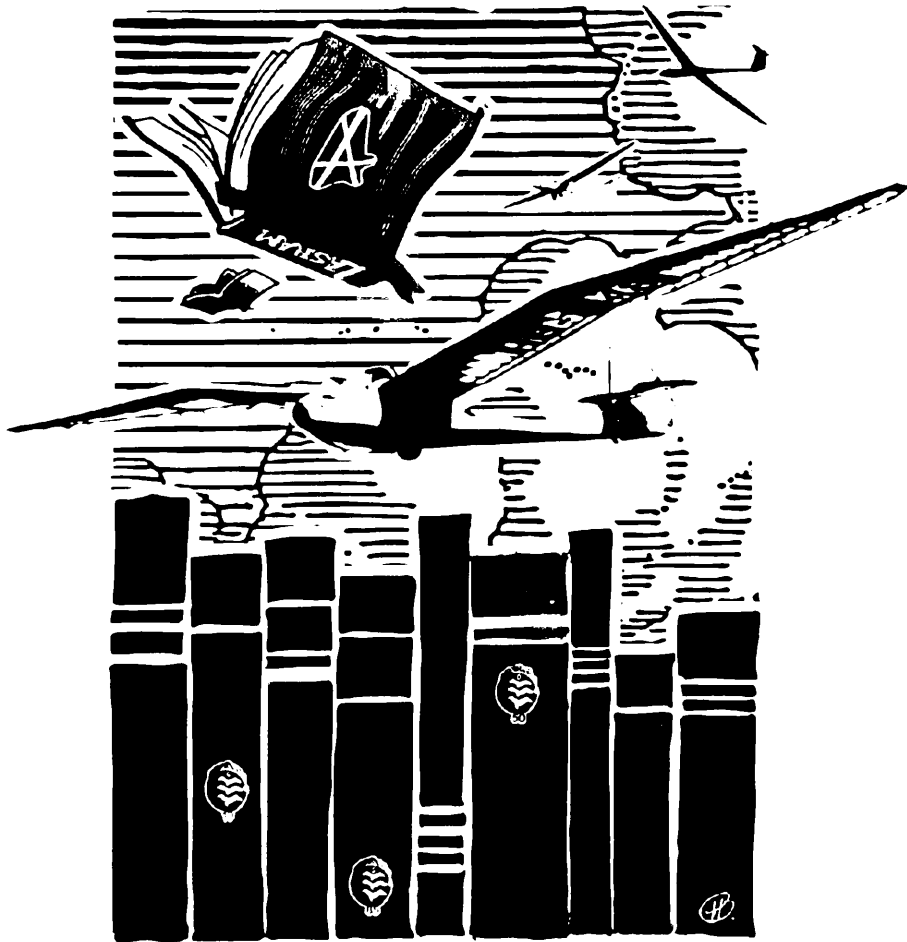


Sails in the Sky

G. T. Collins



Ex Libris



From the Gliding Library of
Wally Kahn

1.25-00

I a fellow pharmacist and
now. Home pilot.

Best wishes,

George Collins

~

SAILS IN THE SKY

BY
GEORGE T. COLLINS

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Foreword by Hugo Irwin...author of Garlands Galore.

With a long connection with aviation in many forms, including the import into the East of the very first glider ever...a Slingsby Primary, in 1934, I feel competent to talk about the author and his versatility in so many different fields...although my contact over many years has been through flying and watching him devote so much of his professional time to his beloved Cornish Club.

George Trehane Collins was born towards the end of the first world war in Wadebridge, where his father was a wholesale grocer and a keen sportsman...playing for his County at Soccer and later serving as a J.P. Both George's parents were musical and at the age of eleven George was a boarder at Truro School where he progressed quickly at normal studies but also at music. Besides gaining his colours in cricket, Soccer and Rugby, he spent endless hours in the music rooms and playing the 'cello in the School Orchestra which was rewarded by a Scholarship to Trinity College of Music. The Headmaster, however, had different ideas and banned music entirely until the end of the forthcoming examinations.

George was stunned but promptly left school and went to London and qualified as a chemist whilst supplementing his income by playing the clarinet in a dance band!

Many of his ancestors were miners and spread themselves around the world...Brazil, Newfoundland, South Africa and Rhodesia, which may account for George's delight in overseas travel which his wife has finally grown to accept.

He learned to fly on single, twin and four engined aircraft and after the war gained an 'above average' rating whilst flying with the R.A.F.V.R. at Exeter. Being the C.F.I. at the Air Training Corps Gliding School at St. Eval, and later, St. Merryn, Culdrose and Harrowbeer in Devon he still managed to play Soccer for Wadebridge Town and Truro City, but in 1948 was elected to the Instructors Committee of the British Gliding Association and was the Senior Regional Examiner for the South West. He also bought a Tiger Moth for glider towing which he kept at R.N.A.S. St. Merryn and later at Culdrose...and became an examiner for motor glider pilots up to Private Pilots standard. All these duties were time consuming, unpaid and I suspect largely taken for granted. George was the first C.F.I. and Chairman of the Cornish Gliding (& Flying) Club at Perranporth which was initiated by himself, Major Ted Berry and Bill Robins. George is still active, but the other two personalities have sadly passed on, but not before they had persuaded their C.F.I. to compete in eleven National Gliding

Championships to represent the Cornish Club, but although not being 'pot-hunter' in any sense, George admits that he enjoyed the high standard of flying in such competitions and was always a credit to the Club in his personal performances. This desire to enjoy a high standard has taken him gliding in South Africa, Canada, Australia, America and most European countries where he has sampled all kinds of flying from heavy aircraft to microlites.

Being in business in Truro, his musical training (including a conductors' course) was soon harnessed and he took an active part in reviving the Truro Orchestra which he conducted for several years and also was Musical Director of the Truro Operatic and Dramatic Society for thirteen years.

Not being content with all this he studied oil painting with several tutors before deciding to beg the help of professional painters Lester Atack and Stanley Bennett after which his technique and quality improved to professional quality and was much sought after. Finally, as if to prove his amazing versatility he looks after his bees both at home and in Spain...a hobby that completely holds its fascination for him since he started in 1946.



PREFACE

Over many years of flying and gliding, especially in Cornwall, I have often thought that someone ought to record the activities of the gliding enthusiasts, from hopeful and tentative beginnings to the present standard.

Having talked to several of the other pilots in the County, one in particular simply said... "What are you keeping on about... you are the one to do the writing and we will tell you when you go wrong." Being a Cornishman and with 40 years of gliding and flying behind me since leaving the flying of the R.A.F. in 1946 I have taken his words to heart. I am not including the hours of flying with the R.A.F. as they do not reflect any of the local Cornish spirit which is my aim; to make the history as accurate and interesting as possible.

The readers' indulgence is sought in that it will frequently be necessary to divert from the happenings in Cornwall to describe both people and other Clubs all over the world in order to keep our local activities in some sort of perspective. There are also some personalities that simply could never be omitted from a book on gliding or flying...the reasons being sometimes both varied and controversial.

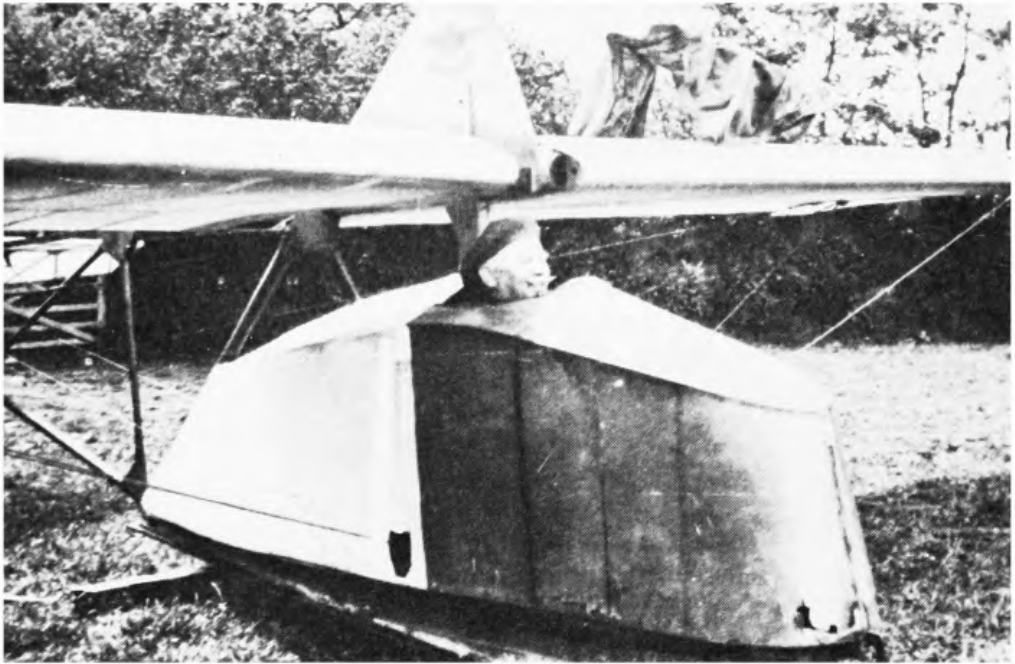
My own flights have not always been the most interesting or exciting but at least will be as accurate as fading memory allows and inevitably, without being a wealthy person, have been a few steps behind the financially more fortunate. It would be naive to pretend that in gliding especially, I have not spent a lifetime envying those able to get hold of the latest 'hot ship' and all its appendages in instrumentation and general equipment.

Changes in glider design have been frequent and rapid in the last few years with more sophisticated instruments keeping in line, but the pilots flying them are much the same and the experiences always interesting, both to hear and relate. May this never change in such a challenging and disciplined sport

Most of the contents will be predominantly concerned with gliding as the early power flying days have been well covered in my friend Ted Chapman's book...Cornwall Aviation Ltd.



Jim Williams with son Ian on his back at Rosenannon.



The 'KEEBLING' Glider

THE BEGINNINGS OF GLIDING

The beginnings were certainly tentative, but given impetus by news of a flight of three hours duration in Germany in 1922 (the year the Daily Mail organised a 'meet' at Itford Hill) a group in Manchester under the guidance of Basil Meads (who was an instructor with the Club at Dunstable as far back as 1935) began the construction of a two-seater BAC-VII designed by Lowe-Wylde. Both were convinced that instruction could be best undertaken in a two-seater and the idea has never been bettered. Progress was slow but sure and in 1930 another 'meet' was organised by Latimer-Needham also at Itford and using a Dagling (modified in the works of R.F. Dagnall from a German Zogling) and a very elegant Wien, a glider with a span of 63 feet. Others in the group were Lord Sempill with his own Puss Moth, Professor Georgii and the winner of the 1929 Wasserkuppe Competitions, Robert Kronfeld. The eventual object of this group was to make an organised tour of Britain.

The first National Competitions for gliders was at Barrow-in-Furness in 1932, where oddly enough I was later to fly with the R.A.F. and also glide as a civilian.

Now in Cornwall the spark had alighted. I am indebted for much of the following to Arthur Hamel James of Newquay and 'Monty' Powell of St. Columb who very willingly dug up their information for my benefit. Arthur's mother was interested in aviation and so christened her son Hamel, from the pre-war aviator, Gustav Hamel who lost his life flying from the East Coast of England to Denmark.

Arthur remembers a visit from Lowe-Wylde to Penzance in 1931, when he was about 16 years old and the attempt by a man called Robinson to form a Club, after watching Lowe-Wylde give several demonstration flights from Luggy Sands at Eastern Green at low tide. Sadly, not enough people expressed interest to go ahead, but another group of people at Summercourt got hold of a modified Zogling (Dagling) in 1936. It was further modified by a Mr. Keeble who worked in the design department of the Bristol Aviation Company and he incorporated a modified wing and nacelle to advantage.

A Club was formed called the St. Austell and South Cornwall Gliding Club, but changed its name with increasing membership to the Cornwall Gliding Club. The energetic founder member was Michael Graham, a solicitor from St. Austell, with A. N. Williams (Jim) from Newquay, Bill Huxtable, Bill Ratcliffe from the old Red Lion Hotel in Truro, Monty Powell, Tony Roach and H. Yelland from St. Austell, Arthur James, Buchanan-Smith and others such as W. Hoskin, R. Crowle, F Matthews, E. B. Jenkins, H. Salton,

Warne, Grigg, Hunt, Truscott, Whetter and others that are not easily traceable. However, they recognised and joined the British Gliding Association at this early date.

Instruction was basic, consisting of a verbal description of glider controls followed by the first gentle ascent from a bunjee launch which, if all went well, was followed by a gentle enough landing for a glider to remain in one piece for the next courageous pupil. Progress was of course very slow, but a transfer of site to Rosenannon Downs immediately gave the club more scope, especially in a South wind when some soaring was possible on a small ridge. Some gliding also took place on the North Coast near Delabole where the Fleet Air Arm had set up a satellite field for a specific exercise development. The site is still identifiable from the air with the old control tower clearly visible. . .and obviously would still make a fine gliding site!

I consider myself privileged to have made friends with many of these early pilots and have learned much about their initial problems.

Bernard Shaw wrote "Some see and say WHY...others dream and say "WHY NOT"? These pioneers were certainly in the latter category.

MORE ABOUT THE CORNWALL GLIDING CLUB

The Club took shape in answer to an advertisement in the Western Morning News, initiated by Michael Graham, and began operations at Carvynick Farm, Summercourt before transferring to Rosenannon Downs. Records of eventual flights from this site have been made available to me by Michael Graham. Mr. Assheton Salton made the first flight of 30 seconds which was duly registered for an 'A' certificate flight and at the end of the day there was a brief note in the distinctive handwriting of Jim Williams, "Everyone made an excellent showing". What a satisfying day that would have been and on July 5th 1936. Assheton Salton made a flight of 65 seconds, but a following entry noted 'Williams flew and crashed'.

The same log mentioned that some Official Observers had been registered with the B.G.A. and the machine had an extended certificate of airworthiness. . .rather short lived unfortunately after the recent 'prang'. The price of such a new glider at this time was about £50 and I also remember seeing in the Town Hall at Wadebridge a complete 'Flying Flea' which had been built by a Mr. Oliver, but which I don't think ever successfully flew and the design was never considered reliable.

On August 23rd Michael Graham got his 'A' certificate at Rosenannon Downs and an entry reads. . . "There were 8 'hops' and



BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION.

CERTIFICATE OF AIRWORTHINESS.

The validity of C. of A., No. G 168, Machine type

is extended, for a further period of twelve months from

26/8/36 to 26/8/37

Chairman Technical Committee.

Date

W. H. Waring

An early C. of A. of the Cornwall Club





This site of the old airfield at Treligga with the disused control tower clearly visible in the foreground.

2 'slides' during the day and total flying fees collected amounted to 9 shillings".

In 1937, a highlight was an expedition to Haldon in Devon, where Fred Slingsby with a two-seater Falcon glider and Philip Wills as fellow pilot gave demonstrations of being aero-towed behind a Tiger Moth piloted by Capt. Phillips of St. Austell.

The next year, back at the home site, Arthur James having made several flights of over 50 seconds, took an auto-tow (a car pulling the glider forward and upwards on a length of wire) into a wind of about 25 knots, when at the top of the climb after release, the glider's starboard wing broke off and unhappily crash landed on its back, extensively damaged. Arthur was taken unconscious to hospital and to this day bravely puts up with the lasting effects of his misfortune. I met him at St. Eval when he came to visit his friend Jim Williams, where I was privileged to take him for a trip in the T21 two-seater glider of Number 82 Gliding School.

Another glider, a Camcraft, was bought to replace the Keebling...but before members had time to become familiar with this much lighter machine, World War II had begun. It was hangared in a trailer with Capt. Rhodes-Moorhouse on the site that was later to become the home of the Fleet Air Arm at St. Merryn.

MICHAEL GRAHAM

It is interesting to follow the career of one of these early glider pilots as he briefly (and I suspect modestly) recounted it to me. Michael Graham joined the Glider Pilots' Regiment and started his flying at Booker Airfield, now surely one of the busiest airfields in Britain and where, incidentally, my son Michael is now an Instructor and tug-pilot.

Michael Graham made several flights of over 50 seconds by auto-tow launch (quite a feat in those days), with the Cornwall Club and this he swears helped him to go solo in under 5 hours at Booker in the now much larger military machines. He then went to Stoke Orchard and converted to Hotspur and Horsa gliders and was one of the first pilots to make up a Squadron at Blakehill Farm. The Horsa was made by Airspeeds and could carry 28 men and their equipment or alternatively a jeep and anti-tank gun. Flying behind a long sisal rope (no nylon in those days) was indeed an ordeal as the rope had little 'stretch' to take up the air bumps, Michael went on to take part in the famous Rhine crossing which warrants a book in itself. He described to me vividly the smoke and confusion and how he landed in the wrong place in the noise and explosions, having followed the first one down!

Many years later when we formed the Cornish Gliding (& Flying)

Club, he was to give us much valuable legal advice when dealing with the Air Ministry, and subsequently, when the airfield was acquired by the late Ernest Milner-Haigh. I still possess the original lease from the Air Ministry, made out to G. T. Collins et al and this was the gateway to future operations, as the rent was only £1 per aircraft per year.

MY OWN BEGINNINGS

As a small boy, Alan Cobham's Air Display near my home town of Wadebridge was a magnet with its varied programme, but a glider doing aerobatics was my particular highlight. The pilot was a lady...Joan Meakin (later Joan Price) and when cycling back home I can remember two things clearly...the top of the glider's loop and being stung on the arm by a bumblebee... What a day indeed! I have since discovered that Ann Welch was also a spectator on the same day.

