spend more in the bar to pay for it.  
**Ged McCann**

## Wrekin (Cosford)

THE CLUB hosted a successful Gliding Challenge, raising £3,000 for the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. A large additional area of the airfield has been graded to ensure flying is not interrupted during prolonged wet spells, offering the potential for all-year glider and power operations. April's weather affected the evening training programme and cross-country flying. We hope to regain momentum during the summer. The club Discus, R12, has been exchanged for 87. Well done to Dennis Maddocks on his Assistant Instructor rating.  
**Sheila Russon**

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*Martin Carolan*

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# Obituaries

## Wyvern (Upavon)

Over the Easter weekend we were visited by Lee on Solent. Several of their pilots took advantage of good conditions to convert to our LS-4 and our instructors were quite taken with Tony World's ASW 27. Sadly, the weather didn't stay good, and some of the *ab initio* courses lost days. In May, the club cross-country task week turned into a local soaring week, although Werner Stroud, keen to show off his Silver skills gained in Australia, did manage 20km to Keevil! More recently things have improved, with three first solos, a resolo after 20 years, and conversions within the club fleet. Several weekend days have been good enough for 100 to 200km tasks and the CFI has led by example with the first field landing of the year. We are all hoping for a productive summer.

Gavin Deane

## York Gliding Centre (Rufforth)

THE JUNIOR is now in full use, and was worth the long wait. The Inter-club League was valuable in getting pilots to go a little further afield on more marginal cross-country days. Even though the weather has not given us many good days, some pilots have flown tasks over 300km. Despite a crop of Bronze legs, it would have been nice to see more badge claims from our pilots. Visitor flights have continue to contribute significantly to our finances. Although our two-seat tug has been on hire to Staffordshire GC, the two Pawnees have kept our launch rate going very well, particularly on good soaring days. We are saving up to try to pay for a tarred parking area to complete the high-quality access surface for members and visitors alike.

Mike Cohler

## Yorkshire (Sutton Bank)

CONGRATULATIONS to: John Russell (his Bronze completed in April and Silver height in May); Paul Carter (solo); Steve Sanderson (Silver distance); David Bradley (Bronze) and Tom Goodall (Gold height). We are in the lead after three rounds of the Yorkshire Inter-club League; well done to the team thus far and good luck to those flying at Pocklington and Dishforth. We had our share of wave in June. The best flight must have been Paul Foster and Derek Taylor in the Nimbus – more than 600km on June 11. Andy Wright and team are busy organising the Northern Regionals (see results in next issue). Our task week starts on August 12 – we usually get the best weather of the year and manage at least 3,000km. All welcome. The first two courses this year were full – please contact the office if you would like to join us on one.

Marian Stanley



Best-selling romantic novelist Barbara Cartland, who died this spring, was a supporter of gliding in its early days, as this photograph from a display at Brooklands Museum in Surrey shows. But can you tell us more about this glider?

## Vern Adams – Shalbourne Soaring Society

IT IS WITH regret that we report the death of one of our oldest members, Vern Adams (1915-2000). He first took to the air in 1935 and was taught to fly in primaries by Amy Johnson at Sutton Bank. He had been a member at London GC before he joined Shalbourne. I always remember his perfect spot landings in the K-8 and his enthusiastic help at the launchpoint. He gave up gliding about two years ago, but remained a member and will be missed.

Clive Harder

## George Huntley – 616 Volunteer Gliding School



SQN LDR George E Huntley MBE RAFVR(T) Rtd (1933-2000) passed away peacefully on May 18 after losing his battle against leukemia. A member of the Air Cadets gliding movement for over 30 years, he gained A and B Certificates in 1965, and was Commanding Officer of 616 VGS for 12 years (from 1977-1989). In 1978 he had to convert the school from Kirby Cadets and Sedbergh T-21Bs to the Venture – and select his "ten best men" to remain from more than 25. He deplored the task of saying goodbye to many hard-working people, but he did it, then set about convincing the powers-that-be of the weaknesses of such a limited staff level.

Over the next 11 years the VGS went from strength to strength, culminating in performance

awards. He was awarded the MBE in recognition of outstanding services shortly before retiring in 1989. A devoted family man, he leaves his beloved wife Brenda, three daughters, ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He will be sadly missed by all who knew this gentleman of Air Cadets Gliding.

Alan R Wyse, CFI 616 VGS

## Rex Vinson

– Cornish Gliding & Flying Club, Midland GC REX VINSON (1935-2000), until his illness, was an enthusiastic member of, and syndicate partner at, two gliding clubs. Both were represented at his funeral. John Shaw spoke the moving Eulogy. Rex is survived by his wife, Lynne.

Rex had a great love of "wooden oldies," particularly the Cornish T-21, in which he gave a memorable, scenic experience to first-time flyers. A writer, he had published a number of science fiction novels and applied his talents to edit the revived club magazine and, as resident cartoonist, gently lampooned our aeronautical foibles.

He was casual in dress and manner, yet eclectic in interests and highly organised in what was important to him (mostly ideas).

A photograph of him was passed around at the funeral: lying on his back in his garden, eyes closed, waving. The caption read: "See you later!" And perhaps (to borrow from Pilot Officer John Magee) Rex has once again "...trod the high untrespassed sanctity of space ... Put out [his] hand and touched the face of God."

Mike Sheedy

## British Gliding Association Certificates

No	Pilot	Club	Date	No	Pilot	Club	Date	No	Pilot	Club	Date
<b>DIAMOND BADGE</b>				<b>GOLD BADGE</b>				<b>SILVER BADGE</b>			
574	Brown, Anthony	Scottish GC	9/6/99	2117	John Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)	9/2/00	10712	James Walters	Aquila	1/8/00
575	Perkins, Andrew	Booker (Omarama)	13/1/00	2118	David Hayes	Yorkshire (Omarama)	12/2/00	10713	Roger Cuthbert	Borders	11/3/00
576	John Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)		2119	Derek Westwood	Soaring Ctr (Benalla)	18/2/00	10714	Richard Dance	Derby & Lancs	4/3/00
				2120	Sunay Shah	Bicester (Long Mynd)	14/3/00	10715	Malgorzata Drecka	Lasham	8/1/00
<b>Diamond distance</b>				<b>Gold distance</b>				10716 Christopher Osgood Bristol & Glos 9/3/00			
1-816	Lyn Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)	17/2/00	John Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)	9/2/00	10717	Paul Hodgetts	Staffs	16/4/00	
1-817	John Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)	9/2/00	Ray Parkin	Trent V (Narromine)	23/11/99	10718	Neville Wilson	Derby & Lancs	15/3/00	
1-818	Ralph Johnson	S'down (Tocumwal)	15/1/00	Malgorzata Drecka	Lasham (Benalla)	8/1/00	10719	James Nethercott	Ulster	9/4/00	
<b>Diamond goal</b>				10720 Robert Boughey Burn 1/5/00				10721 Philip Strangward Sherington 30/4/00			
2-2715	Lyn Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)	31/1/00	William Emery	York (Spain)	21/7/99	10722	T Edmunds	Fenland	16/4/00	
2-2716	John Martindale	Lakes (Benalla)	9/2/00	Alun Jenkins	Booker	16/6/99	10723	Frederick R Marks	Devon & Somerset	4/3/00	
2-2717	Ray Parkin	Trent V (Narromine)	23/11/99	<b>Gold height</b>				10724 Michael Rubin Lasham 14/5/00			
2-2718	Malgorzata Drecka	Lasham (Benalla)	8/1/00	Neil Irving	Scottish GC	22/1/00	10725	George Phillips	Heron	30/4/00	
2-2719	David Hayes	Yorkshire (Omarama)	12/2/00	Pete Benn	Lasham (Omarama)	27/2/00	10726	David Tew	Cambridge	16/5/00	
2-2720	William Emery	York (Spain)	21/7/99	Derek Westwood	Soaring Ctr (Benalla)	18/2/00	10727	George Lodge	Mendip	30/4/00	
<b>Diamond height</b>				10727 Guy Hall Scottish GC 11/3/00				<b>UK CROSS-COUNTRY DIPLOMA</b>			
3-1514	David Hayes	Yorkshire (Omarama)	12/2/00	Sunay Shah	Bicester (Long Mynd)	14/3/00	Pt 1	Roger Cuthbert	Borders	11/3/00	
3-1515	Jack Wilson	Expatriate (Minden)	22/2/00	Gordon Pledgers	Borders	13/5/00	Pts1&2	Paul Taverner	Norfolk	16/4/00	
								Pt 1	Roy Jones	Lakes	26/3/00
								Pt 1	Gordon Bowes	Trent Valley	23/4/00
								Pt 1	Debbie Thomas	Cambridge Uni	29/4/00