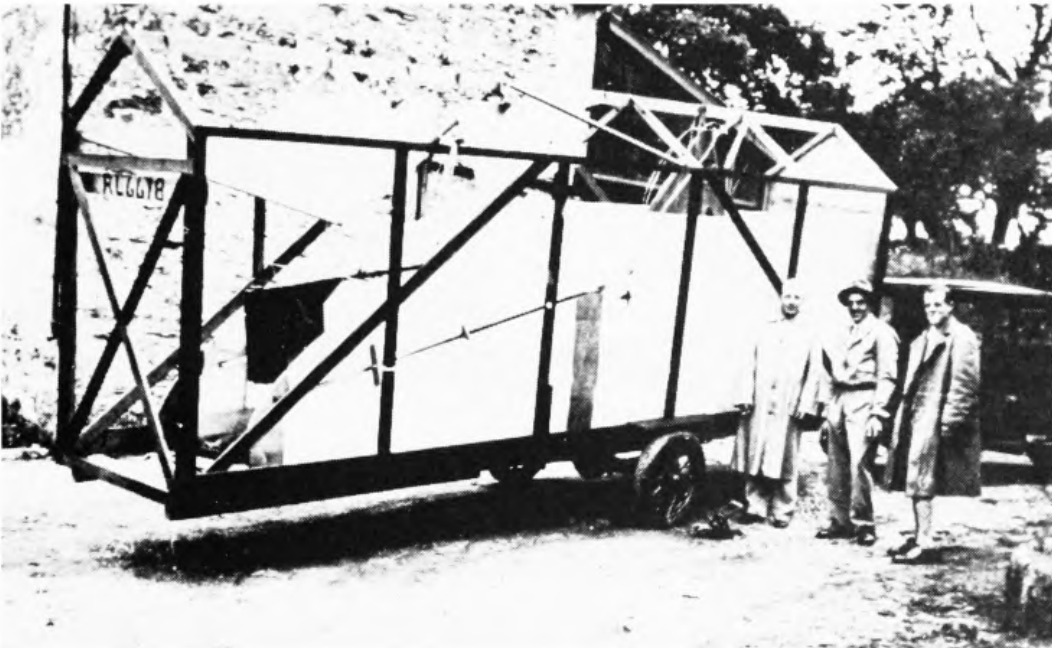
The war came and having qualified as a pharmacist was in a reserved occupation, so I busied myself with musical studies which included a conductors' course and playing the clarinet in the Hertfordshire Operatic Orchestra. The war itself seemed to have reached a kind of stalemate and then I saw on a railway poster, "Whatever your occupation, you can volunteer for aircrew with the R.A.F.". The old L.N.E.R. took me to London where on a Friday I had an interview, and on the following Monday was at Lords cricket ground with a uniform and being sent off for medicals, vaccination and immunisations for various diseases. Ground training at Stratford-on-Avon, then to an airfield near Leicester (now a housing estate) and an introduction to a Tiger Moth by a Warrant Officer Fine...one never forgets the name of one's first Instructor... about 6 hours flying and then time to take it round and land for the first time.

Off I went and it seemed only a few seconds before I was on the approach for a landing which was a good one, when foolishly I opened the throttle and was again airborne, with the final briefing of my instructor still echoing... "If you are not happy with your landing just open the throttle and try again". The second landing was not as good as the first, but a wise Instructor said quietly "Right. The first landing was the better one...so keep to that standard".

I had learned a lesson and reflected on it for a long time that night before going to sleep. My conclusion was simple, to keep a firm grip over fear without being unaware of danger, and that reasoning I consider to have saved my life and those of others on more than one occasion...especially in the days when aircraft reliability was



In the Hangar of Capt. Rhodes-Moorhouse at the site which later became R.N.A.S. St. Merryn. The A/C is a Percival Gull (Centre, Bill Huxtable with Jim Williams kneeling. The small boy is Jim's son Ian).



The Keebling glider in its home-made trailer. (Bill Huxtable on right of picture).



The Tiger Moth that I bought...G.A.NFW. (housed at Culdrose), and Bill Robins (right). Ted Berry (left) myself



In 1981 I hired a Cessna 172 from Sebring in Florida and flew down to the old abandoned airfield at Clewiston. The old control tower was still in fair condition and was exactly as I remembered it so many years ago.

nowhere near its present standard. I had arrived in the world of flying which at that time I little realised would claim so much of my spare time in the years to come. . .and that this fortuitous move (like so many other young men) was dictated by a pompous little fellow in Germany whom none of us knew and who considered the world his own 'trade union'.

The next move was training in the Army Air Corps of the U.S.A. in Florida - a tough programme designed to produce fighter pilots with emphasis on dog-fighting, formation flying, aerobatics, quick climbs to high altitude and night flying. The latter was a bit hazardous, as we quickly recognised that not all our Instructors were experienced and some clearly reticent after darkness fell, but eleven months of continuous flying had brought invaluable lessons. Confidence was building and this was in turn improving our flying ability, but the first instance of over-confidence was about to remind us all of our responsibilities.

I flew one night as navigator for a friend (having completed my own course) and on the last 'leg' home was horrified to see that we were flying down the main street of a small town, below the rooftops of many of the houses. The next night this same pilot asked me to fly again on his last trip, but I declined and another friend went instead and a similar exercise resulted in both being killed. In 1981 with Ron Wills and John van den Broek as passengers, I flew down in a Cessna 172 from Sebring and stood at their graveside where some 20 years ago I had attended the joint funeral service.

Those of us who passed the course (about half) had flown a minimum of 300 hours and on returning to Britain were given the option of waiting about six months for a fighter posting or the opportunity of training on twin-engined aircraft. A fellow pharmacist chose the former and myself the latter and later when I was flying Wellingtons in Scotland learned that he was at Predannick in Cornwall on Mustangs. This was Ray Stebbings. After I had survived a crash in 1943 a mutual friend was able to tell me that Ray was a P.O.W. in France. After the war, Ray told me that he had been escorting Bostons from St. Mawgan when on reaching the French Coast he found himself in the air with no aircraft around him. On pulling his chute he floated into France where he spent the rest of the war. His Mustang had collided with a Spitfire going the opposite way and flying into the sun.

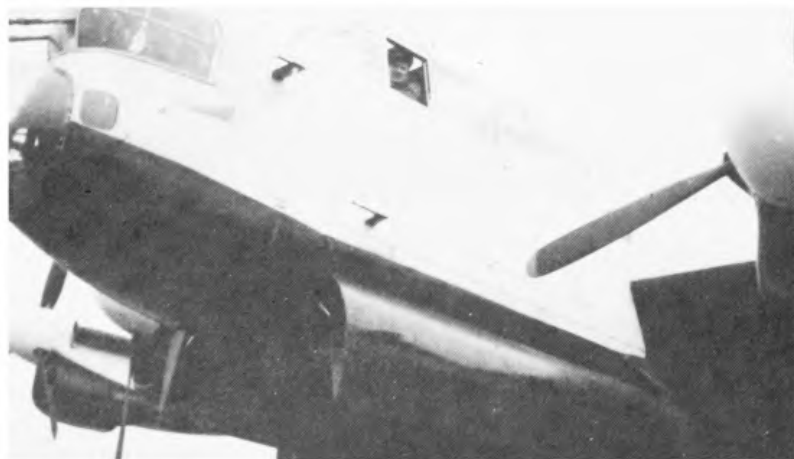
As previously mentioned I had been in a fairly severe crash (not pilot error!) which meant a long stay in hospital in Scotland (Raigmore). At one inspection of the Hospital by a Scots Army General, the General stopped at my bed where I was dutifully lying at attention as instructed, I thought he asked 'How's the foot?' Having had most of my toe-nails scraped off when thrown through the Wellington, my feet were unbearably painful so I promptly replied, "Not too good Sir", whereupon he turned to the matron and



The writer flying a Wellington.



At Swinderby, Lincolnshire



Self in Lancaster VII



Lancaster MkVII



Self with crew by A Lancaster

snapped, "Matron, there's an Officer here complaining about the FOOD". His accent had completely deceived the southern Englishman and given most of the other patients something to relieve the monotony of hospital life.

When finally back in circulation, I was made a link Instructor for two months, then came a two-day medical in London and a posting back to Bomber Command and a new crew. A month's course at Credenhill on parachute packing and survival in the Far East, a month at Cranwell prior to possible senior promotion and then to Lancasters for conversion to four engines. What wonderful machines they were too, and as far as I ever heard, unanimously approved by all who flew them.

The war ended in the Far East quite suddenly and in our 'demo' hut at Bruntingthorpe a chap told me that he would go back to riding horses...a leg-pull? Later I read that he rode Devon Loch in the Grand National...went on to write (as he still does) fictional stories and owns his own aircraft...Dick Francis.

I now presumed that my flying days were over and returned to Cornwall after a refresher course in pharmacy at Nottingham University, and went into partnership in a pharmaceutical business. It was nice to be back in Cornwall again, but although being conscientious in my job I found it difficult to appreciate that making money should be a priority. I suspect that the majority of ex-service personnel having worked for an ideal, experienced the same doubts, and seeing all around me getting new cars I too ordered one. Those who had been at home during the war seemed to get them, but when after six years and two months I was finally offered my order I told the firm what to do with their new car, went to another firm and immediately got a new one. I was learning that the ideals of civilian life were quite different from war-time service life, where a promise really had to be a promise and a signature on a form 700 was a life at stake, at the very minimum.

Within a few weeks of being in business however, I heard the unmistakable sound of a Wellington passing overhead and my mind made what is now termed a 'U' turn. Very shortly I was to become involved with aeroplanes and gliders again and share the common interest of those kindred souls.

SQUADRON LEADER A. N. WILLIAMS AND MAJOR J. W. E. BERRY C.B.E.

Although these two men were involved in different spheres of gliding, they were both indefatigable workers for the gliding movement in Cornwall, following the ground work of Wing Commander McMillan.

In 1946 S/Ldr A.N. (Jim) Williams became the C.O. of No. 82



*Back Prowse, Conium, Mackay, Robins, Warmington.
Front Huxtable, Williams, Collins.*



A line-up of the gliders of 82 Gliding School.



The writer with wife in a T21. Arthur Bosanko standing at side.



The 'Old Faithful' T21 taking off.

Gliding School at St. Eval. The airfield was still an active one of Coastal Command and several of their pilots joined us in helping to instruct the Air Training Cadets, using T21, T31 and Tutor gliders...all being built by Slingsby Sailplanes in Yorkshire. I was talked into becoming the C.F.I. (a job which eventually lasted 11 years) and managed to alternate this responsibility with flying in the R.A.F.V.R. at Exeter, where the famous 'Wispey' Turner was our C.O. One of our gliding pupils was a Corporal Luff who later became an international rugby referee and instructors included Mike Armstrong, Bert Lutey and Bill Huxtable. Jim Williams, wholly committed to his principles, managed not only to hold us together with respect and purpose, but in addition create an atmosphere of unswerving loyalty.

For some reason the Training School was moved to the R.N.A.S. airfield at St. Merryn, only a couple of miles away and here we were joined by Ted Berry who had done some flying overseas and was possessed with both enthusiasm and a cheerful nature which was infectious to all around him, qualities that were later to become invaluable with the formation of the Cornish Gliding Club at Perranporth.

Other instructors who joined about this time included Bill Robins, Bernard Warmington and Vic Prowse. Bill Robins made himself a name when he decided to copy the stall turns that we had been practising in the two-seater T21. He flew the Tutor and at only about 600 feet pulled up steeply to commence this turn, but allowed his speed to fall off too much before applying rudder. On the ground it looked horrific and just as we awaited disaster he sensibly pulled the stick hard back and completed a loop with the necessary few feet of air left between the glider and the ground...but only just!

It was August, and I went off to pick a few mushrooms and be quietly thankful for his presence of mind and undoubted courage.

THE AIR TRAINING SCHOOL. No. 82 GLIDING SCHOOL

As already mentioned, this School was started at St. Eval and then moved to St. Merryn and was in fact the only gliding carried on in Cornwall from 1946 for several years. A brief interlude was an offshoot at Portreath where we flew two Kirby Cadet single seaters, but there were not enough instructors to keep two sites going, so this was abandoned.

Even before starting at St. Eval, a pilot scheme was initiated at Perranporth, but two parked gliders were blown over the cliff early on and the site was considered unsuitable, as perhaps it was for the flimsy machines of that time. The first soaring flight at

Perranporth was made by Colonel Phillips from Bath who later became the C.O. of the central soaring site at Hales' Land on the Mendips.

At St. Eval the gliding was both boring and monotonous for any Instructor with the slightest ambition to escape from what is now often termed 'aerial tobogganing' so I bought a Tiger Moth from the Air Ministry and went to Aston Down to collect it (after organising a brand new propeller and complete set of instruments) and then flew it to Exeter where it was strengthened to take an approved tow-hook system. That was Tiger G-ANFW which even today in 1986 is still aero-towing; sadly not at Perranporth for inexplicable reasons!

The boredom of our operations was recognised by the C.O. Jim Williams and he organised a trip by air for his instructors to Oerlinghausen, in Germany, which had a ridge which was soarable in the prevailing wind. Here we were welcomed by Air Commodore Chris Paul and also met Hannah Reitsch (at one time Hitler's personal pilot) and Wolf Hirth, the aircraft designer. The C.F.I. was F Lt Jock Forbes, ably assisted by F Lt Meiklejohn and two German instructors of long experience. Jock had laid claim to a Weihe glider, but one day let me fly it on what was to become a most remarkable day indeed. We had to fly two miles downwind to the ridge, over pine trees, where a strong wind picked us up rapidly and everyone (9 gliders in all) was happily soaring along the ridge. I remember looking down into the cockpit of another glider and watching S/Ldr Jerry Gray struggling to light a cigarette...which later in the day he told me he had never managed to accomplish.

Then quite suddenly nature played one of her vicious and unrelenting tricks with the arrival of a line squall, together with a snowstorm. Height at a premium, a quick decision with the wind leaving the ridge, and my glider was on its way home drifting with the changing wind. Passing over a tiny clearing I saw the Minimoa glider with the figure of Jim Williams standing beside it and giving a wave to indicate that all was safely gathered in. Not so with several other pilots who were flying Grunau gliders with little penetration, but I kept on and caught up a Meise which was the only other glider to land safely back home with the Weihe. One pilot, losing sight of the ground for only a few seconds found himself on the far side of the ridge and the lift was so strong that it was 60 kilometres before he was able to safely land on a relatively quiet piece of autobahn. He successfully claimed a Silver 'C', but many other pilots were high amongst the pine trees, wrecking the aircraft but miraculously escaping any serious injuries. Next day was a busy one for all fit personnel...picking up the bits and later exhaustedly lounging round the bar and listening to a succession of hairy stories.

It was at this time that many of us (most in fact) were stricken with a mystery 'tummy bug' and the two doctors on site gaily dished



*Oerlinghausen Airfield 1948.
(The White Area)*



Control Tower at Oerlinghausen.



Weihe & Minimoa



Lounge



Centre *Wolf Hirth (Designer of Minimoa)*
Right *Hannah Reitsch (Hitlers' pilot friend)*
the first woman ever to fly a Silver 'C'
distance.



Kranich two-seater about to land.

out the kaolin and morphia with little success. A week after returning to Cornwall I was still personally afflicted and my doctor prescribed guanamycin which I assured him was a poor guess as I was gradually losing my power of thought and becoming confused. At this time a report in the Daily Express mentioning Oerlinghausen wrote that 40 cases of paratyphoid had been confirmed so my doctor relented and gave me a systemic sulphonamide which began to work after a couple of days of delirium. It was at least two weeks before these black days retreated and I was back both at work and flying with the A.T.C. at St. Merryn where I gave Jim Williams his first aero-tow with the Tiger and a length of sisal rope.

Next came yet another move for the A.T.C. to R.N.A.S. Culdrose where we were received warmly. Commander Air (Bill Hawley) joined our Olympia group and we were allowed to keep the Tiger Moth on site. Ted and I had previously gone to Elliott's of Newbury to see the glider being made and Horace Buckingham showed us the plans of the new Olympia 419 designed by Harry Midwood, one of which I was later destined to own.

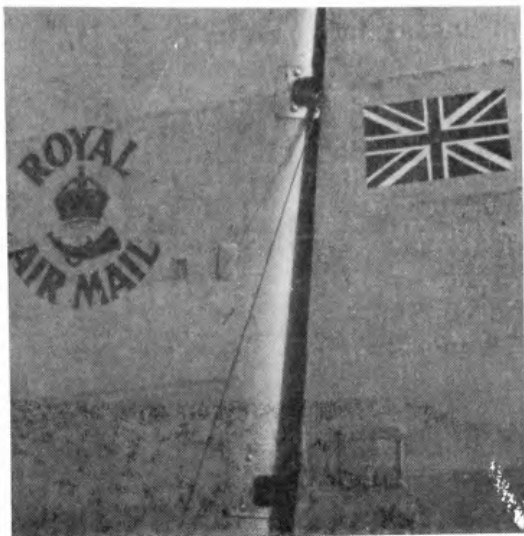
My own flying with power was now limited to the Tiger Moth and the Chipmunks at Exeter, but I kept my twin rating valid with several flights in "The City of Plymouth", a Gemini of Plymouth Aero Club of which I was a member.

One memorable day I was entrusted to deliver an Anson to Exeter from Plymouth and this was nostalgia indeed when my landing at Exeter was a 'greaser'.

Night flying, blind flying and link trainer exercises kept the V.R. pilots up to scratch and with valid I.M.C. ratings, flights all over the country were rarely cancelled through bad weather conditions. I was also lucky enough to be able to do some flying for the Royal Mail with a company called Transair, to Jersey, Brussels and Paris. The aircraft used were Anson 21's. The pilots were housed in the Croydon Hotel, flew from the old Croydon Airport and did these nightly runs in all weathers at the end of which we were given a good meal, a bed in an hotel and then an early return to Croydon. Suffice to say here that some of these flights were not without incident!

On going back to Cornwall I was soon invited to Chivenor by S Ldr Jerry Gray to do some flying in the new Sedbergh, or T21 as it was more generally known later. It was unanimously pronounced a success and my next stop was the R.A.F.G.S.A. headquarters at Detling where again I was invited to instruct. More advanced soaring and aerobatics were the order of the day and it was here that I first met Ann Welch and Ed Meddings. The former we shall talk about later and the latter had his first gliding trip with me and went on to become the National Coach when John Everitt retired.

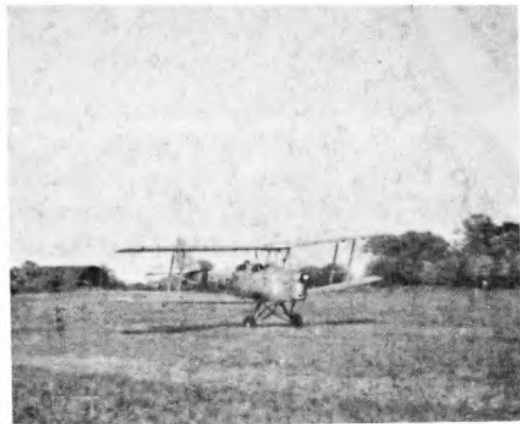
Jock Forbes had come home from Germany to become C.O. and



*Above, Royal Mail insignia on the Anson 21 aircraft.
Left, Derek Fowler. One of Transair's pilots in the workshop.*



Hawkinge Airfield.



A Tiger Moth aero-towing at Detling.



Towing out the Kite glider at the Long Mynd. From left to right (first four). Buchanan-Smith, Frank Horrell, Jack Aked and self.

WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS



Lorne & Ann Welch Hugo Trotter & Frank Irving 1954.



Rigging the gliders at Camphill.

F/Lt Butt was the C.F.I. Only a week before my arrival there 'Dusty' Miller had killed himself whilst attempting a slow roll during which the glider had broken up.

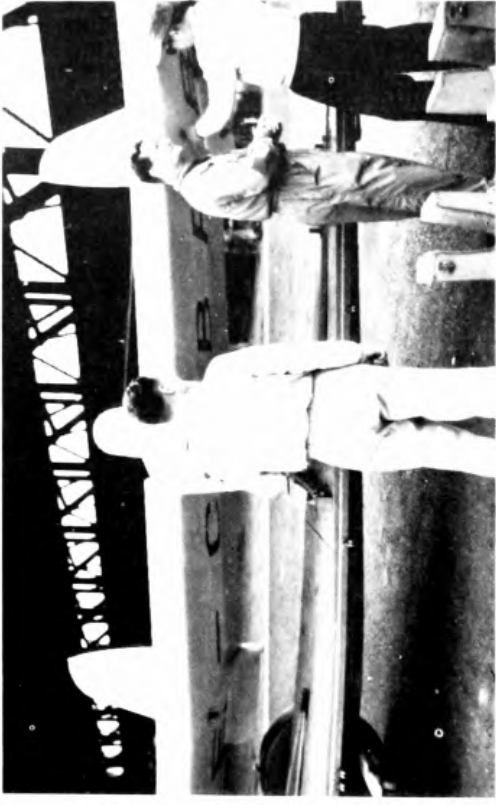
In 1951, Jim Williams and myself went to the Mynd for some flying; the Club started by Espin Hardwick, the loving owner of a Petrel glider which was cared for by the resident engineer, Teddy Proll. Jim and myself both sat out 5 hours in an Eon Baby, made more bearable by being able to come in ostensibly for a landing but instead, carrying on over the edge of the ridge and soaring again. We helped Alan Yates rig his aircraft but didn't get a flight in it as he made his way down to Monmouth and landed on a School playing pitch. He was well received by the Headmaster after promising a talk to the boys about gliding!

THE MENDIP HILLS

The Air Training Corps had found a site on the Mendip Hills, above Draycott and made it a Group Gliding Centre under S/Ldr Phillips the ex-Army Officer from Bath where A.T.C. Instructors from the South West could come and enjoy flying different types of glider as well as instruct promising pupils to a higher standard. It was here that in a gusty wind one morning I took a pupil to see what conditions were like and on landing promptly pronounced 'unfit for flying, considerable turbulence and too strong a wind'. Another senior Instructor was unwise enough to disagree in the C.O.'s presence, so the new Instructor was promptly detailed to take the machine with a pupil himself.

He took over from me and the pupil held the wing tip when suddenly a strong gust caught the wings and Vic Prowse, Bernard Warmington and myself watched the alarming spectacle of the glider rearing up vertically, then turning over backwards and breaking its back on a stone wall. A salutary lesson learnt about picketing aircraft securely at all times, and also perhaps of keeping quiet when someone has actually made a decision after experiencing the flying conditions...an opinion confirmed at the subsequent enquiry.

The International Competitions were about to take place at Camphill, one of the early gliding clubs of Britain and to learn something about the operation of such a competition it was necessary to go and browse around and meet some of the entrants. This I did and enjoyed thoroughly. The British two-seater team consisted of husband and wife, Ann and Lorne Welch ably assisted by Hugo Trotter and Frank Irvine. This was 1954 and knowing the members of the French team was added interest to me...watching their daily progress...but the Jugoslavian team



Centre The C.F.I.



The Fauvel tailless glider at Pont-St-Vincent.



Six tug aircraft ready to start the day.



Gliders at Pont-St-Vincent.



The more serious side of the club - a game of boules in the evening.

were the winners of the two-seater event in a Kosava and I don't even remember the single seater winner. These were the days of friendly competition rather than the more cut-throat events of today which was recognised by Philip Wills when he set up a more relaxed type of competition at North Hill, Devon, which he named Enterprise and is still very popular amongst pilots who put enjoyment before trophies.

Back yet again to the interminable circuit flying of the A.T.C. with very little to relieve the monotony...some aerobatics at St. Eval and later St. Mawgan air displays and then another cadet ready for solo. A bespectacled youth of slight build, and, if I remember correctly, wearing a leather jacket, got into the Tutor and made his first flight. Little did I know that years later he was to become the authoritative C.F.I. at Perranporth with whom I dare not disagree. Such is and so should be. This was Dave Pentecost.

It was at this stage in our A.T.C. flying that I decided that perhaps a civilian club could be self-supportive in Cornwall and Bill Robins and Ted Berry shared this conviction, but first I had decided to take some time off to visit France where they operated special schemes for foreign ex-service visitors. The welcome at St. Auban was very warm and it was suggested that I pay £5 (approximately) and fly whenever was possible with no upper limit on time. The weather was poor, but even so, I was able to fly in the famous wave to about 10,000 feet and the view was exciting...mountains to the North and the Mediterranean to the South. The following year a visit to Pont St. Vincent on the same financial terms was fixed and in 5 days I had flown 26½ hours, done a Silver C distance to Epinal with aero-tow retrieve and an out and return flight of over 9 hours.

At dinner in the evening we had lively discussions and all knowledge was shared, including that of the then world champion Gerard Pierre. Bill Robins had decided to sample this site as well, and his cheery nature combined with a completely negative understanding of the French language somehow combined to produce much hilarious backchat.

Back to England again, flying with the car from Le Touquet to Lydd and the memories of the French attitude to gliding very fresh in our minds. We had both flown several different types of glider including the then very advanced Air 100 with water ballast, and all launching was by aero-tow using Stampe biplanes as tugs. These tug pilots were first-rate; quick climbs when thermals were about by means of tight turns, a spin down to about 100 metres, short landings, quick turn around and off again. Their accident rate was minimal which meant that not only were they excellent pilots but costs were kept to the minimum also.

PERRANPORTH AND PORTREATH AERODROMES

At this stage it would seem appropriate to introduce the facts and figures of the two adjacent airfields, both constructed about the same time in 1940.

PERRANPORTH. No. 66 Squadron, equipped with Spitfires was based here from April to December 1941, during which time it carried out offensive sweeps over the Channel. The squadron returned to Perranporth in September 1943, equipped this time with Spitfire V's and remained there until November 8th when it moved to Hornchurch. While based at Perranporth for the second time it undertook operations in defence of Coastal and Fighter Command Perranporth Aircraft flying off the Isles of Scilly. No. 130 Squadron was based at Perranporth flying Spitfire V's between December 1941 and March 1943 and No. 183 Squadron flying Typhoon 1B's operated from September and October 1943. No. 276 Squadron was there during October and November in the air/sea rescue role. . flying Lysanders and Walruses and then came 340 Squadron in November 1943 to April 1944 flying Spitfire VB's and manned by Free French pilots. . . many of whom I met since the war whilst they were re-visiting the site. No. 341 Squadron also arrived at Perranporth, also the Free French, on October 1943 who remained with their Spitfire IX's until April 1944. The airfield officially closed in April 1944.

PORTREATH. No. 66 Squadron first flew into Portreath in December 1941 and used Spitfire 11's and V's until April 1942. No. 130 Squadron formed there in June 1941, equipped with long range Spitfire 11's and carried out its first operation a month later. In August 1941, short range Spitfires were exchanged for the long range Ventura and the squadron moved to Harrowbeer in October 1941. No. 152 Squadron was there from August 1941, flying Spitfire 11's and No. 276 Squadron (C Flight) from November 1941 until September 1944.

I am grateful to Group Captain Jack Alcock for the above researches especially as Jack was a respected and valuable ex-officer of the gliding club at Perranporth when he was stationed at R.A.F. St. Mawgan.



Perranporth Airfield.



Jim Williams.

Number of Company: 570668

THE COMPANIES ACT, 1948

COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

Memorandum
— and —
Articles of Association

OF
CORNISH GLIDING (AND FLYING) CLUB PROPRIETORY
LIMITED

Incorporated the 23rd day of August, 1956.

MORE OF THE SAME

Another visit to Pont. St. Vincent was made and the exciting attitude of the French pilots enjoyed, with conversation going on late into the night. I made one good out and return flight which in the evening I was forced to get on the bench after supper and recount in my best French. These indeed were my vintage days of gliding...a single Englishman amongst so many French pilots yet with a completely common interest; the only female within sight was the elderly cook!

Back at home yet another move was in progress...the A.T.C. moved to Harrowbeer in Devon, the Tiger Moth was left housed at St. Mawgan, Vic Prowse left for the North of England and Instructor Jack Rand (an ex-Sunderland captain) emigrated to Canada. I was invited to do some instructing at Hawkinge, the new home of the A.T.C. Headquarters. This airfield was all grass and inland from the coast of Dover and whereas the French sites had at first acquaintance seemed a little lacking in control, a critical examination showed that the opposite was the case as they had developed a self-discipline to an enviable degree. At Hawkinge again a first appraisal gave rise to some apprehension...was this out of place?

Two Bedford trucks would bring back two cables from each of two winches stationed quite close together at the upwind end of the field to four parked T31 gliders each with its own signaller provided with an Aldis Lamp. This meant of course that if all went well a far greater number of launches could be accomplished during the day and the cadets would benefit by receiving more instruction...but it also meant that the airfield could at times become very congested with gliders landing, taking off and trucks going one way or the other. An occasional T21 and Prefect doing some local soaring was often encountered. Approaching with a pupil I could sense his apprehension as to where he could possibly land safely...a problem that I was also trying to sensibly solve. I rather think the result was a bit of a compromise!

The time came for this pupil to go solo. A message to the next instructor to delay his next flight for a few minutes met with a curt negative so I postponed my pupil's flight until the evening when things usually died down a little and space was available.

The next message was from the instructor to me. "Just watch how it is done" and he got ready to send his cadet on his first flight. Out of courtesy I stopped operations on my line and interested myself in his method which was rewarded in a peculiar fashion. The pupil had successfully flown around the circuit and was on his final approach when he became worried about the mass of activity on the field and being a little high decided to execute a complete 360 degree turn. This was clearly impossible as he was too low, but having

CORNISH GLIDING (and Flying) CLUB.

Many flying enthusiasts have suggested that a Gliding (and Flying) Club should be formed in Cornwall.

The Kemsley Trust has advised us that they are prepared to assist with the loan of 90% of the capital cost and that 50 Active members should be sufficient to operate such a Club on a Voluntary basis, while 100 Active members might enable a full time instructor to be engaged.

Adequately qualified voluntary Instructors, winch drivers and a Tiger Moth, fitted for Aero Tows are already available; initial requirements of a winch, T-31B Sedburgh 2 seater and one single seater Primary or Intermediate Glider, with a Hanger, would probably cost some £2,000.

The use of Perranporth Aerodrome might be secured.

The assistance of Plymouth Aero Club is assured, and we wish to emphasize that full training in powered aircraft of different types is available at Plymouth from permanent instructors and that our policy would be to co-operate with Plymouth and not to compete with them.

We believe that some support would be forthcoming from interested Service personnel from adjacent R.A.F. Aerodromes, the R.N.A.S. Culdrose and also A.T.C. Flights who, at present, have no gliding facilities nearer than Exeter.

It is suggested that charges might be in the following regions:-

Entrance Fee	£2..2..0.
Annual Subscription	£6..6..0.
Gliding Charges	3/- per launch and £2. per hour.
Power Flying	£3. per hour.

Will those of your readers who are interested, kindly communicate with any of the undersigned giving particulars of :-

- i. Gliding/Flying experience, qualifications & intentions
- ii. Voluntary assistance in the way of organization, administration on the flying side.
- iii. Others, in Cornwall, likely to be interested so that a meeting or meetings may be convened by us as soon as possible to form a Committee to give further active consideration to the matter.

Yours faithfully,

George T. Collins,
Bodwareen,
Chapel Hill, Truro.

W.J. Robbins,
Firs Farm,
Goonhavern, Truro.

J.W.E. Berry,
Parc Sparblas, Carbis Bay, St. Ives.

WE, the several persons whose Names, Addresses, and Descriptions are subscribed are desirous of being formed into a Company in pursuance of this Memorandum of Association.

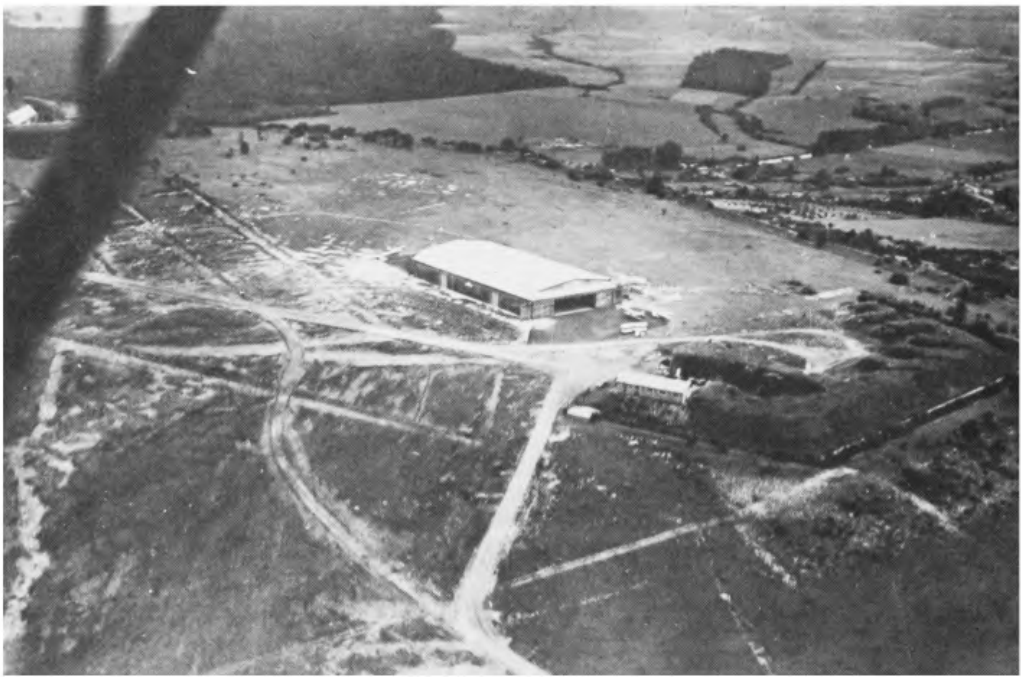
NAMES, ADDRESSES, AND DESCRIPTIONS OF SUBSCRIBERS.	Number of Shares taken by each Subscriber
<p>William John Russell Robins, Firs Farm, Goonhavern, Truro.</p> <p>Salesman.</p>	<p>One</p>
<p>George Trehane Collins, Bodwareen, Chapel Hill, Truro.</p> <p>Company Director.</p>	<p>One</p>
<p>John William Edward Berry, Parc Sparbels, Carbis Bay, St. Ives.</p> <p>Retired Company Director.</p>	<p>One</p>

D A T E D the ninth day of August, 1956.

WITNESS to the above Signatures —

K. M. BURROWS,
6 Carclew Terrace,
Truro.

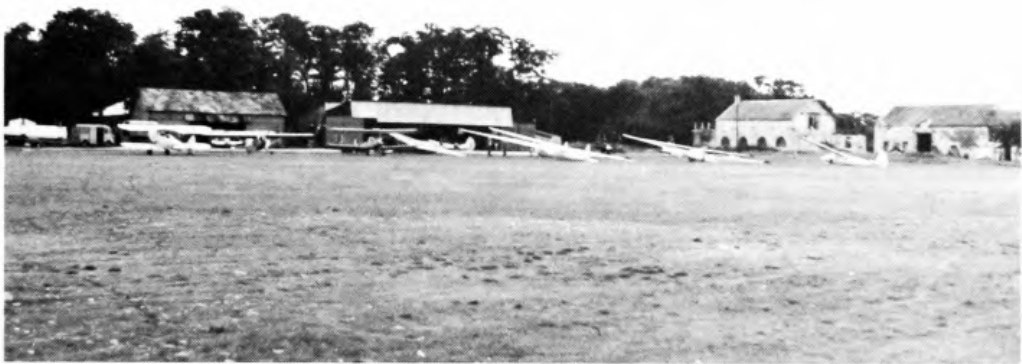
Clerk.



Pont-St-Vincent Airfield.



The type of winch (modified balloon winches used during the war) which were used at Hawkinge and were standard equipment with the Air Training Corps.



Pictures at La Fertais Alais.

made most of the turn he then landed on the far side of a rooftop by the main road, went gently over the top and luckily came to rest with wings firmly anchored by a chimney on each side. The fire brigade had a field-day and I recorded the latter stages on 16mm film but unfortunately did not take an ordinary photograph to include with this description.

The Instructor, still unconcerned, sent another pupil almost at once, who, on landing, hit a returning truck and removed his starboard wing completely. I recorded the aftermath on cine but had no sound apparatus to record the extensive repertoire of expletives from the C.O. at the enquiry that evening. Here we were with the C.O. berating the unfortunate instructor and intimating that a visit to Perranporth might widen his future perception. My services were unpaid, as they were to remain during the coming years, but this chap's job was at stake.

Back to the R.A.F.V.R. at Exeter for some continuous training and Terry Maunsell suggested that we fly to Redhill in a Chipmunk and go by train to London and have a look at the Battersea Fun Fair. We did so and in the evening returned to Victoria Station to pick up our bags. . .the luggage office was locked and an ill-afforded bribe was necessary to get them out. Terry had a supportive drink or two and next day, flying past Lasham we saw a glider on tow and clearly heading for a nearby fat cumulus with its accompanying strong upcurrent which all gliders constantly seek. I found later that it was Nick Goodhart in the glider towed by an Auster on one of the first flights from Lasham since the war ended. Terry and I continued towards Exeter until he asked me to take over as he was feeling a bit under the weather. Which I did, and decided to land at Middle Wallop for a rest where we met another gliding type, Lt/Colonel Grant-Dalton from Place House in Cornwall and who had previously been with us at Oerlinghausen.