## Pete Stratten offers advice on the split-second decisions instructors have to take

"IF WE CUT the instructional flights out of the statistics, the overall gliding accident rate would reduce dramatically." That recent comment by a BGA Regional Safety Officer is probably true, but is of course not the solution. Training accidents occur occasionally in any sport. The responsibility of keeping those occasional accidents in our sport to a minimum falls on us all – and, in particular, on instructors.

### Time lag

Teaching people to fly is potentially more hazardous than just flying solo. There is inevitably a time lag between realising that your pupil has got it wrong and your prompt or take-over. This point is emphasised during all aspects of BGA instructor training. The timing of a prompt is critical: you need to leave enough time to take over if your indirect – or, more likely, direct – prompts don't get the intended result! Most instructing accidents occur in the landing phase.

### Responsibility

Any instruction involves a gradual handing over of decision-making responsibility to the student. In the early days a student may only be expected to, say, hold the correct attitude and maintain wings level. But many flights later that same student will be expected to deal with all phases of the flight, including potential difficulties, the instructor will feel redundant and launch another new solo pilot. However, it's the phase some way

# I have control

**"Fairly early during the approach, the instructor under test (flying left handed in a T-21) induced a 'pilot induced oscillation' as he confused the spoiler lever and control column. By the time the coaching instructor took control, the trainee had moved from being uncomfortable with the situation to near panic – the coach was unable to fully take control before the glider landed very heavily."**

**"To 'test' the student as part of the winch launch failure training she had experienced that day, the instructor pulled the release at approximately 75ft. The student lowered the nose, but opened full airbrake. The glider landed very heavily, damaging the instructor's back."**

**"The flight ended when the role-playing coaching instructor induced a ballooned landing to test the trainee instructor. The trainee instructor failed to react correctly despite a prompt from the coach. Too late now for corrective action by the coach, the K-13 landed heavily, damaging the nose skid."**

back, before the student has really cracked it, that often appears in the accident stats. We have to give the student a certain amount of rope to make mistakes and learn, but not enough to hang both the glider's occupants! The instructor is always responsible for the safe conduct of the flight. Regardless of P2's abilities, the buck stops with P1.

### Take control in time

A common thread in instructing accidents is a failure by the instructor to take control in time. However, the reasons for this vary. Perhaps the instructor's hands and feet weren't close enough to the controls. Perhaps a potential problem went unrecognised until too late. The instructor might have been over confident of the student's ability

to cope – or even have had "cockpit gradient" difficulties (instructor hesitancy to question the decisions of an apparently authoritative P2). Whatever the P2's flying experience or status, both pilots need to be clear that P1 will take control if he or she feels it necessary.

- Regardless of P2's experience, you should always be guarding the flying controls and air-brake lever. Never relax just because he or she got it right last time – airbrakes, for example, can be whipped open just as quickly as the stick can be moved fore and aft.
- You should never let a situation develop until it is close to the limit of your own capability.
- You should always assume the student will probably get it wrong – you owe it to him or her,

## Salutary Soaring

I, LIKE MANY others, have read with incredulity about pilots who, recovering from a reduced-g situation, have simply dived the glider into the ground. It sounds almost impossible to believe, doesn't it? That's what I thought – until recently.