A little later in the year I was talked into doing two weeks as a guest instructor at Lasham in the T21 and the Club was forging ahead to become the leading Club in the country. (I can imagine this claim now being disputed.) A devoted nucleus of enthusiasts were at the head of numerous enterprises and one that could not easily be forgotten was a notice from Wally Kahn with an impassioned plea for funds towards a new flush toilet. . .a facility as yet not installed. I remember Ted Berry coming up from Cornwall and giving a generous donation and appending a little note which will not be included herewith! Somehow, this Club seems to have retained the same friendly spirit throughout the years and visitors can count on a warm welcome from the C.F.I. Derek Pigott who, as one of our leading glider pilots, is undoubtedly one of the most self-effacing, and has overcome several problems as a result. In gliding it often appears more valuable to shout loudly than to quietly know the answers. . .perhaps it is the same in other sports, hand in hand with lowering standards of behaviour.

About this time I managed to visit the French Club at La Ferte Alais (Essonne), just south of Paris, where Paul Lепансе the C.F.I. had just made a flight down to Bordeaux and was receiving the congratulations of his friends. Another visit to Beynes (west of Paris) was enjoyed with warm hospitality and hand shakes...a meeting with the French lady Champion, Madame Choynet who promptly took us to her home for a meal before leaving for Paris. Both airfields had all aero-tow launches and the pilots were brilliant in the speed at which they organised the 'turn around' and it was plain to see that in true French style they were enjoying every minute of being 'part of the team'.

At the end of 1956 the A.T.C. were still at Culdrose and a logbook entry shows 'Aerobatics at Air Display' towed by F/Lt Vince. I remember the day only in that it was a superb soaring day and this had of necessity to be wasted in order to adhere to the flying display timetable. My own first 10 years in gliding had passed and I had only flown 400 hours and we were talking about starting a Club at Perranporth.

Bill Robins wrote a letter to Basil Meads who at that time was administering funds from the Kemsley Trust which was supporting gliding all over Britain, and Basil kindly agreed to come to Perranporth and meet us. Whilst awaiting this visit, Ted and myself motored all over the country to gliding clubs, picking up brochures and learning all we could from the administrators. Bill Robins shortly had to leave the County for business reasons, but had it not been for his hopeful letter, the Club would have never have been born. Ted undertook most of the paper work to come and with his concise administrative ability coupled with a keen sense of perception and etiquette, worked with amazing speed and vitality whilst I agreed to accept the flying problems that were bound to arise. We ran into one or two doubters from the start, but as Ted said, "If they throw mud they will lose ground".

Basil Meads arrived and his comments were at once depressing. He said that every gliding club should be able to draw on a population within a circle of at least 30 miles, but at Perranporth half our circle would be in the sea. In retrospect, the club has probably always had this disadvantage, but he must have sensed our Cornish obstinacy and agreed a loan at 2½% interest which was immediately accepted. We ordered a T21 from Slingsbys and called a meeting at the R.A.F.A. Club in Truro and the list of joining members is still in my file, many joining as life members such was their trust. We called for subscriptions in March 1957 and began flying the next month...the new club was born... The Cornish Gliding (& Flying) Club.

Philip Wills (B.G.A. Chairman) and Ann and Lorne Welch came to the site with valuable observations and the latter duo to categorise any instructor who was eligible for the test. On April

19th 1957 we aero-towed the Olympia with the Tiger Moth from Culdrose, both belonging to Ted and myself and immediately put them at the disposal of our new club, which had obtained a T31, a Tutor and was anxiously awaiting delivery of the New T21. An entry on May 26th 1957 whilst flying the Olympia 2B read... "Wave lift to 5,300 feet, wind 015 18 knots".

DECISIONS ON HOW TO OPERATE AT PERRANPORTH

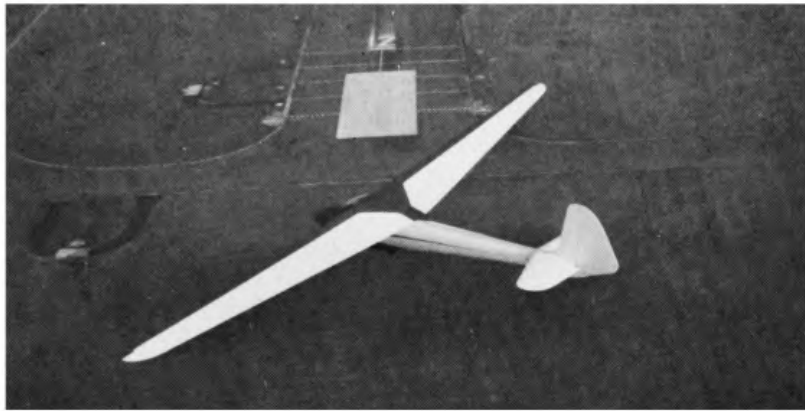
A policy of operation was publicised at Perranporth sensibly before flying began and effectively hinged on one or two basic principles dictated to a great extent by the position of the airfield and the prevailing weather to be expected. With the announcement of the Club's formation I had a running battle in the press with the wartime commander of the airfield, an Air Vice Marshal who considered the site too dangerous for gliding. Many experienced glider pilots were aware of the idiosyncrasies of the field but were unanimous in opposing his view and we were well and truly on course!

1. Launching by car on the East-West runway when it was ridge soarable was both economical, safe and efficient.
2. A tug aircraft was essential if we were to reach the inland thermal conditions and become a true gliding club.
3. Training would be in the best available two-seater that the club could afford.
4. The title of the club would be such as to allow the inclusion of power flying and instruction if finances ever allowed.

The first proviso was soon fulfilled, as Bill Lewis had already taken over the M.T. side and had organised a tow-car with Otffur ring and inside cab release. The second was the Tiger Moth, immediately available for 2000 feet tows at a cost of 15/- which charge included insurance, fuel, Certificate of Airworthiness and maintenance charges.

Item 3 was already in the pipeline...we were getting a T21 and the last item was duly incorporated.

This may sound pretty mundane to the reader but was vital information to those who came to the first meeting in the R.A.F.A. Club at Truro who accepted the ground work wholeheartedly...a warm start...resulting in a far flung membership. Next year (1958) we had achieved 7,362 flights without accident, including 41 first solos, 37 B certificates, 12 C certificates and 4 Silver C 'legs'. Membership was 140 and included an active ladies' committee.



The Olympia 2B at Culdrose.



Some of the early members of the Cornish Club.



Members building the entrance to the first hangar.



Single seater glider over the sea.

WE FETCH ANOTHER GLIDER

In August 1956, the Olympia 2B ordered by Ted and myself was ready for collection from Elliott's of Newbury after a test flight at Lasham. Ted thought we should aero-tow it back from there. From that idea much was to happen and the following story was very much a Ted Berry saga. It would not be unkind to say that Ted was 'incident prone' when it came to flying and we took off in the Tiger with Ted flying from the front and me well wrapped up in the back seat as we left Culdrose in quite abnormally cold weather for August and it was turbulent.

Passing over Plymouth airport we noticed the wind sock almost horizontal and bucketing about merrily, and by the time we had reached Exeter it had become really rough. With the Tiger re-fuelled we ploughed on towards Christchurch, where I had arranged to meet an old flying friend, Ron Hayter; but over Portland Bill, Ted began to circle thinking perhaps that we had arrived. I waggled the stick in true open cockpit style and flew on to Christchurch and landed, where Ted soon settled in an armchair with 'tea up' and I went to re-fuel the aircraft. Starting up again and impatiently waiting for Ted I eventually switched off and went back to the clubhouse where Ted was fast asleep...it really had been a rough trip and daylight was now fading, so once again airborne I drove the Tiger as fast as she would decently tolerate, but noting that the cars on the roads below already had their headlights on I quickly found farmer Newman's field and landed...just a few miles from Lasham. I knew the drill as I had landed only the previous August on Falmouth golf course whilst trying to crawl into Culdrose in thick fog. The police arrived and an unlucky constable was detailed to standby the aircraft all night before I rather shamefacedly turned up early in the morning to fly it to Lasham.

Now came the preparations to tow it to Cornwall and what followed was by any standards in flying, genuinely exciting.

Into a South Westerly wind of about 20 knots the day was unusually soarable with Ted flying the glider and me doing the towing we took off from Lasham for Christchurch again. Immediately after take-off the glider began cavorting all over the place in the lively air and at about 500 feet I saw the glider about 40 feet above me on the starboard side with the nylon cable wrapped round his port wing tip. Immediate action was vital... Using full throttle I slewed upwards and towards him in an unrepeatable manoeuvre which even the Tiger disliked, but mercifully the rope freed itself and a mighty tug meant that the two of us were still together. We flew low into the strong headwind but just before reaching Christchurch I took Ted up to 3000 feet so that he could have a little soar and enjoy the scenery whilst I re-fuelled. At Christchurch there were two airfields in one...the first for the

development of the twin Elizabethan civil aircraft and the other, a smaller area for light aircraft. I had forgotten to brief Ted who eventually landed on the long runway in front of an Elizabethan about to take off. I was called to the telephone and received the full blast of an indignant but articulate female control officer for causing a delay, so the Tiger fairly whistled over to remove the offending glider and once again we were bumping along on what was now a nerve pinching trip. It was long and tiring before we finally landed at Exeter which was to have been our last stop, but we both decided that it would be prudent to call at Plymouth to make sure of having enough fuel to proceed into what was now an even stronger wind.

Ted had just about had enough of the glider so we changed over with Ted in the tug heading for Plymouth. Dare I say it? Ted went off course to starboard and despite frantic tugging at his tail by the glider he didn't get the message. Finally, when completely frustrated, I pulled off the tug in a fizzing thermal which took me to about 6000 feet and flew to Roborough (Plymouth) where I went out to sea and back and still saw Ted land at Roborough. Another climb and some aerobatics to celebrate and I became aware of quite a crowd outside the control tower and thinking they were enjoying the aerobatics did another climb and a super spin right down to circuit height and landed. . .right by Ted, only to discover that the crowd were distinctly hostile. Ted had somehow forgotten to release the tow rope and it had bounced merrily up one side of a nearby house, over the top into the garden and struck a pram housing one mother's young baby. I led Ted quickly away leaving the airport manager to do a splendid job of placation and Ted found a chair and went to sleep, after confirming that the baby had been untouched and unharmed. I abandoned common sense for a time and enjoyed the Test Match on television before waking Ted for the final rough and exhausting leg to Culdrose. The next week end as we opened the hangar doors we both decided that it had all been worth while.

LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE

Our experience of towing the Olympia from Lasham to Exeter was a lesson indeed, but such a lesson has to be remembered before it becomes of any value to those concerned.

In August 1966 I was asked to tow the A.T.C. glider a T21 with pilots Frank Mares (in charge) and Tony Edwards from Exeter to Roborough (Plymouth) for the glider to give an aerobatic display. Always being willing to help I agreed and turned up at Exeter with plenty of time and an increasing awareness that once again it was going to be a soarable day with our track going straight across Dartmoor. . .a wonderful source of thermals, into a S.W. wind.

Off we went on the longest runway at Exeter and I kept feeling hard pulls on the Tiger Moth which resulted in the combination using all the runway and just clearing the trees at the end of the runway. Allowing for the dislike of a T21 to being aero-towed there seemed to be no explanation for this miserably slow climb until I noticed in the mirror that the spoilers of the T21 were occasionally opening and naturally thought that there were some minor mechanical problems at their end. If not...then I was angry!

After the display at Plymouth and both landing nicely I discovered that neither pilot had flown a T21 on aero-tow before and considered that it was necessary to keep station by opening the spoilers. I refused to tow them back to Exeter...not simply because I was not even being paid for the cost of my petrol, but because Plymouth was too small an airfield to take chances. On reflection I profited I'm sure as I had now really learnt the lesson and would remember it for ever.

A few flights with the Olympia at Culdrose and then we towed it to Perranporth to the hangar where Frank Lipman had made the hangar doors without any help whatever and which are still being used today in 1986. Other members pitched in and with the calculations of architect Tom Henwood Hicks (now living in Perth, Australia) concreted the heavy buttresses to support the roof and the wide entrance for the gliders.

CORNISH GLIDING (& FLYING) CLUB

Paro Sparbles,

Carbis Bay,

Tel: Ferranporth 2124

(1959)

ST. IVES, Cornwall.

BANKERS ORDER. It will greatly assist the Treasurers and Secretaries - all Honorary workers - if you would sign the enclosed Bankers Order.

AIRFIELD. Since receiving our last summary of results of our campaign, you will have read and heard that, thanks to the public support organized by members, the late Mr. Ernest Milner-Haigh's tender was accepted and this Club therefore has security of tenure.

The Committee have hung his portrait in the Club Room recording the fact that he purchased the Aerodrome for the benefit of this Club and this County, and they are also arranging a Memorial Annual Cup for the most outstanding flight within, or starting from, this County.

FLYING RESULTS. Since we started less than 2 years ago, we have trained 62 Pilots to the Solo A and B stage and 30 to the Soaring "C" Certificate, and we invite your comparison with the 1958 results of other leading clubs in the U.K.:

Club	Members	Launches	Certificates				Legs
			A	B	C	Silver C	
Lasham	798	23,000	56	65	22	-	20
Cornish	94	5,117	31	31	17	-	12
Coventry	133	6,764	24	24	9	6	14
London	420	10,280	22	22	12	7	20

In the number of flights we were seventh and in the certificate results we were SECOND only to Lasham, the largest gliding centre in the world. For a club of our size and age such results are quite outstanding and they show that we should receive far more support than we do at present. With two full time instructors and FLYING EVERY DAY between April 13th and October 9th we should achieve 7,000 launches this year and enable YOU to have more flying.

LADIES COMMITTEE made a valiant start and provided tea and refreshments mid-day and evening on most flying days and, thanks largely to the efforts of Mary Jose, have accumulated a balance of some £40, which can be spent in whatever way the Ladies themselves choose.

The burden was (like many others who do so much 'home-work' for the Club) borne by a few - too few and many more helpers are required - and are assured of a very hearty welcome.

We had one successful romance, Anne Tuson and Instructor Tony Clark-Lewis, and we'll welcome more results in this direction.

THE SHOP. In addition to excellent Club ties, scarves, etc. in stock, Titus Bate has first class Club Car Badges, and before Whitsun we shall have a stock of Club Badges suitable for Blazers, Flying Overalls or Berets, at really low prices:

Mens Ties	£0.15.0.
Mens Scarves	£1. 0.0.
Ladies Scarves	£0.12.0.
Ladies Triangles	£0.16.6.
Blazer Badges Hand Made - Gold wire	£1.16.0.
Machine Embroidered	£0. 5.0.
Enamelled Car Badges	£1. 5.0.



Pictures from a glider of St. Merryn... covered by snow.

THE CORNISH A.T.C. GLIDING SCHOOL CLOSES DOWN

In February, 1957 the Cornish Gliding School closed down, not to re-open for several years, so we had timed the opening of Perranporth well. All the A.T.C. instructors who had given so much of their time freely for so many years suddenly found themselves with time on their hands and many joined the Cornish Club anxious to help and see the club become successful.

In the eleven years that I had been C.F.I. with Jim Williams the C.O. and Bill Huxtable almost part of the winch, there had been many shared memories and we had sent over 300 cadets on their first flights, not always without incident but thankfully without any injuries which says a lot for the patience and thoroughness of the School.

We had started at St. Eval when it was still operational in Coastal Command, moved to the Royal Naval Air Station at St. Merryn where they were also operational and which in addition provided a magnificent bonus in the form of a bountiful mushroom crop at the end of each summer. From St. Merryn we had moved to the Royal Naval Air Station at Culdrose, also operational and also rich

Tuesday 16th May 1961. *Hutchinson* Frank during

LANDING CERTIFICATE 91

D. Kaye This glider is taking part in the National Gliding Championships at Lasham Aerodrome, Hampshire and the organisers would be very grateful for any help that you are able to give the pilot.

This is to certify that the glider was flown by *W. J. Hutchinson*

Landed by US at *St Merryn* (full postal address) *89, 75, 123, 175*

Landed at *Perranporth* *16, 18, 2, 60, 20*

Signature: *W. J. Hutchinson* Signed: *John B. ...*

Address: *W. J. Hutchinson, Perranporth, Cornwall*

W. J. Hutchinson *J. P. ...* *J. Paul*

W. J. Hutchinson *J. P. ...* *J. Paul*

LEAFLET 1. TUESDAY 16th MAY 1961
 "DISTANCE ALONG A LINE THROUGH PERRANPORTH"
 Communal landing certificate of the 29 gliders which landed at Perranporth. A further 11 gliders overflowed towards Lant's End.



A typical cold front approaches the airfield.

in mushrooms, then to disused Harrowbeer near Yelverton in Devon and lastly back to Culdrose again.

Many of the cadets progressed in various ways in their flying, some privately and some commercially. Several of the naval pilots helped at different stages in the instruction of cadets and of one I must tell an odd story. I knew that from Culdrose he went to R.N.A.S. Yeovilton and then I heard that he had emigrated to Edmonton in Canada, so when in 1982 I was in Edmonton I looked him up in the telephone book and there, sure enough was Michael Apps. . . must be Lt/Commander Apps that I knew in England, so I made the call.

What a coincidence. . . it was Michael Apps who answered the telephone right enough, but he was a Canadian and nothing to do with the British Navy! But. . . he was. . . the President of the Alberta Soaring Association and soon led me to a source of gliding of which more later.

THE STORY SO FAR

It was my original intention to make this a little history of gliding in Cornwall, but now realise that a mere collection of facts is restrictively boring and hence the frequent departures. The stories incorporated are necessarily those as seen through only two eyes; my own, but they are as accurate as possible and hopefully interesting.

One small event at St. Eval was the materialisation of an Auster Autocrat from somewhere complete with tow-hook. I towed Jim Williams one Sunday in a Tutor into some thin wispy cloud which somehow quickly developed into real cloud and felt him release so went back and landed. After about half an hour no glider appeared so an aerial search revealed that he had unwittingly landed at St. Mawgan! Mike Armstrong and I went over to tow him back but he was having none of it and I had to get in the Tutor whilst he went with Mike in the Auster to tow me back.

Naturally he was the subject of a few ribald remarks, but he got his own back on me at least, when the following Sunday saw his approach go a little astray and he put the wing of the Tutor straight through the windscreen of my car.

My own father, not very interested in flying and saying that he would never go up in any kind of aircraft, did at least come to St. Eval one day and have a look at this Auster and sat in it for me to explain 'how it worked'. I showed him as best I could and started the engine and before he could protest, we were at the end of the runway at about 100 feet. He was unconcerned and in no time at all he was saying "That farm down there is Harry Key's. . . see the river coming

right up to Wadebridge...there's the football field; I've played there a good many times"... We flew for about an hour and he was delighted.

On September 28th 1958 Ann Welch came to visit us and Arthur Bosanko gained his full category and was a staunch helper for many years.

In 1959, my gliding started in Fayence in France where on one day I had a check flight and next flew a Nord 2000 to a height of 14,000 feet. Entry in logbook reads Altitude de Brevet E which meant a gold C height...disappointing, as I was still climbing well when ordered down because the Mistral wind was increasing violently. I only had two days to spare, but 17 years later I still had a card announcing that I was an Honorary Member of their Club! - And I flew there again, even higher!

THE GLIDER DOCTOR

This was a self-bestowed title on Don Campbell who together with his wife went around the country carrying out C's of A and general repairs to gliders whenever required and he did the necessary checks on our Olympia, as well as several aircraft of the Club fleet. This was at the time that Warren Storey was the amiable engineer at Lasham before the business was taken over by Southern Sailplanes Ltd., under the guidance of glider pilot/engineer Ken Fripp. Ken is still part of the 'vitals' at Lasham and it is rare indeed that many visitors to Lasham come and go without going to see him and his son Mike who is also in the business as a first-class aviation engineer.

Don Campbell was helping with Emile Hartman's ornithopter at Perranporth which was a queer looking beast, suggesting that its ancestors may well have been from the T31 stables, but real feathers at the wing tips were enough to make most pilots stand and stare. The flapping motion required was to have been provided by strong elastic cords and from the moment of inception this side of the mechanics seemed to have been the stumbling block and it never really became a success.

It is said that 'Necessity is the mother of Invention!' but in this case it was understood that plenty of financial backing was promised, but it was sad to see a dream just fade away after reaching the last push in construction. It was also a shock to hear a few months later that both Don and his wife Nan had perished in a Viscount crash in Italy.

In May 1959, I was appointed to the Instructors Committee of the British Gliding Association whose meetings used to be held at Artillery Mansions in Victoria before the Association moved to

Leicester. At those meetings, not only was the necessary formal agenda dealt with but afterwards the informal conversation provided an exchange of information which I personally found invaluable. This was carried back by me to my own club.

TRAILER BUILDING...THE FARMERS AT TREVELLAS...POWER FLYING

The Committee of which I was both Chairman (a nominal position in a gliding club) and C.F.I., decided that we needed a trailer and an old chassis was purchased and lay waiting for volunteers. It was April 1959 and everyone was too busy flying so we asked Harry Hooper to build it on a professional basis and Bernard Warmington and myself would pay for it. Harry had his own building business and telephoned one night to say it was almost ready, so the next day an examination of the sky suggested that it might just be possible to soar; perhaps even as far as St. Tudy where the trailer was being built. A quick aero-tow and the Olympia was pointing towards St. Tudy, but it was hard work and took nearly an hour to see Harry's workshop and land in a field about 200 yards away. When I walked into the workshop, Harry was full of apologies as he thought I had come to tow the trailer back by car but it was far from finished. When I told him the glider was just across the road he was even more apologetic, but a few hurried messages and telephone calls produced a mass of workers and by evening the Olympia was safely in its box and a car had arrived to tow us to Perranporth. This was another step forward and there was now a move to enter the machine in the National Championships...opposed by myself as most of the other gliders in the competition were of far more advanced design. It was 'decided' that I should put the Club on the map and enter...more later!

A serious omission so far in the story has been the attitude of the farmers who were our co-tenants, in that they rented the land as did the gliding club the runways and perimeter tracks. At first they were a little suspicious, but quickly learnt that we were harmless and never has there been any serious disagreement since our flying operations began.

Power flying? We have never reached the financial position of being able to start any serious kind of operation...but it still remains an open option for the future, but never, we hope never, to the detriment of the gliding activities.

OUR FIRST NATIONALS

Harry Hooper, Ted Berry, Bernard Warmington, Vic Prowse, my wife Elizabeth and self set off for a new experience for all of us and without affording any practice time like the pundits, took off for the first task...a distance flight. Without saying how far I didn't go, it was the day that Nick Goodhart went to Portmoak in Scotland as his declared landing place. The next day the weather forecast was for very weak thermals (May 12th 1959) so I took out of the Olympia all the unnecessary 'clobber' including an efficient oxygen demand system, in order to save weight, but after launching and setting off on track it began to dawn that the air was in fact more than usually active and searching under one huge cloud with brakes fully 'out' I found the green ball of the Cosim variometer stuck at the top, so decided on an all out height climb. Between my feet I had put a small vacuum pump driven by batteries which in turn worked the previously 'venturi driven' Artificial horizon. The horizon was an old Sperry 3C in which I had complete confidence and on entering cloud the altimeter wound merrily away as the glider settled down to accurate rate 3 turns, yet I was somewhat disturbed by a loud burst of thunder which made the aircraft vibrate. However, I had made my mind up that I would get really high and was beginning to think about anoxia as I passed 15,000 feet still climbing rapidly. At 18,500 feet I was sensible enough to try and get out on a Westerly course which I eventually achieved but not before experiencing the most severe turbulence I hope ever to encounter. Trying to tighten one's straps with one hand and maintain some sort of control with the other was enough to produce a very dry mouth...and then suddenly...warm sunshine and a blinding light in a cockpit covered with ice. I opened the clear view panel and made a conscious effort not to make any sudden movement, in case of oxygen deprivation. The rapidly sinking glider gave me the impression of clouds of steam rushing upwards near the side. I could see that this cloud extended as far as Southampton and was very black at its base so I flew on fast into the sunshine at the same time hoping that the controls would soon resume their normal feel and that the lumps of ice breaking off would soon completely clear.

Nearby I recognised a smaller 'cell' from this massive cu-nim and made straight for it as I knew although I had been high I had not covered much ground and that this was a competition in which only distance counted. Looking down I saw Keith Aldridge landing his Eagle in a field, so I knew at least that I would not be last, but this next cloud simply opened itself and gave my shiny Olympia a good dose of rain and sleet. Flying through it, sink was alarming and then I saw a good field in sunshine with an A.A. telephone box alongside, so down we went and stopped right by the gate. A quick call from the box and the crew were en route and then it began to

rain torrentially and the thunder and lightning kept up an incessant bombardment. The crew arrived and Harry came over with a bit of a long face to tell me that some gliders had gone a lot further and that so far I had been far from brilliant. I felt a bit sorry, as the entrance to the gate had now become a quagmire and it was still raining heavily; then I told him to have a look at the barograph and I can still hear his remark... "Blimey, that's a bit of all right old boy". All was forgiven...we drove to Warminster, stopped and changed clothes in a public lavatory...my wife as well...but even then were refused entry to a nice Hotel for dinner and we were all really famished. Fish and chips never tasted better that night!

We finished in the top half of the competition and had now become that bit less parochial in our outlook as a gliding club. Talk was all about flying...and politics unimportant as we had enough pilots in the club to make it so; they were mainly ex-service and were anxious to see that the club went purposely forward in every way it possibly could.

We had an occasional visitor in a Cessna 310 in the person of Jack Silley, a wealthy businessman, who one day asked me what I would like for the Club in its present state of development and I said an 'Eagle' two seater, for cross-country training. Within two weeks he had bought one from Wally Kahn and it was at Perranporth, but after a very short while one of our members told him that the Club could manage without 'charity' and he was so offended that the glider went to the Essex Club at North Weald and we were the poorer. We had even used the machine on courses and one good day at lunch-hour I went out from Truro to help and took one of the pupils, Les Crawford, on a little flight from Perranporth to Lostwithiel and back. Les is now a fully rated gliding instructor with a diamond or two to his credit.

January 28th was a boisterous day and I fell for a challenge to take off in the Olympia from outside the old hangar and launch directly into wind. Bill Lewis drove the tow-car and off we went along the hard ground but on meeting the wet grass area 'the car stood still but the wheels went round'...a song for which any Cornishman will provide the words! However, disaster was looming when the car managed to urge forward and almost to the edge of the cliff which I reached in the glider at 80 feet. The strong North Westerly wind welcomed the bucketing glider and by the time we had reached the St. Agnes end of the ridge our height was 1800 feet. No more problems but a quiet decision not to do it again!

A visit to North Hill with its usual warm reception and a flight with Sam Tolman their longstanding instructor and Chairman, was dulled a few weeks later when we learnt in Cornwall that he had lost his life in a car accident.

Another flight of interest was a tow behind Mike Armstrong to try and find wave lift near Davidstow. All was well until near St. Tudy



Friends brought tug aircraft to help the show at our National Gliding Week.



Part of the crowd.



*Major 'Ted' Berry Bernard Warmington Sir Peter Scott
Sir Wavell Wakefield Colonel Benson*



Sir Wavell opening the flying programme

he waved me off at only 1500 feet (the Tiger was running short of petrol) in a stiff head wind, but almost at once I found wave, certainly not the primary which I tried unsuccessfully to reach, but got to 4,600 feet before turning downwind to land at St. Eval for an aero-tow home.

Ted and I had numerous meetings with the Commoners of Davidstow and their solicitors at Launceston which culminated happily in the club being given permission to use Davidstow airfield for auto and aero-tow launches which we did on many occasions with many extra soaring hours as our dividend. One day at Perranporth I thought it would be a good idea to make the Skylark III available to Harry Hooper to fly from Davidstow to Perranporth for a Silver C distance, so Tony Clarke-Lewis (tug pilot) towed me up to Davidstow and we both landed to meet Harry. The idea was now to give Harry an aero-tow to 1000 feet only (Davidstow was nearly 1000 feet above sea level) and for Harry to soar to Perranporth whilst Tony and I returned in the Tiger. Anxious not to keep anyone waiting, Tony decided to start the Tiger on his own without checks and once again the familiar story was to be told. The aircraft started and the pilot having just swung the propeller, was outside and mighty depressed to watch it lurch forward on undulating ground and hit the propeller. The Tiger was back on duty in a week thanks to Russell Hocking at Plymouth.

NATIONAL GLIDING WEEK AT PERRANPORTH

In June the Club was to organise a National Gliding Week and still keep the courses for visiting pilots running under Instructor John Harris. Bernard Warmington and Harry Hooper worked conscientiously at the preparation for the gliding week which was opened by Sir Wavell Wakefield (who once played Rugby for London University Pharmacy College) and many other important local dignitaries were present for the first day which was to be an air display with the first flypast of the Boeing 707 at low level, a Hunter of III Squadron, three Tigers from Plymouth roped together in aerobatic manouevres, six parachutists and a glider display in the Olympia which started with a full spin from 6000 feet down to 2000 feet and then the more usual display.

Entrants in the competition included Philip Wills, Colonel Benson, Sir Peter Scott, Charles Ellis, Lionel Alexander Q.C., Major Godfrey Harwood, Ivor Tarver, Ted Stark, Dr. Gregg, other well known pundits and one local member Pip Phillips. My job was task setter and on the very first day this meant everyone trailing to Davidstow, rigging and then flying the set task. Two Tigers, our own and one flown by John Garood got to work, and back at

Perranporth I felt relieved as Dr. Gregg appeared in a gentle glide and landed, having used the sea breeze effect from Bude to home. Pip Phillips went the other way to try and get home for his Silver C badge, but landed at Pentire Farm, Polzeath. All this activity was in May 1960 and a cold contribution from myself was to fly Mr. Jefferson, the 'met' man in the Tiger each morning at the crack of dawn with a massive thermometer strapped to the starboard strut. Together with these temperature readings and the tephigrams from Camborne we struggled to match the results with the general forecast from R.A.F. Mountbatten. All in all we were surprisingly successful and the last day arrived which had all the indications of being a 'cracker' and so it was. In a light South West wind I set a free distance task and by winning this day Philip Wills was the overall winner with Peter Scott a close second. This day too, about an hour after all the competitors had left I went off in the Olympia and got as far as Weston Zoyland before being beaten by heavy rain, but my consolation was that only Philip and Peter had gone farther.

A NEW INSTRUCTOR AND RESIDENT ENGINEER

In 1960, Fred Breeze joined us as resident instructor and engineer and in the latter capacity never ceased to amaze onlookers with both his accuracy and speed of work. Slingsbury Sailplane were at this time selling kits for home construction programme and the response was immediate. The Club bought a kit to build a Swallow glider and Fred set about the job vigorously, occasionally accepting help from one or two of the more capable amateurs and my logbook shows a test flight on August 27th 1960 and another flight next day of 50 minutes in thermals.

We achieved another step forward and my flying for 1960 ended just before Christmas with a flight from Sabadell in Spain, along the coast and over Barcelona which was a relaxed and pleasant end to the year which I thought I had earned.

THE WEATHER

No gliding club in Britain could be sensibly started without a detailed study of local weather. Over the whole country the weather is usually described as temperate, but in Cornwall the weather is far more temperamental than temperate and in any case temperamental is usually half temper and half mental... and is our heritage. This extreme corner of our islands gets the 'first and last' of British weather and when a sudden tell-tale drop in the barometer indicates a raging South Westerly gale it has to be

endured to be understood, such is often its violence. Low pressure systems queue up in the Atlantic for this battle with the mainland and surely this tremendous source of energy will one day be harnessed for the good of mankind. Even when these cold fronts arrive there is still sufficient energy in the wind to be used. The light is clear, the air clean and crisp and must have been much the same as that which in the past inspired such great painters as Rembrandt and Vermeer to achieve such clarity of tone, as this air mass swept its way over the Dutch fenlands.

In these North Westerly winds the gliders are able to soar freely over the Atlantic facing cliffs (320 feet high) and enables the pilots to see right across the county to Falmouth and beyond and on the North Coast to St. Ives. This provides gliding which is a step above the gliding 'school' type of training with heights of 1500 to 2000 feet being quite common. . .but it is still not what the true glider pilot is seeking, which is the thermal activity further inland when the weather is unstable. To reach this area a tug aircraft is an absolute necessity and such conditions are much more frequent than many pilots imagine. One day the sea breeze effect is vital, exciting and powerful, forming large clouds which carry the gliders upwards and onwards and the next day sweeps all convection away from the land for miles.

A fickle area weatherwise, but for the observant, a constant challenge that can often be conquered and enjoyed as only a glider and its pilot can experience. Thus it was at the very start of flying at Perranporth the necessity of a tug aircraft was recognised, only to be dispensed with later by a committee of newer members with little gliding experience. It was sold without my knowledge after all the problems I had overcome to get it to the site and even today is still towing valiantly at another club. Its value has also increased about 30 times from the amount that Ted and I sold it to the Club.

This loss of a tug aircraft contrasted sharply with the entry by our secretary P.V. Prowse in the magazine 'Sailplane & Gliding' listing the fleet of the Cornish Club and ending with the words "including of course the absolutely indispensable Tiger Moth".

TUG PILOT

Prior to the loss of the Tiger we had been steadily building up a reserve of competent tug pilots and I had got my 'ticket' to instruct on the Tiger and Chipmunk plus motor gliders to P.P.L. and towing standards. The list of pilots included Courtenay-Thomas (ex R.A.F.), Jack Ware from Plymouth Aero Club, Bill Mathews (ex R.A.F.), Maurice Leng (ex Battle of Britain and R.A.F.V.R.), Tony Clark-Lewis (ex Fleet Air Arm), Mike Armstrong (ex A.T.A.) and

F/Lts Geoff Jones and Peter Hanneman from R.A.F. St. Mawgan.

This provided a roster of two pilots every Saturday and Sunday and one on Thursday afternoons which were normal club flying times, but of course if the weather was bubbling it was often possible to get somebody out to do a quick tow. I have often been out to the field on a working day and given a tow in my lunch hour...such was the keenness of the soaring members! We also had some visiting pilots qualified to tow and these included Geoff Wass, Ken Woolley and John Garood...all good friends of the Cornish Club.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

Flying from East to West behind the Tiger Moth, Vic Prowse and myself into a stiff wind and for three of us (Mike Armstrong in the Tiger) this was to be a short flight never to be forgotten. Well up the runway at about 250 feet there was suddenly tremendous turbulence with the Tiger dancing madly up and down whilst we made less than competent efforts to keep in station and began to lose height alarmingly. It was about 50 feet when we reached the cliffs and here the lift was true to form, but we climbed, made a quick circuit and took a unanimous decision, which at that time was not unusual. In future as soon as both tug and glider were airborne, the tug would turn left to avoid this evil turbulence, but incredibly a similar experience was to follow. With Jack Silley as a passenger a few days later I specifically reminded Mike (the tug pilot) about the new directive to turn left, but somehow his mind was elsewhere and a similar 'flight' was endured.

Jack at this time was considering building a new hangar at his own expense; planning permission had been obtained, his architects had drawn up the plans and the first Spitfire bay was to be the site. This would have been a wonderful boost to the Club but sadly Jack was killed returning from France one day in a hired light aircraft after successfully competing in the London-Paris Air Race.

FLYING PROGRESS

The Cornish Club had been steadily forging ahead and after the Swallow had been built from kit form, to help retain the invaluable services of Fred Breeze during the winter I had bought a kit to build a Skylark IIIF and construction had begun in the hangar.