During a routine check flight with an early solo pilot, I asked him to demonstrate a stall. This was obviously an exercise he had done previously without any problem. The controls were guarded by me around the grip of the control column. This positioning proved critical to what followed.

The first stall he did was a mushing stall. I then asked him to do a nose-drop stall. By this time we were at about 850ft. He put the glider into a nose-up attitude and the glider duly stalled. The nose dropped as anticipated. What happened next, however, was less expected.

The nose continued to drop so violently that the negative g was very high. Despite having my hand around the control column, I ended up out of my seat, hands forced against the canopy.

It took a fraction of a second for my brain to overcome the unexpected attitude. By this time, the glider had gone beyond the vertical and things were becoming very interesting! I didn't

have time to check the instruments but I would estimate the following: beyond vertical dive, 100kts and 400ft.

I said: "I have control," even though my hand had not quite reached the stick. At this point, the ground rush was tremendous. I wasn't sure whether there was sufficient time to make a recovery. The P2 deployed the airbrakes – which although not what you would ideally do at speed helped to slow our rapid descent. I managed to effect a recovery and we made a safe landing. I am sure that this P2 on his own would not have reacted in time to recover from the dive.

Needless to say, a careful debrief followed. The P2 said he had known the glider was getting steeper and steeper but had been "waiting for something to happen". Upon further questioning he explained that on a spin recovery, he moves the stick forward until the spinning stopped and was waiting for something in the stall recovery. He said he realised this wasn't going to happen but by the time he knew things were wrong, I had taken over.

We were flying a K-7 and began the exercise at about 850ft. If we had been either lower or in

glass, I don't think we would have survived.

Many such incidents in the past have resulted in fatalities leaving us to ponder the cause for the dive into the ground. Sensitivity to reduced g was always thought to be the cause. Maybe we have found another reason – simple confusion by the pilot expecting something to happen and by the time he realises his error it is too late? Two lessons can be learned:

Firstly, instructors need to guard the control column low down and not around the grip of the control column. The usual place is useless in this situation. I know this seems hard to believe, but trust me! Secondly, even with pilots who are familiar with stalls, the unexpected can happen.

If you are not 100 per cent certain of stall/spin/spiral dive recoveries, speak to your instructors. For instructors – are you really sure your pupils are confident with the appropriate recoveries?

If this account helps prevent another of these bizarre diving accidents then our experience will have been worth the heart-stopping moments.

*David Urpeth, CFI, Dukeries GC*

**P2's comments:** On being asked to do the second stall, I had in mind to be more positive in my actions and pull back on the controls more sharply and recover more rapidly. The need to make more vigorous movements was perhaps a misunderstanding but was in my mind. Having pulled the nose up and stalled the glider, I pushed the controls firmly forward. At this time, having

as well as yourself, to be ready to take control in time. Instructors should always consider before the event how they would deal with a manoeuvre that is mishandled by the P2.

- If you're a CFI, be careful which instructors fly with 'difficult' students, and always be on the lookout for the one who lets students go that bit too far before taking control.

- All instructors should ensure that the P2 understands how to co-operate when the instructor takes control.

### If in doubt...

The majority of gliding training takes place without incident. However, it may be that the normality of incident-free training can lead the unwary instructor up the path of complacency and potential problems. All of us need to keep alert, particularly near the ground. If you believe you have never had a problem with being slightly behind the student (in more ways than one), then your clear conscience is probably a sign of a bad memory. The advice given in the *BGA Instructors Manual* is unambiguous: "if there is any doubt whether you should take control, then there is no doubt – take control".