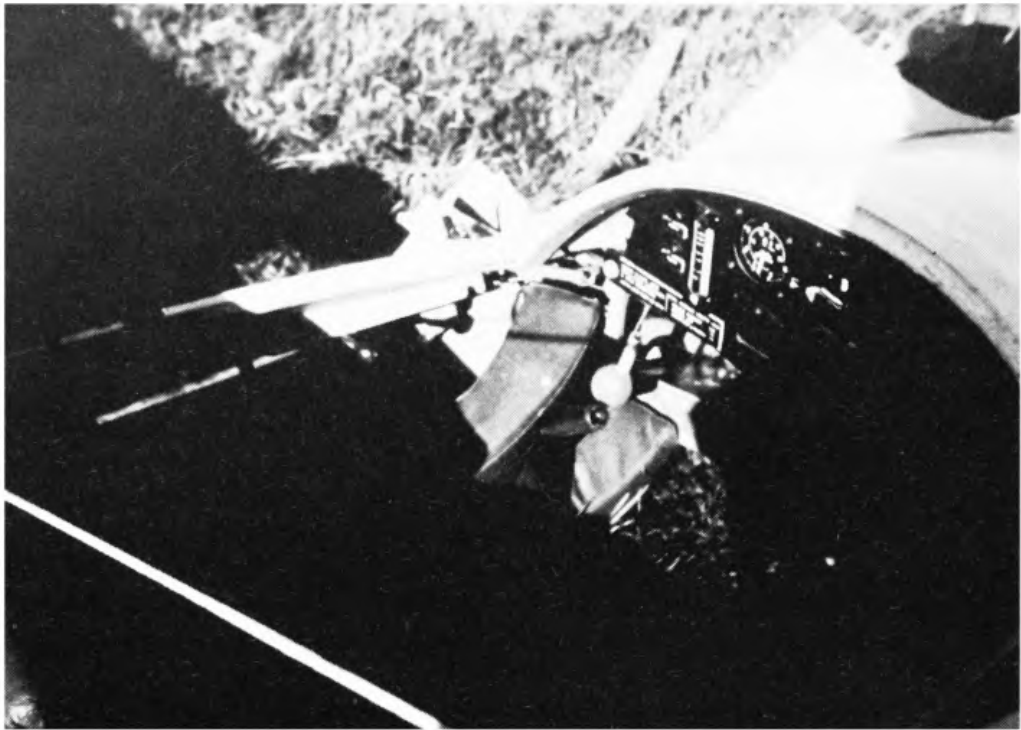
As a member of the Instructors Committee I was on the panel of examiners for pilots wishing to obtain full ratings and my area was from R.N.A.S. Yeovilton, Weston-Super-Mare, Dunkeswell, North



The Skylark 111F under construction in the workshop. I flew two diamond goals from Perranporth in the machine when finished, and sadly it was the machine in which Peter Lanyon crashed at Dunkeswell and later died from resulting injuries.



Dunkeswell airfield with Upottery airfield beyond...taken from the Skylark on a flight to Compton Abbas.



My seat in the Eagle after the 'prang'.



The finished Skylark outside the old hangar.

Hill, Davidstow and Culdrose and occasionally when asked, Lasham. This, including attending B.G.A. meetings in London involved quite some expense and time, but I felt it made the Cornish Club a little less isolated.

Most of our members read Sailplane & Gliding magazine (and others) which one day told us that Paul Bickle had climbed to 46,267 feet over the Mojave in California and Anne Burns had reached 34,000 feet in South Africa whilst her husband Denis had made an out and return flight of 353 miles. Such a few words in a magazine meant so much effort by so many that it served to make us think of our own small ambitions.

On March 14th 1962 I test flew the Skylark 3 on which artist Peter Lanyon had painted the competition number 103 and a few days later with George Tuson and my wife as crew entered the Swanton Morley Rally. I won one of the only three flying days that the weather permitted which we considered acceptable and in May I was off to the Nationals at Lasham where flights of over 100 miles on five consecutive days gave the crew some fun and the trailer an airing after it had been adorned 'Cornish Gliding Club' by the now famous artist Ben Maile.

Back to Perranporth and more organising and flights to Yeovilton, Cullompton and a triangle, Davidstow-Roborough-Perranporth, but the outstanding flight of the year was made by John Kenny when he flew from Perranporth to Plymouth...in a well-worn Kite glider! Earlier in the year the B.B.C. had made a film of our flying called 'View' and wanted to come again so with some small financial inducement we went ahead with the preparation. I got the National Coach John Everitt to come with an Auster to tow and Bobby Coles agreed to bring down his Eagle two-seater.

THE B.B.C. MAKE A FEATURE FILM OF THE CORNISH CLUB

John Everitt with the Auster had the side door removed for the benefit of the Chief cameraman, Jack Belasco, who quickly made friends with everyone and the producer, Ron Webster presented us with the programme he wanted to film. It all seemed straightforward but I was to receive some harsh treatment during the making, albeit quite accidental! Tom Salmon our local television personality flew in the T31 with instructor Bernard Warmington and later David Collins with cheerful countenance answered unswervingly all the banal questions of the friendly interviewers. Ted Berry and George Tuson chatted about the running of the club generally and Terry Lewis for the younger members gave his views about the sport, as did Enid Tuson and my

wife from the female point of view...which naturally included references to the ladies committee and the indefatigable work of course secretary Jane Pollard. Mr Shipton had given us a tea hut which was the centre of a meals and tea canteen which seemed to produce either at the 'drop of a hat'. It was the warm, friendly pivotal point where everyone seemed to forget any differences and enjoyed the company and conversation instead.

Next came the test flight of the Eagle with the owner in the front seat and myself in the back. After questions as to a valid insurance and a new modification to the canopy we set off behind the Auster into a turbulent South Westerly wind and the next flight was to be with Peter West for the film. At about 200 feet I suddenly found that I had no aileron control whatever and with hard rudder the lateral position was held after some difficulty in releasing from the tug. However, we were going straight for an uncompromisingly rough sea, so allowed the glider to drop a wing (a bit too far) and turn towards the centre field, pulled the airbrakes at the last minute, with the glider racing madly downwind, near the ground pulled them hard out and kicked hard rudder yet again. Although the ground speed seemed extreme, the airspeed was just not enough to allow the necessary time for correction when we hit the ground and we performed a violent groundloop. Bobby stepped out with nothing worse than a white face but my straps had become detached, I was hit in the stomach and my left leg cut enough to reveal several inches of shinbone.

Holding my leg together I managed to persuade someone to stop talking long enough to get me to Bill Carter our friendly doctor to fix things and also let me go and change my 'bloody trousers'.

Next day it was even rougher and a call for someone to take over and do the aerobatics went unheeded so I did my best in the Swallow then took Peter West in the T21 now that we no longer had the more elegant Eagle...which had been partly collected in a blanket such was the damage the day before. The accident had been caused by the aileron pin being only partially inserted, hence allowing the vital action checks to be done satisfactorily, but in the turbulent air it had jumped out. A chance in a million everyone said, but all pilots who owned Eagle gliders no doubt took it to heart and beat that chance.

The film turned out to be a good one although the cameraman had missed a good plan view of the Swallow during the aerobatics as he said afterwards that it came so close that he was frightened stiff. Another good shot somehow missed was of the Skylark, Meise and Swallow in line astern at about 80 feet along the soarable ridge. Nevertheless, the film was shown nationally and with an excellent choice of music (now a rare thing) it was well received both locally and nationally.

My reward, apart from hospital treatment for a stiff neck and internal bruising was a copy of the film...with that superb music.



The three
founders of the
Comish Gliders
Club at
Pon-poth



Talking to Prince Philip about the Skylark III made in the workshop at Perranporth. Philip Wills (left), Gerry Burgess (centre) and Doug Jones (just about visible).



At this time Chairman of the British Gliding Association.

THE NATIONALS AGAIN

This year the competitions were at Aston Down and here we enjoyed some of the best weather ever for a National competition. We did not however enjoy the best spirit of competition as clearly the R.A.F. had an overwhelming advantage over civilian entries. Before the contest I received an official notification (as did others) that no launches would be allowed before the competitions began, but on arrival we learnt that the R.A.F. had held a practice week actually on this site and the first triangle set, in which I flew, had been set twice during the practice week. Was it any surprise then when an R.A.F. member won the day easily whilst several of us were still searching for a tiny bridge on our maps at the first turning point. Then we had a rest day and we towed our Skylark out wearily on a hot day for Harry Hooper (one of our crew) to have a flight, only to be told at the launch point that there was a shortage of petrol and only R.A.F. personnel could fly. I had personally little interest in the week; a view shared by most civilians who were not invited to the special briefing for R.A.F. pilots. These civilian pilots voted it a ghastly blunder, so on the last day I simply flew to Exeter which was on the way home for the crew.

Away from competition Alfred Warminger, on April 14th, flew from Swanton Morley to Perranporth and became the fourth British pilot to achieve all three diamonds to his Gold badge. It was a superb day and C.P.O. Holding from Bicester also arrived as did Les Cheeseman from Lasham. Rika Harwood flew from Lasham on the last day of May and we did our best to welcome everyone with many congratulations.

My next long trail of interest was with Ernie Hayman (later to become our C.F.I. at Perranporth) to Wales via the Severn Tunnel which was an experience in itself and then later to Varese in Italy.

THE VISIT TO WALES

It was 1962 and Ivor Shattock having done his instructors' course at Perranporth had invited us to a site on the hills that we decided to try. Ivor has since literally pioneered the mountains and is now known as 'The wizard of the Welsh mountains'. I knew him and still do as a dedicated glider pilot willing to help anyone who wanted to ask his advice and we set out up a steep hill as per his telephone briefing to find this site. Access was difficult, the weather forecast was 'porous' so we left the glider at a farm and went the rest of the way by car only. It was a super site but the difficulties of access and there being no hangarage space soon made another site a priority and hence was born the field at Usk. Ernie and I pressed on to

Dunstable where after he had flown locally I took a launch and flew down and landed at Lasham which with so many friends around always acted to me like a magnet. Ernie had first flights at Lasham and after Godfrey Harwood had pronounced it absolutely unsoarable by flying around in his motor Tutor an obdurate Cornishman took a launch and after floating around carefully in the Skylark turned towards the West and gently proceeded. A very gentle and soothing flight ended with a landing at Exeter where yet again my friends were at hand and the aircraft was de-rigged and ready for the trailer within a few minutes. I had flown 128 miles and half expected Ernie to be waiting for me as it had been such an unconcerned flight as regards time, but I had a surprise when I telephoned Lasham to give my position to learn that Ernie had been convinced by the pundits that I must be down in a field somewhere as conditions really were not soarable. A long wait and Ernie arrived with his imperturbable smile and we were on our way home; after a lovely flight in a wooden ship!

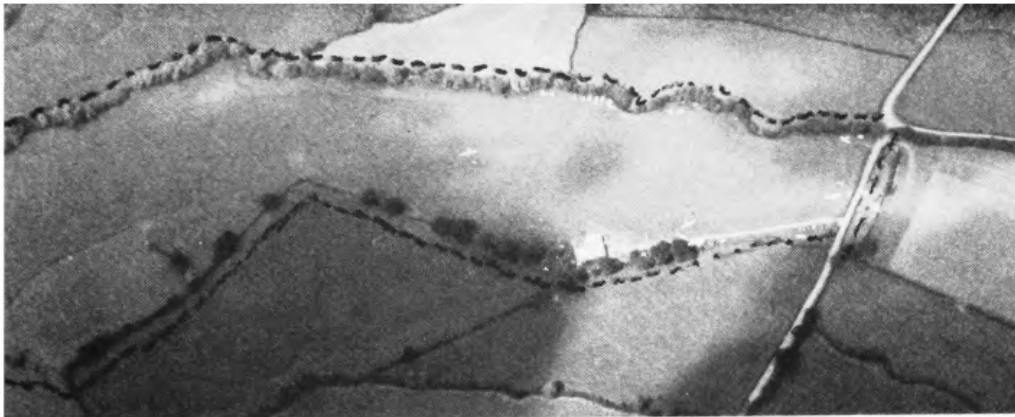
Four more cross country flights all over 100 miles entered in my logbook, then I thought I would try to make Lasham, as during the last National Competition 29 pilots had got to Perranporth (or beyond) from Lasham, and I wanted to be the first to do it the other way. It was far from an easy flight, as after releasing at 2000 feet over Redruth I had a hard struggle to remain airborne, and in fact it was past Okehampton (about 80 miles) before I ever regained my release height. . . much of the flight being fought out at about 1800 feet or below and progress was slow. At Okehampton luckily the air mass changed and I went up to 3800 feet and soon afterwards fizzed past 5000 feet with ease. It was June 16th and Denis Bolton and Dr Pat Pearson were driving the trailer when I called them and diverted them to Thruxton as the road traffic was intense. From Lasham I got an aero-tow back to Thruxton where at that time Ralph Jones had his glider works and this saved a considerable time on the retrieve. One or two more flights, including a flight to St. Just and back and 1963 was upon us.

My log book now showed 1000 gliding hours in addition to the hours piled up with the R.A.F. V.R. at Exeter. A competition again at Swanton Morley finishing second, and then back to the Nationals where several flights of 150 miles or more enabled us to finish well up the table. Back to work at Perranporth again, a flight to Hales Land on the Mendip Hills and then an exciting (and very frustrating trip) to Varese in Italy.

Before 1962 ended though, Jan Jansen became the first lady pilot to gain a Silver C from Perranporth, and her husband Terry became a valuable member of the fully categorised instructors. It was a bit of a blow to the Club when they decided to leave Cornwall for Winchester where their work took them. They were a well-liked couple at Perranporth and were always welcomed when they paid



Ernie Hayman waiting on the Railway Transporter to cross under the River Severn.



The Airfield at Usk with its well-known 'bend'.



DUNSTABLE

The home of the London Club in the early days.



Tonly Clarke-Lewis with a Skylark 4 in New Zealand where he went for a working holiday that eventually lasted several years!



The writer in a Vega at Bicester.



and the new Twin Astir at Lasham.

us a visit or two in the years to come with their small addition to the family.

A NEW TOWING AIRCRAFT FROM POLAND

Driving to Cornwall from London usually invites a diversion to Lasham and on June 9th 1972 I was lucky enough to arrive to find the first demonstration Wilga tug aircraft about to go off with the test pilot and Derek Piggott. Typical of Derek's unfailing welcome, he insisted that I go first as I still had to motor to Cornwall. It was difficult to refuse and brings to mind another C.F.I. Andy Gough of R.A.F. G.S.A. (Bicester) when calling in one day got out their new Vega for me to fly whilst telling me that he had not even flown it himself as yet. Both Derek and Andy over the years have been outstanding examples of excellent pilots putting the organisation of their clubs before their own personal achievements, although whenever able to find time to enter competitions have both always done extremely well.

Tragically, Andy was killed during an aerobatic display at Brize Norton in a Blanik after the Falkland campaign had ended.

The flight of the Wilga? Test pilot Witold Lukomski ably demonstrated its voracious appetite for towing gliders quickly to the normal release height and its stupendous angle of descent. However, in addition to being expensive the machine was also 'thirsty', and with the price of petrol consistently on the increase many clubs who would have dearly liked to have bought one had to stand back and admit that their finances would not allow such an exciting luxury. The Cornish Club was of course in this position...we simply had to do without!

VARESE...NORTHERN ITALY 1963

John Kenny had just become an instructor (now he flies in the Isle of Wight), Newlyn Fields had been used for the first time, and Ted Berry had resigned as Secretary. After years of magnificent and devoted service to our club, with his usual modesty he declined the invitation to become its first President.

Away from home I was asked to take part in an O.S.T.I.V. Conference in Italy where there was also to be comparison tests between the new two-seaters of various countries and I was asked to look after the Capstan. Another new glider was the Peak, designed by Harry Midwood and in the charge of Don Spottiswood, now an Air Vice Marshal. Motoring to Maidstone and leaving my car with



The Mucha Standart (with Swiss Markings) being flown at Locarno by some German pilots. Our Capstan trailer is in the background on the left.



Time to take off the Honey!

the C.F.I. of the Kent Club (Roy Hubble, a friend who had previously flown his 5 hours at Perranporth), I met Mike Wilson the sales manager of Slingsby Sailplanes, the builders of the new Capstan or T49. Hooking on to his Diesel Land Rover we went to Dover for the ferry where there seemed to be a little difficulty about documentation, but we took a risk and continued. At Calais the French customs spotted the omission but with typical French good nature "Ah, bien...c'est pour le sport", waved us on and we progressed to the Swiss border to take the Susten Pass where the Swiss customs told us our trailer would be too big to negotiate the hair pin bends and advised us to return to Brig and take the railcar through the tunnel which we did, but not before a polite discussion with the Swiss customs, who again noticed the carnet discrepancy. A few telephone calls and with smiles and good wishes they let us continue. Backing the trailer on the railcar, the train took us through the Simplon tunnel to the other side where we were welcomed again by the Swiss who were expecting us. We crossed the railway line to the Italian customs post at Isabell, and here the story changed drastically.

A little man immediately vetoed any further progress and we even had the Swiss customs coming across trying to help, and an odd military gentleman throwing his arms around apparently on our behalf. I was allowed to drive the Land Rover to the customs office at Domodossola where I telephoned London, all to no avail. Then I telephoned Ann Welch, a solution was suggested and implementation began.

Back to the customs post and the Italian policeman (with pistol) seated himself between Mike and myself and we were on our way to Locarno, but before leaving, this little man made me sign a document promising to pay the taxi fare of the policeman back to his post.

We had endured enough from this unhelpful gentleman and when Mike asked me what language he was speaking I replied "It's a bastard kind of French" and Mike tersely replied "Most appropriate!" Anyway, I thought it would be fitting to leave as Britishers were supposed to leave...and gave Mike a quick briefing to thank this bloke effusively for his help, pat him on the shoulder, exaggerate the handshake and smile happily. Before we could effect this ploy he asked me to check the receipt for the taxi fare to which we had agreed and I had the notion that it would be right for him to sign as well, which he reluctantly did, but I explained that I wanted it for our British Prime Minister, Mr Harold Macmillan and when we finally took our leave amongst a crowd of sympathetic onlookers he promptly burst into tears and retreated to his office.

We set off on what was now a night journey and stopped first for some refreshment at the only inn within sight and all the lorry drivers told us that the trailer was too big to get to Locarno along the

route that we had chosen, but our pride had been pricked for a whole day so we ignored the advice. I remembered the saying of my very wise father “there is only one thing to do with advice...give it” so on we went, to begin what was a nightmare journey of both anxiety and exhaustion, during which we frequently had to unhitch the trailer to negotiate bends over bridges with the hissing rivers below issuing their warnings.