**"During a winch launch, with the student handling the glider, the launch failed at about 80ft with the glider in a steep nose-up attitude. The nose pitched down, the glider rolled uncommanded to the left and struck the ground yawing to the left. The glider was seriously damaged, but both pilots walked away."**

lost sight of the horizon I suspect I was looking into the cockpit and focusing on the ASI. The next second I was conscious of holding the control well forward and seeing the ground coming up and aware that we were vertical and feeling that I should do something quick. I opened the air brakes, and as I was thinking I must pull back, my instructor said: "I have control" and I relaxed the pressure on the control and followed him through as he pulled back and recovered the dive. Thanks, Dave. I like to think that I would have pulled out in time but the negative g and the speed of finding myself vertical had temporarily confused me sufficiently to prevent me from making the obvious reaction of pulling back on the controls.

I think, that by not looking ahead as I pushed the control too far and rapidly forward, I was not aware of the horizon and, with the continuous falling sensation, I had no indication of when to pull back on the controls. I waited a second or so too long with near-disastrous consequences. *David Bullock, National Coach (Instructing) adds: don't guard the control column in front of where the hand grip is or the chances are that the student will catch you out and you will miss the stick when you need it. Instead, guard it as Dave Urpeth says, further down – though not so far down that you risk jamming your fingers in the mechanism. And before you do stalling or spinning checks, remember to make sure your straps are tight.*

## Accident/incident summaries by Dave Wright

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	BGA No	Damage	DATE Time	Place	PILOT(S) Age	Injury	P1 Hours
35	Ventus B	—	None	Feb-00	Incident Report	41	None	1,669
After completing C of A checks, including control deflection and u/c cycling checks, the pilot flew his glider. He noticed a slight restriction of aileron, which he thought was a binding seal or tape. However, on lowering the u/c the stick was forced fully left then released as the gear locked down. A loose ferrite block was found in the control rods.								
36	K-13	2739	Minor	13-Feb-00	North Hill	47	None	1,604 1,215
During an instructor refresher course P2, below an ideal circuit height, flew a safe final turn and, with a number of vehicles moving across the field, landed in a rough, downhill, part of the field. During the ground run the left lower airbrake contacted the ground and was damaged.								
37	Discus	4360	Substantial	05-Mar-00 1215	Sutton Bank	46	None	353
The pilot realised he could not make it back to the airfield due to strong sink and decided, "possibly too late," to land in a field he had already selected. Still in sink he made a quick S turn and landed. A wingtip caught on the ground and groundlooped. The nose rose up and hit just before the wheel and then the tail, which was broken off.								
38	K-21	2588	Minor	11-Mar-00 1203	Tibenham	62	None	9
During the early stages of the solo winch launch the rear canopy flew open and smashed. The pilot found he could maintain control and had sufficient height to fly a circuit and land safely. The rear canopy pins had not been fully locked and he had not pushed up on the frame.								
39	SF 27A	3531	Substantial	04-Mar-00 1315	Ditchling	50	None	65
The pilot was soaring the South Downs in deteriorating conditions. Starting to get low, he selected a field then decided to fly away from it and try the ridge again. He found only strong sink and picked the only (poor) alternative field. During the final turn he dropped a wing and recovered, just rounding out before a very heavy landing.								
40	Super Dimona motorglider	G-BYRL	None	12-Mar-00 1640	Husbands Bosworth	52	None	1,185 —
Taxying back to the launch point the pilot kept the motorglider away from the launch area by running along the left side of the perimeter track. Finding the aircraft was reluctant to turn right he noticed the left tip was across the boundary fence. He shut down and found the winglet had caught on the barbed wire fence.								
41	K-7	3925	Minor	27-Mar-00 1130	Blenheim (Jamaica)	34 63	None	666 0
At about 250ft on the winch launch P1 pulled a simulated cable brake on the very early solo P2 who lowered the nose then started a slow turn to the left. P1 saw that this was not the correct way to turn so took control and turned to land downwind. He gave control to P2 who failed to use the airbrakes correctly and the glider ran downhill into a car.								
42	DG 800B motorglider	G-MSIX	Minor	06-Apr-00 1700	Dunstable	69	None	1,086
While landing the motorglider in longer grass at the edge of the airfield the starboard small wing wheel was torn off. Further information from the club is awaited.								
43	Pegase	3578	Substantial	22-Mar-00 1615	North Hill	45	None	30
The pilot found the initial winch launch slow and failed to climb. He finally decided to release and fully opened the airbrakes. The glider dropped heavily onto the ground and bounced about 5ft back into the air before striking it again, collapsing the undercarriage.								
44	DG 300	—	None	Feb-00	Incident Report	56	None	500
After a local soaring flight the pilot found that he could not lock the gear down and the undercarriage retracted upon landing on the grass. The lock was prevented by displacement of the metal guide, which had been fitted to ensure a more reliable gear lock. Dismantling the mechanism showed up a poor previous repair.								
45	K-18	2973	Minor	26-Mar-00 1035	Parham	68	None	10
The early solo pilot was carrying out a solo simulated field landing across the normal landing run as briefed by an instructor. The pilot misjudged the circuit and was too high and fast and as a result overshot the airfield, bouncing into the adjacent field, which damaged the fuselage.								
46	K-23	2996	Minor	25-Mar-00	Dunstable	42	None	14
The early solo pilot was flying in turbulent, strong lift conditions near to cloudbase, which was also near to the base of controlled airspace. He pushed forward to move out of strong lift and, under negative g, moved up in his straps until his head contacted the canopy, which fractured at a glued previous repair point.								
47	Stemme S10 motorglider	G-LINA	Minor	08-Apr-00 1530	Talgarth	—	None	—
The visiting motorglider was attempting to take off from the gliding site. The question of take-off performance was raised with the pilot but said to be adequate. The full length was not used and acceleration was slow until, about 100m from the end, it struck soft ground and a bump and the prop hit the ground. The take-off was aborted.								
48	K-13	3163	Minor	05-Apr-00 1000	Lasham	—	None	4,000 6
The early solo pilot was being checked out in crosswind conditions when he rounded out too high and lost flying speed. P1 took over and closed the brakes but could not compensate for drift as P1's leg was "jammed on the panel" locking the rudder. As a result the glider landed with drift and damaged the nose skid.								
49	K-13	2984	Minor	10-Apr-00 1405	Lasham	66	None	16
After a two-hour flight the pilot returned to the airfield. He used the airbrakes to lose height quickly in preparation for landing but misjudged this and found himself too low on the downwind leg. He attempted to reach the airfield but hit a noticeboard on the boundary with the underside of a wing.								
50	T-21B	3292	Minor	08-Apr-00 1628	Snitterfield	38 62	None	906 300
The experienced pilot was taking dual familiarisation flights in the left-hand seat of the vintage glider that had one, centrally placed airbrake lever. During his second approach he experienced difficulty flying with his left hand. He mistakenly raised the nose then "corrected" by moving the spoiler, then pushed the glider into the ground.								