We slept at Locarno and the next day was warm and encouraging. A good breakfast quickly banished unpleasant memories and Ann had arranged an aero-tow from Locarno (some Germans were gliding there with one Mucha Standart glider) and at lunch time all was ready. Mike decided not to fly and to bring the trailer to Varese and I made the foolish decision not to take my cine camera...one which I have always regretted, such was the exciting flight, about which perhaps not too much should be said. I was briefed that if a cable broke...fly to the mountains... “You will certainly go up” ...and off we went...or rather off I went. The first range of mountains and I was over 15000 feet and could see Lugano airfield, a haven of flat green amongst the mountains which was very reassuring.

Over the next range and I was very near Varese but unable to see it...my map being an Esso road map picked up en route with the Land Rover. Panic...I was exactly where I should be but still no field in sight, and then I saw it! ‘It’ was a flash in the sunlight of another glider which I quickly joined and pointed hopefully to the ground, but he was obviously enjoying life and simply acknowledged with a friendly wave. Three times I tried and three times he waved so I flew back to the hill for more height and went back to the pilot flying a little M100. Then I spotted an aircraft clearly going into land so followed him and saw a single airstrip...that had been completely hidden from my position by a row of pine trees.

On the ground, my wife, with Alison and Susan, were waiting together with the person who had so successfully tied all the strings! We were also welcomed by Georgie and Adele Orsi who were such very good friends of the growing organisation at Varese and who a few days later lent me a car which was much appreciated. Three weeks of good flying and sunny weather (after one only bad day with torrential rain) was our dividend.

BACK IN CORNWALL

Without being precise I think it was about this time that a gliding club was started at R.A.F. St. Mawgan called the Mawgan Vale Gliding Club with a quota of civilian members, but there was never

a good liaison established between their club and Perranporth which was a pity. I remember flying to Culdrose and back in the S.H.K. and on the radio heard the gliding in progress at St. Mawgan so flew over there asking for a launch if I landed to make a contact. A rather curt and inexplicable negative did nothing to set up any relationship although at their annual R.A.F. Air Display I lent them my S.H.K. for a static display as Carl Knight did later with his Standard Cirrus.

It was not until they closed down that several of their members joined us at Perranporth to continue flying and one, Jock Wishart, later became our course instructor for one season.

STILL IN 1963

This continued for me with a flight to Glastonbury, and then George Tuson suggested a week together at Bicester where we were well received as ever by Andy Gough and his friends. Some very happy flying was enjoyed by us both in good weather, and like so many other visitors we were grateful to Andy who let us use both his new single seaters and two seater aircraft.

This year the Nationals were once again at Lasham and as Prince Philip came along the lined up gliders he stopped at mine (which was built from a kit) and his unforgettable question was firstly "Will it keep the wet out?" He also had a flight in an Eagle two-seater before leaving for another duty by helicopter, but quite unexpectedly he returned in the afternoon, taking tea with the ladies in the control room and watching the landing reports come in.

At the end of this year a lot of our Cornish members were rightly feeling their feet in the gliding world, but a lot of ideas were being put forward that I felt unable to support so had to say so. After a conversation with George Tuson who largely shared my views I handed over to Pip Phillips who, whilst not possessing a full category, was made acting C.F.I. and 1964 began with several new ideas which at the end of the year I think were still mostly ideas. Pip converted to the Tiger but on his solo flight forgot that he was not still flying a glider and broke the propeller which I still possess, and have not yet started making into the clock mounting which was the objective!

This year I suggested that perhaps another pilot should represent the Club at the Nationals but there were no takers, so once again it was my lot to compete, but this time with a Skylark 4 that I had bought with trailer from Weston-on-the-Green. Our new number was 171 and on one day I came first with a gentlemanly 130 miles...and back in time for tea. John Fielden won overall and he

himself had flown his 5 hours at Perranporth in 1961, and at home Harry Hooper had flown his distance to Davidstow, but far away Alvin Parker attracted world attention when he flew the first 1000 kilometres, from Odessa in Texas to Kimball, Nebraska. Such was the progress on the International scene.

At home on January 12th 1963 Fred Breeze was having a bash at Tiger flying and I was in the instructors' seat when on take-off at above 400 feet the motor stopped and Fred threw up his hands. Only an immediate (and probably overcooked) sideslip saved the day and we landed straight ahead only 4 feet from a barbed wire fence.

YET ANOTHER C.F.I.

1964 arrived in an undue hurry with Pip Phillips handing over the job of C.F.I., to Tony Lapham, who was faced with several worries, not least of which was a combined falling membership, launch rate and financial deficit, but again the new ideas were confidently presented to the new Committee.

Luckily gliding was still a joy and a little trip to St. Kew and back restored ambition, followed by some good gliding at Lasham, South Marston and Walney Island in the Skylark 4. It was at Walney Island several years before that I had been a staff pilot with Training Command, and from there we went with George Tuson and my wife to Portmoak to sample the wave, and immediately afterwards to Sutton Bank. From the latter site I noticed that it was looking promising in the sky, and as we 'wandered' towards the launch point where the Skylark was already rigged I suggested I might take a launch but was told that they were just about to change ends as the wind had backed to South-West. I said that I didn't mind trying a downwind launch and went off to reach 400 feet, turned into a thermal immediately after release and climbed rather gently to about 4000 feet, whereupon I declared Swanton Morley to the 'crew' and pressed on into an ever increasing wind. A few miles out I climbed to 5000 feet and this made things easier; at least mentally! Six further climbs in cloud (each to about 6,500 feet) enabled the Skylark to lower its nose and head for goal. Flying around the Wash we once again made a climb to 6,500 feet but ahead was a very different weather picture. . . the sea breeze was covering the whole area between us and Swanton Morley. A final glide was begun with everything adjusted to maximise performance and the glide calculator gave me 300 feet over the boundary at Swanton Morley, as visibility got steadily worse. At 2,400 feet passing over Wendling airfield on course a slight trembling in the wings and the 'vario' reacted slightly, but sensibly I ignored this temptation, pressed on and passed over the peri track

at exactly 300 feet to land at Swanton Morley where I had many friends. F/Lt Jim Gregory was the first to ask where I had flown from and was a bit sceptical when I told him. The weather was really 'grotty' at Swanton and Alfred Warminger arrived asking the same question just as my crew were arriving, after being in constant radio contact. The next day belonged to George Tuson.

A WELCOME AT SWANTON MORLEY

The C.F.I. of the A.T.C. Unit at Swanton Morley was F/Lt Ian Ladley whom I had already met at Hawkinge (where incidentally I stayed in the W.A.A.F. Officers Mess commanded by Fl/Officer Conan Doyle) and he had moved to Swanton Morley and soon got things into first-class working order.

The Skylark had remained rigged in a hangar for the night and was all ready to go when the thermals started to bubble even better than the previous day, so I suggested to George that it would be a good time to do a Silver 'C' distance, but he was not at all keen, so Jim Gregory, the tug pilot and I got together and hatched a little scheme... George would be towed upwind to Feltwell and released there to glide back to Swanton Morley. He agreed to this and just before his departure I installed the barograph and told him it would be worth trying for a height gain, which he was disappointed not to get at Portmoak. Jim duly towed him to Feltwell and a few minutes afterwards we called him on the radio and were told that he was too busy climbing to be bothered to talk, but at 4000 feet he did call us to tell us that he was still going up and could see Swanton Morley and a good many miles past, so we suggested a further climb after passing Swanton and then a straight glide to Oulton... a disused airfield. He passed Swanton at about 5000 feet and went towards Oulton and Alf Warminger told him which runway to land on and at which end, by which time Jim Gregory was on his way in the Tiger. George landed perfectly at Oulton and a friendly farmer held the wingtip whilst they took-off for an almost immediate return to Swanton where he landed with a very wry smile having realised that he had played the vital role in the 'plot'. That night we were entertained by Dr and Mrs Clark who had both previously visited Perranporth and enjoyed a trip around the coast in the Tiger Moth, and we then went back to the Clubhouse where quite by chance there was a party going on.

Shortly after getting back to Perranporth, Geoff Horler flew the Skylark to Davidstow for his Silver 'C' distance. On a more serious note I had occasion to take one of our pilots to task for attempting a cross-country without first getting a briefing, so he decided that he would go to Dunkeswell and fly. Very sadly he crashed in Skylark

103 (my old machine) and later died in hospital. this was the famous St. Ives artist, Peter Lanyon, and he was much missed.

WORK FOR SOME – FLYING FOR OTHERS

Flying was not flourishing in the Club at this particular period so I had been mulling over an idea for some time to try and inject a little more excitement into the proceedings and after the Nationals at Lasham, June 20th at Perranporth seemed to promise an opportunity to try out the plan. The wind was light Northerly and several members were present with sufficient ability to undertake the effort and make the enterprise worthwhile.

First I offered Tony Clark-Lewis the Skylark and a tow to Padstow where he would release and fly to Culdrose whilst I was on my way back to Perranporth in the Tiger to tow David Pentecost in the Avia also to Padstow. Tony released and with service flying experience made an almost immediate cloud climb to 7000 feet and set off for Culdrose. Meanwhile I was towing Dave to Padstow at about 500 feet all the way over the sea so as not to expose the old Avia to undue turbulence. I then took the Skylark for a flight myself whilst Tony aero-towed Ted Mann to Padstow in the Swallow...but the day was ending and Ted landed short of Perranporth as did Ernie Hayman after a similar tow by only a few miles.

On the 24th August I had ideas about a 500 km flight and Alan Davie left first in his new Diamant for Bicester. I got as far as Bodmin Moor when I was very much aware of lowering cloud base and deteriorating weather in general, so called up my crew chief (Air Commodore Paddy Kearon) that I was going to land shortly, so with characteristic foresight he suggested Jamaica Inn! I came back and landed in the adjoining field, but Alan in the Diamant was not so fortunate and had to make a hurried decision to land and in doing so hit a Cornish stone wall, watched all the time with some apprehension by our own Harry Hooper. Alan's machine was out of service for some considerable time and 1965 was nearly with us.

FINANCE CALLS THE TUNE

Slowly but insidiously the launch rate and the actual launches had recently been falling, and the answer of the Committee had been in general to increase flying and membership charges, which seemed a quick solution, but which at the Club's inception had been one of the objects which we were also anxious to avoid. Nobody wanted to be C.F.I. in face of the somewhat dismal picture ahead, and

eventually I was persuaded to take over for a limited period which I stipulated to be a maximum of two years. This period was a much longer stint than that of most of our unending list of Chairmen who seemed to come and go at an amazing rate. Someone remarked that we were having more chairmen than launches and the lack of continuity was having an undoubted adverse effect on the Club. The duties of chairman were simple enough, but with an ever increasing influx of members little versed in flying practises, meetings became even longer and protracted with often the wrong flying decisions being adopted at the end. Nevertheless, soldiering on with broad shoulders began to produce results... by the end of June we had done over 300 aero-tows, Bill Owens had joined us as resident instructor and approved inspector and our treasurer was as always, still a member of Lloyds' Bank staff in Truro, who over the years since the inception of the Club, had steered us trustily.

In February, the Club took delivery, by air from Bicester with the fluent flying hand of Andy Gough, of a Blanik two-seater which was immediately given a sample of Perranporth air by George Tuson and myself who soared it to over 3,500 feet. This in February! Another step forward at last, and outside our Club we heard of the death of Horace Buckingham of Elliotts of Newbury who had done so much unpaid work in the development, design and building of British gliders which were soon to die in the years to come when Fred Slingsby retired.

Back home I flew a quick flight to Saltash and back in the Skylark 4, and then together with Doug Reynolds we trailered the same trusty wooden ship to Terlet (Holland), Saint Hubert (Belgium) and Nancy L'Est (France), and had some good soaring. On the way home we visited the World Championships at Little Rissington from where during the war I had flown many 'blind flying' exercises and knew well. The Russians were competing in this event and were a constant source of interest.

During 1965 Bill Owens had some useful help with the courses from Ken Woolley who was also checked out to fly the Tiger Moth, and the aero-towing had not only put up the number of launches, but had greatly increased the flying times of the gliders, and we were able to peg the flying charges at least for the coming year. This was heartening to the Committee but also enabled the keen members to do some real cloud flying in the Blanik. One flight with Geoff Horler to 7,000 feet, then to 8,000 in the Skylark, at the same time as Ernie Hayman was at 8,000 feet with Peter Rasmussen in the Blanik.

On August 4th John Kenny and I, after some cloud flying, landed in the Blanik, on the way back from Hayle, at the prohibited airfield at Portreath. It was only after a lot of fuss that we were allowed to be towed out by Tony Clarke-Lewis, as I was due to give an aerobatic display at Plymouth in the afternoon for their Annual Air Display.



A new arrival at Lasham...A Capstan two-seater.



An odd request at Lasham before I could have an aero-tow...with the help of a plastic bag with holes drilled (to use as a veil) the swarm of bees were taken from the tailplane, wrapped up in a box and given to a local beekeeper!



The late Ray Stafford-Allen (then Chief Technical Officer B.G.A.) with his Capstan two-seater glider on a visit to the site of the new Albatros Club.

My own flying was highlighted on August 20th when I declared a 500 km flight from Perranporth to South Marston and from there to anywhere on the East coast passing over Lasham en route. The wind was North Westerly, which on the first leg was a handicap in terms of getting a move on because of cloud flying, but turning at South Marston produced the first pleasant surprise in what was so far a fairly tedious flight. I rocketed up to over 7,000 feet and saw that my track was directly under a cloud street. Easy, I thought and so it was until I called a blue Skylark 2 going in the opposite direction and obviously based at Lasham. I can still see it quite clearly in my mind, number 35 and when I got no answer to my call, assumed that it had no radio. The early part of the flight was of necessity in cloud to make the necessary speed on track, and I used an unusual amount of battery current on instruments, and it was shortly after passing 35 that I woke up enough to find that the horizon had toppled and I had no electrics whatever. The radio was to be used to clear me through the old Gatwick control zone via a base station that had recently been set up at Lasham. I reached Lasham at 7,000 feet, got no radio response and waffled about for a few minutes trying to decide whether or not to take a chance on what would now be a virtual glide-out for a 500km distance. It would mean breaking an air law, so with brakes fully out plopped down at Lasham for the second time in two years, but this time I was not so happy as the first!

ANOTHER GLIDING CLUB IS BORN...THE ALBATROSS CLUB

Back at Perranporth there was cause for rejoicing as we had trebled our number of aero-tows compared with the previous year and it was rumoured that a new club was to start at Davidstow near Camelford.

The Exeter gliding school of the A.T.C. provided the nucleus of instructors and the first moves to start a civilian club began in 1964. Ron Trend bought a T31, Bill Dyer collected the old Perranporth winch and Fred Sloggett a retrieve tractor. David Cundy (ex Spitfires) offered some land at Langstone Farm which allowed flying over Soar Head. . .which I tried, enjoyed and marvelled at the unbelievably apt name for such a site.

Frank Mares became the C.F.I. and Ray Stafford-Allen with his Capstan paid the Club an early visit before the Club moved to Bolberry Down when Tony Edwards took over as C.F.I. The fleet was increased with the purchase of a Prefect from Fred Breeze whose workshops were now at Dunkeswell airfield and a determined group set off to bring back a Bergfalke II from

Germany. Tony Edwards had been a popular resident instructor at Perranporth prior to his appointment as C.F.I. to the Albatross Club. A naval group from the Manadon College of Engineering at Plymouth joined the Albatross Club with their own leader, Lt/Com. Bunny Hale at the new site at Burnford Common which I went to have a look at and endured what was an 'uncommon' rough ride on the take-off run, but it was undoubtedly a good site although somewhat exposed, which was emphasised when several naval gliders picketed overnight were blown over and severely damaged. Bunny Hale himself was involved in a T31 accident in which he sustained a broken ankle.

The club moved yet again, to Davidstow aerodrome and another ex Perranporth and Culdrose instructor, the likeable Arthur Webb, became C.F.I. Peter Rassmussen set up a reverse pulley system of launching and the Cornish club helped out whenever possible. In 1976 Bill Dyer bought a K6Cr single seater (later bought by the Club) and an Olympia 2B operated with a private syndicate...and later additions included a club Blanik and a vintage Grunau Baby captured by 'Herb' Leverett, an aero-engineer. Good soaring was usually available if early starts were made before the dreaded sea-breeze made its customary appearance.

The club progressed despite lack of hangarage space and a further handicap was introduced when aero-towing was refused...a startling piece of red tape on what was a deserted airfield, miles from anywhere and incidentally the highest airfield in Great Britain and from where the Cornish Club still retained permission to aero-tow on its original agreement.

DAVIDSTOW AERODROME

The aerodrome had been opened at the end of 1942 by 19 Group Coastal Command and first used by U.S.A.A.F. Fortresses and Liberators as a staging post for operations over Brittany. In April, 1943, No. 612 Squadron with Whitleys moved in but with barely a year passing the last Whitley came limping home after a flight of only just over one hour, with engine trouble.

No. 547 Squadron came as a replacement for the Whitleys and in February, 1944, an Air Sea Rescue Squadron was formed with 20 Warwick aircraft and another Wellington Squadron No. 254.

In May, 1944, two Beaufighter Squadrons arrived from Wick emphasising that the war was getting serious and on 'D' day 30 Beaufighters attacked three German Narvik class destroyers, leaving two on fire and a third badly crippled.

On September 19th, 1944, the last Squadron of aircraft, No. 282 finally left the aerodrome which only two days later was reduced to



The Field at Deer Park where the Albatros club hoped to re-establish their gliding activities shortly. Sadly, permission was refused. Photo: Roger Edwards.



Davidstow Airfield before the trees were cut.



Over the dam next to Davidstow aerodrome.



Lorne Welch, Ian Stokes and Ann Welch at Davidstow.



A steep turn over Boscastle.

care and maintenance. Somehow a sad occasion on a deserted and desolate airfield.

The Cornish Gliding Club obtained permission to use the aerodrome during the Summer season and then the Albatross Club was established more permanently on the same site with the restrictions previously mentioned being observed, albeit with little understanding.

The Albatross soldiered on for a few years but the handicaps were too heavy to enable the Club to prosper and expand despite the efforts of 'the few' and in 1983 I made some test flights from a possible new site at Deer Park which had been made available to the Club by the owner Mike Cobbold. This site near Plympton seemed ideal apart from a possible interference with Brymon aircraft approaches to Roborough, but it now appears that this will be mutually solved by both the club and the airline. Hopefully this will be so and a new gliding site will appear on our 1986 maps.