## Accident/incident summaries (continued from page 61)

AIRCRAFT Ref No	Type	BGA No	Damage	DATE Time	Place	PILOT(S) Age	Injury	P1 Hours
51	K-21	3848	Substantial	16-Apr-00 1315	North Hill	62 47	None None	1,200 0
<p>This was the third of a series of flights over which the student showed a steady improvement. After a good circuit and approach P2 rounded out a little quickly and levelled out too high. As he started to close the brakes P1 advised they should be left open. However, P2 pushed the stick forward and the glider hit the ground before P1 could react.</p>								
52	Skylark 3G	1015	Write off	16-Apr-00 1607	Melton Mowbray	43	Minor	256
<p>After a late field selection in an area of undulating terrain the experienced, but out of practice, pilot approached the upward sloping field with full airbrake. On finals the airbrake lever slipped out of his hand and while attempting to close the brakes he failed to round out properly on the upslope and the heavy landing destroyed the glider.</p>								
53	Bocian	4090	Substantial	24-Apr-00 1205	The Park	59 42	None None	1,000 350
<p>Two instructors were flying the two-seater in the strong crosswind conditions. The glider flew a normal base leg then lined up for a landing into wind, across the field. The approach was started too close and too fast and directly in line with the launch point. The glider ran on into a parked tractor and a caravan.</p>								
54	Scud 2	231	Minor	30-Apr-00 1245	RAF Halton	69	None	3,000
<p>This was the first test flight of the refurbished vintage glider. The winch was warmed up for about five minutes and the launch commenced. After a smooth take up and initial launch the winch lost power while the glider was about 15ft up. The pilot attempted to lower the nose but could not and the glider sank into the ground at low forward speed.</p>								
55	K-21	2764	Minor	08-May-00 1430	Long Mynd	54 45	None None	3594
<p>In order to maximise the winch launch height the longest possible run was selected, launching from part of the airfield not normally landed on. During the landing run the glider hit a half-buried rock which damaged the fuselage.</p>								
56	LS-8	4688	Minor	01-Apr-00 1640	RAF Marham	52	None	206
<p>After soaring to cloudbase the pilot encountered a large area of rain so decided to return quickly, especially after hearing lightning crackling on the radio. "Thoroughly distracted" the pilot omitted the pre-landing checks and landed with the wheel up on the concrete runway.</p>								
57	K-7	1626	Minor	04-May-00 1400	Perranporth	73 66	None None	1,825 19
<p>The glider had just become airborne from a grass strip alongside the runway when the cable slackened so P2 released and lowered the nose to land ahead. He made a slight correction to the left to avoid the 20in tall crop in the adjacent field but as the glider landed one wingtip caught in it and a groundloop followed.</p>								
58	Std Cirrus	4459	Minor	29-Apr-00 1607	Lasham	64	None	910
<p>While returning from a cross-country flight the pilot misjudged his final glide and made a field landing 1km short of the airfield. The glider stopped very quickly in the heavy cropped, soft field and the wing fittings and fuselage were damaged.</p>								
59	DG 101	3139	Minor	01-May-00 1555	Hatherden	53	None	107
<p>During a cross-country flight the pilot had to make a field landing. He chose a long, ploughed field and landed into wind. After a normal approach the glider was fully held off until it stalled in from about 2ft, touching tail first. Deceleration was very rapid as the wheel sunk into the soft ground, which was full of flints that scored the fuselage.</p>								
60	K-13 (two)	-	Minor	May-00	Incident Report	20	Minor	
<p>The glider was being towed back to the hangar by a tractor. The driver stopped just behind another glider and the cable was about to be released when his foot slipped off the clutch. The glider lurched forward, hitting a member of the ground crew before swinging into the rudder of the other glider.</p>								
61	Duo Discus	4661	Substantial	01-May-00 1400	Shenington	54 40	None None	999 15
<p>Conditions deteriorated during a training cross-country flight so P1 elected to land at a nearby airfield. Following the circuit flown by another glider, he chose a grass area alongside the other glider. During the approach P2 (in front seat) commented on a fence ahead. The glider cleared the one P1 saw but not the other one P2 had seen.</p>								
62	SHK1	1837	Minor	19-Feb-00	Parham	38	None	41
<p>While soaring the local ridge the lift became weak and the pilot had to make a field landing. During the landing the tailplane and undercarriage were damaged.</p>								
63	SF 34	3325	Substantial	20-May-00 1402	Nympsfield (near)	48	None None	3,841 4.5
<p>On recovery from the fifth spin of the flight, at 110kts and about 3g with a small amount of rudder, there was a large bang followed by severe oscillations. This stopped at 80kts and the glider was flown gently to a safe landing. The rear fuselage side had failed, greatly reducing the torsional stiffness. (Investigation continues.)</p>								
64	K-13	2405	Substantial	13-May-00 1645	Wormingford	47 37	None None	358 0
<p>P2 found that the intended landing area was obstructed, and moved to the left. With brakes fully open the student, weaving and getting low, found they could not stop the glider drifting towards crops. One wingtip hit the ground, breaking the spar and turning the glider into the crop. The glider was substantially damaged but the crew unharmed.</p>								
65	Grob Aco 2		Minor	16-May-00 1900	Lasham	60	None	36
<p>The pilot was making his second flight during a gusty evening flying session. After an apparently normal final approach at 55kts he started to round out. At about three feet the glider dropped onto the ground, probably tail wheel first, rocked onto the nose and then back onto the tail causing minor damage.</p>								
66	DG 300	3583	Minor	13-May-00 1800	Long Mynd	40	None	60
<p>The pilot was making his fourth flight on type. On the previous flight he had overshoot the landing area so on the next one he focused on his approach path at the expense of speed control. Approaching at 50kts instead of the recommended 55kts he found he was undershooting and mistakenly opened rather than shut the brakes and dropped onto the ground.</p>								



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## NEW RD Aviation catalogue 2000/01

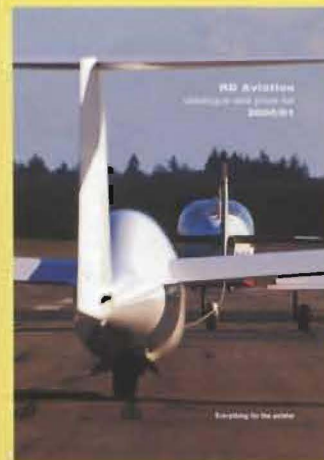
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2	E Ziegler	LS 8	5832
3	M Schunk	LS 8	5822
4	P Fischer	LS 8	5806
5	A Behrendt	LS 8	5777
6	C Triebel	Discus 2	5596
7	C Freyer	LS 8	5591
8	G Lauer	LS 8	5586
9	J Schulte	LS 8	5568
10	M Buchthal	Discus 2	5554
11	S Huhmann	LS 8	5524
12	M Kiessling	LS 8	54964
13	M Moeker	LS 8	5443
14	D Gintzel	LS 8	5423
15	G Rincker	Discus 2	5414
16	S Baumgartl	LS 8	5367
17	M Streicher	LS 8	5361
18	B de Boer	LS 8	5331
19	M Hauße	LS 8	5320
20	C Barthel	LS 8	5316
21	J Kraus	LS 8	5215
22	J Treier	LS 8	5205
23	U Dallmann	LS 8	5204
24	H Weiß	LS 8	5183
25	O Knischewski	Discus B	5177
26	C Ossmann	LS 8	5162
27	M Ziegler	LS 8	5148
28	P Kuhl	ASW 24	5028
29	A Kessler	LS 8	5010
30	A Thielemann	LS 8	4985
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34	R Schroeder	LS 8	4482
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36	F Goeke	Discus 2	4430
37	H Winkelmann	LS 8	4355
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40	L Wittig	LS 8	4207
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2	K Bauder	Ventus 2	5756
3	W Meuser	Ventus 2	5697
4	M Grund	Ventus 2	5583
5	E Sommer	Ventus 2	5484
6	H Zimmel	Ventus 2	5450
7	T Tacke	Ventus 2	5132
8	G Theisinger	ASW 27	5104
9	H Edelhoff	Ventus 2	5016
10	H Bauer	LS 6A	5004
11	W Sinn	Ventus 2	4918
12	C Max	LS 8	4896
13	T Holighaus	Ventus 2	4876
14	B Enting	LS 6C 15	4847
15	M Theisinger	ASW 27	4797
16	S Hohnrath	ASW 27	4700
17	H Tronnier	ASW 27	4646
18	S Hahn	Ventus 2	4439
19	P Folwill	ASW 27	4414
20	E Wehnert	ASW 27	4373
21	K Scholz	ASW 27	4315
22	P Eberhardt	Ventus 2	4266
23	M Link	ASW 27	4098
24	R Mathar	ASW 27	3905
25	H Horstmann	Ventus 2	3775
26	R Kuschel	ASW 27	3340

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