THE MAGNETISM OF AN AIRFIELD

Soon after the Albatross Club moved from Davidstow airfield the call of the runways persisted and Ian Stokes arrived with the beginnings of his microlight organisation and he decided not to just 'keep up with the Joneses', but actually BE the Joneses! Such was his determination that he quickly formed round himself a jolly band of believers and has gone from strength to strength. On a quick visit he had me strapped in and he flew me around the circuit. . . enough to get me asking for more and this was also immediately granted. A flight into wind to Boscastle over the slate quarry at Delabole (which is world famous) took quite a time in the rather slow machine, but the return trip with the wind behind was a very different experience. The landing was simple with the use of throttle and I now am a convert. . . at least in good weather. Harry Hooper has also visited the field and enjoyed many similar flights but we both agreed that it does not come up to the delights of thermal soaring on a cracking day with streets of cumulus clouds beckoning invitingly to any keen glider pilot.

One day I heard that Lorne and Ann Welch were visiting Ian and his friends, so I flew up in a Cessna and shared a cup of coffee whilst Ian extolled the virtues of both his fleet and the site at Davidstow. The spirit of the pioneers was alive again and the friendliness of the members infused into this spirit which I found warm and refreshing. Ian intends to expand to both use and build different types of machines and we can all wish him well in such an adventure. The licencing requirements have been relatively simple by the C.A.A. and the class of aircraft is known as Group D and the

British Minimum Aircraft Association are working towards control of a sport that has grown so quickly that different organisations, although made up of kindred spirits, may well not be sharing the same disciplines, hence the need for a central body to guide the efforts of the many forms of recreational flying into a shared operational force.

ARTHUR WRAY

Flying at Dunkeswell in 1963 I was asked by an elderly gentleman if I would give him a check flight for the Swallow glider which I promptly did after making sure that he was a paid-up member in flying practice. This pilot was Arthur Wray and his modest approach was an example to all, as during the war he was Air Commodore Wray, DSO, MC, DFC, AFC... a man with a limp which he earned in combat in 1917! The next war saw him in Lancasters and afterwards the first flying he did again was some gliding at Dunkeswell in 1961 which he described as the best sort of flying anyone could experience. In 1964 he qualified for his Silver 'C' badge and immediately set his sights on the more difficult Gold 'C'... which meant flying a distance of 300 kilometres. He made many attempts without success until one day in May 1972 he set off and landed at his 'goal' the R.A.F. airfield at Binbrook. He was then aged 75 and died in 1982. I was indeed lucky to have met and talked to such a man and indeed luckier that someone had told me about his past flying, otherwise I might well have made the blunder of not making the time to get him talking! His modesty completely obscured his flying bravery of years gone by as well as his vast experience in the air.

LAND'S END GLIDING CLUB

A member of the Cornish Club, Dave Treadwell formed a nucleus to start a new Club at the airfield of St. Just. Geoff Wass who had been aero-towing at Perranporth went to help and Brian Pritchard became the C.F.I.

Dr Keith Read lent his new Blanik two-seater for dual training which together with two single-seaters and an Auster tug aircraft formed the 'fleet'. A diesel winch (needing considerable attention) was the alternative method of launching.

It must be said, however, that without a leader with previous experience of managing a flying organisation, it was an ill-fated venture that ran into financial troubles that took a considerable time to eventually resolve, and the club ceased operations. This was



St. Just Airfield (Land's End) taken from my Olympia 419.



Crossing Mounts Bay in helpfully buoyant air to land at Culdrose.



Land's End...from the sea.



George Kosak and Sid Hillman photographed at Culdrose from where George flew the first 300km out and return flight from Cornwall.



The Pirat near Hayle.

a pity, as a club so situated would have been an asset to other clubs nearby and indeed the whole movement, but the aerodrome itself is still active with the cheerful face of Viv Bellamy and his son Rod almost always in evidence, and occasional gliding week-ends are held there by the Culdrose Gliding Club to which Perranporth members are always welcomed.

CULDROSE GLIDING CLUB

Thanks are due to Jack and Edna Angove who supplied most of the details of the way in which this club originated and quickly progressed. The present C.F.I. is John Smith who succeeded George Kosak, who originally learnt to glide at Perranporth and previously we had flown together for his full category check. John Smith with his infectious enthusiasm will undoubtedly continue to actuate the other members!

Back to history and it was in 1966 at a meeting of keen glider pilots at the Atlantic Hotel, Porthleven, energetically prodded by Dave Aulty, Peter Wells and 'Taff' David that the cornerstones of the club were laid with the comforting knowledge that a grant was promised to buy the first glider, a T31 from Bicester. A tow-car from a scrap yard and the occasional luxury of aero-tows from visiting Chipmunks and all augured well.

The next year a Tutor arrived from Lee-on-Solent which was fitted with a perspex canopy constructed in the lounge of Peter Wells' house. In 1968, as previously mentioned, Land's End Gliding Club closed down and many of their members were only too anxious to join Culdrose who immediately accepted the maximum numbers of civilians that were allowed. The fleet was boosted by the arrival of a T21 and then Dr Keith Read brought his Blanik two-seater to make the flying much more exciting. A Skylark II and Skylark IIIF soon completed the 'fleet' and the first aero-tow of the Blanik with a service Tiger Moth was executed by John Williams who soon proved himself a tireless and willing instructor, together with Peter Wells.

Other names that should be mentioned are David Bath (later C.F.I. at R.N.A.S. Yeovilton), Steve Warwick Fleming, Bob Green and Paul Williams. . . all of whom endured varying terms of office as C.F.I. The launching facilities have improved over the years and at most times there are two service Chipmunks and a civilian Chipmunk (on which I was passed to fly at Land's End) and tow car launches on the superbly maintained long runways.

Dartmouth cadets are trained each year, occasional expeditions to Land's End brighten the year and the standard of discipline is of course exemplary, without appearing harsh to the casual observer. Their overall allegiance to the British Gliding Association rules all their flying activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A C.F.I.

Up until now, the reader may have formed an impression that gliding is simply a matter of learning a few basic essentials of control, and then going off to fly, but this is far from the truth. Even in the days when we (instructors) were allowed to call a beginner a 'pupil', there were incidents of excitement which often brightened up an otherwise uneventful day, and I am sure that no-one will take exception if names are mentioned to bring back these events the more vividly to those present at the time.

Over-enthusiasm in two new members, John and Stan became apparent when they repeatedly told me that another instructor had told them they were ready for solo flying, so having to carry the 'buck' as C.F.I., I flew with them both and soon realised the opposite, which immediately made me quite a 'bogey'. The problem was solved when I told them both that the only person I would sanction to send them solo was the aforementioned instructor himself, who although not as often present on the field as myself eventually bravely undertook this responsibility. John knocked out the bottom of the Tutor on the South-North runway, and Stan (after the machine had been repaired), knocked it out again from the opposite direction of approach.

Then, one awkward day, Bill Robins launched in the T31 on the West-East runway when at the top of the launch the cable release jammed and the tow-car driver (John Flower) immediately guillotined the wire and Bill spiralled gently down over the centre field to prevent the cable becoming fouled. He landed safely.

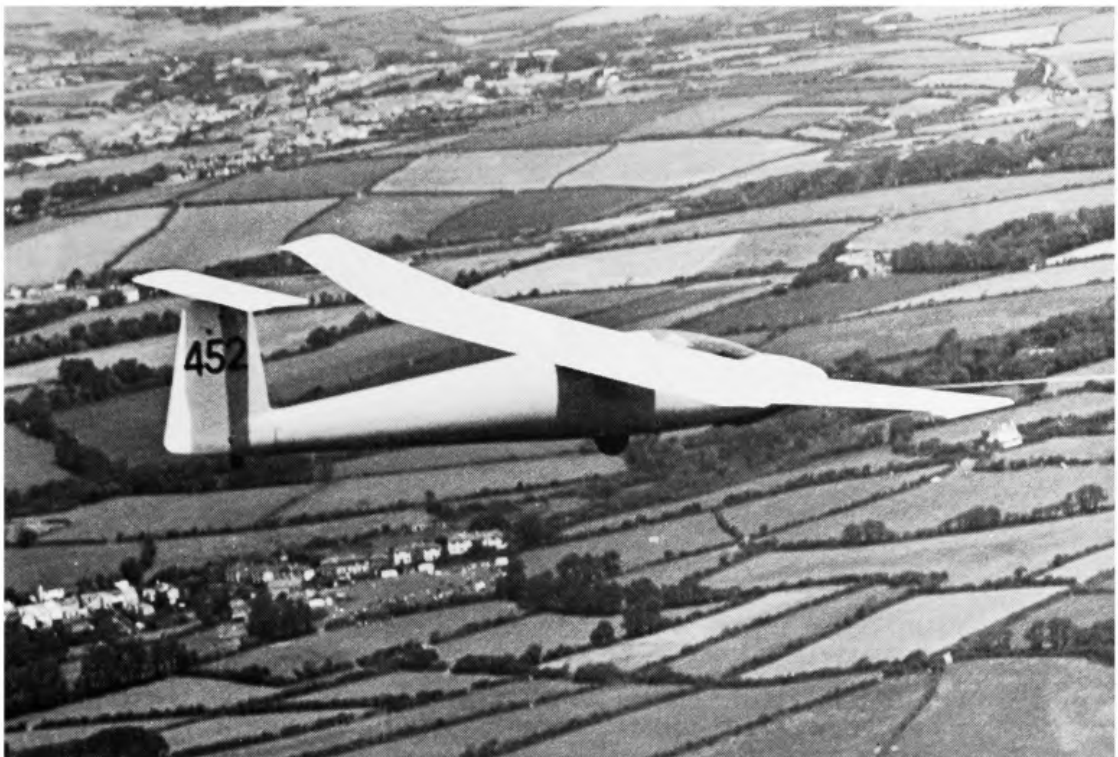
The same week it was my turn...with a new pupil...on the approach in the T21 he 'froze' on the stick and it needed all my strength to finally overcome his iron grip and to land sensibly. By some freak of irony, only the next week Bernard Warmington was coming over the road with a girl pupil on an approach to the West-East runway when she also 'froze', and Bernard had a semi-prang to the right side of the runway. It was fortunate that Bernard was so experienced, and when the girl denied that she had in any way interfered with the approach and landing I simply had to tell her that I always backed my instructors, and that I should have to ground her for at least a month, at which she took umbrage and said that she would continue her training at St. Athan airfield in Wales where her father was the Commanding Officer.

Apparently she did just that, but I was shocked a few weeks later when a letter from Air Commodore Chris Paul called for a report on her flying at Perranporth. Apparently, at St. Athan she had gone off solo in the Tutor, reached the top of the launch, released and then gone into a straight dive to the ground where she was instantly killed.

As a C.F.I. one is constantly being subjected to criticism from



The Chipmunk towing the Pirat from Culdrose.



The Pirat flying back home. (All photographs from Culdrose Gliding Club)



Tiger Moth G-ANFW taken at North Hill.

those who are learning to fly, and unfortunately the odd instructor here and there does not know enough to stamp out these pinpricks...and indeed on so many occasions even actively encourage them to the detriment of the whole Club flying programme. Everyone makes mistakes, but the C.F.I., if he is responsible, has to take it on himself to be both judge and jury on many occasions or lack the courage of his convictions. I personally plead guilty to both counts and the latter is well illustrated when flying in the T21 on the ridge I noticed the Tiger Moth side-slipping to what I considered an alarming degree on the approach to the South-North runway. When I landed I fully intended to have a word with the pilot concerned, but on discovering that it was Mike Armstrong, who had more than the usual experience with the Tiger Moth, I decided that it might cause some unpleasantness and forgot it. On his very next landing he left his recovery too late and I watched in great dismay from the air as the poor Tiger became a sadly crumpled heap. This was an accident that was as much my fault as his and I afterwards went to him and personally apologised for not doing my duty.

Since those days however, I have seen the gradual decline in authority of C.F.I.'s all over the country and with it the inevitable increase in accidents. Many Clubs seem to have Chairmen who imagine that they should have a great deal to say in the daily flying programme, and it is disturbing to watch two or sometimes three people (the duty pilot joining in), briefing a pilot on how a certain flight should be accomplished. Sometimes the wing-tip holder will offer his advice so that the pilot is in no doubt whatever that there are at least three or four 'best' ways of doing the job.

There was a time, when as C.F.I., if briefing a pilot, I would not allow anyone nearer than the wing-tip and it worked extremely well.

As a relaxation to gliding, Plymouth Airport owned a Fairchild at St. Mawgan, and it was a frequent escape route to go over and have a float around.

A TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA

My friend Alfred Warminger from Norfolk had arranged that I should have the use of a Ka 6E in the South African National Championships in which he himself had already arranged to compete. Without much preparation I rushed off by South African Airways, via Brussels, The Canary Islands, Luanda and on to Jan Smuts Aerodrome at Johannesburg, where a friend, Tony Hyde, was to meet me.

Soon after arrival, I was paged and given a message to take the next Boeing 727 to Tempe Airfield near Blomfontein where he

would be. A quick change of plane and a glass of ice cold orange juice as soon as the passengers were all seated and we were off on a flight of about an hour and a half. Tony was at Tempe with his car and we drove to the other side of the town where the gliding was to take place. As soon as I arrived Alfred told me that I should get ready to fly at once as there was a Blanik available and he would like to have a go at the 100 km. record for the U.K.

Having been in the air for just over 19½ hours and dumped on earth again in a temperature of about 100° F, there was nothing I wanted less than to fly in a glider that was so hot that to touch the metal would take the skin off one's fingers! Anyway, with 'chutes on I climbed into the back seat just to be useful in taking the turning point pictures and we started off along the runway with the tow-plane almost invisible in a cloud of red dust when Alfred shouted. . . "You will have to fly, I just haven't got enough room to move with a parachute on" and as he was a well built chap, I realised the unpalatable situation, which however was quickly forgotten when on release we hit a superb thermal and my instinctive turn was rewarded with an eventual height of about 18,000 feet in clear air. Aiming for the first point, Alfred kept telling me I was flying too fast, but I easily won the argument and we pressed on and he took the photograph. On to the next point and still Alfred was complaining and although it was obvious that we should be cutting it a bit fine I was determined to get back to an armchair in the shade as soon as ever possible.

When all seemed to be 'in the bag' we hit a rotten area of sink with the field straight ahead and had to take a miserable thermal to get home. Even with this handicap we broke the U.K. record and it was heard on the radio at home the same evening.

After a long, long sleep I awoke to be told that the K6E had been involved in an accident on the way up in its trailer, there would be no glider for the competition. Disappointment was so obvious that it was shared by many of the competitors and one, Ian Leitch, said that he would lend me his Phoebus for a week after the competitions had finished if I would guarantee to get it up to Baragwanath. During the competition weeks I had an opportunity to fly the BJ2 on an out and return during which flight we reached a height of 16,000, again in clear air, and watched the BJ3 on its final glide to base. These two machines were all metal, designed by Fritz Johl and Pat Beatty and there was a successor, the BJ4 already in the pipeline.

One flight which took two of us in a Blanik into cloud higher than I had ever been before earned us a rebuke from the doyen of South African glider pilots, Boet Dommissie, who told me that although the British were known to fly in cloud, the particular one that I had chosen probably went up to about 50,000 feet. They called them locally 'choppers' and that was enough for me!

The visit was in January 1968 and after the competitions were

over, the weather deteriorated and I wondered whether or not to stay on but was persuaded to wait a day or two. On the 'best' day I tried a 500 km in the little 15 metre Phoebus and landed at a railway junction called De Aar where I was put up for the night by one of Dr. Christian Barnard's theatre sisters and her husband.

Having flown only 464 km this flight was not rated a success and the immediate weather prospects (confirmed by torrential rain), put paid to any further optimism, and I duly trailed to Baragwanath and enjoyed the company of the local club members, and that night lying in bed heard what was to become the most evocative memory of the trip...the sound of steam trains again!

I had met the South African team at Camphill in 1954 and later at Little Rissington, and had now had a first-hand chance of seeing what a fine crowd they were; hospitable, humorous and generous, and determined to enjoy life as well as help others to do the same.

PERRANPORTH WINS A GLIDER

In 1967, the firm of W.D. & H.O. Wills introduced a competition for glider pilots, to be conducted all over the country, and the entrants had to comply with conditions limiting their experience and time in the air. Geoff Hayman, who had fairly recently become an instructor, at my request took over the selected pilots from our Club for their training on a set syllabus from the B.G.A. and which, if they qualified for the finals held later at Lasham, would be expected to competently understand the oral examination and also equally competently execute the exercises in the air in a two-seater glider with the chosen instructor.

The South-Western eliminating flying was held at Weston-Super-Mare at which I was one of the examiners. Our candidate, Noel Ellis, flying with other examiners, won handsomely to go forward to the finals. Geoff Hayman set to work again and when flying with Noel it was difficult to imagine anyone equalling his standard, so I had a good think about all the aspects of the coming competition and of the venue at Lasham which I knew so well. A flash of inspiration? What would happen in the event of an unlikely tie?

Knowing one of the two examiners' liking for aerobatics, F/Lt Doug Bridson, it was not hard to make a stab at his reaction. However, aerobatics were not included in the required manoeuvres... only recovery from a spin. It was logical then to presume that if both competitors agreed, that the entry into a spin could be the decider; so I took poor Noel up again and again until, in the Blanik, he was able to make it spin perfectly on every attempt. Believe it or not there was indeed a tie at the end of the set exercise. A quick conference and it was announced that entry to a spin would

now be required, and watching from the ground we witnessed a superb entry and recovery from Noel. We had won the Swallow which made a great difference to our financial position in the Club. Motoring home with Noel that evening we were just coming up the hill out of Exeter when I saw my Rover (left securely locked on the aerodrome at Perranporth) coming towards us with the trailer attached. Ron Brewer had done the car break-in and next day the Swallow was in the hangar at Perranporth... a magnificent example of all-round co-operation.

CHANGING ONE'S GLIDER

Amongst the serious contenders for the National Championships and those known as the 'pot-hunters', there was always a competition going on as to which glider on the drawing board of various manufacturers would be the best for the next year, but being away down in Cornwall we were always far behind in this almost cloak and dagger procedure! Nevertheless, it was interesting to keep going forward gently, as finances would permit, and starting with the Olympia 2B, the Cornish club had also seen the Skylark IIF mostly built on the site, the Skylark 4, Olympia 419, Diamant 16.5 metre, and S.H.K. flying round its skies.

All was not peace and goodwill however, as after the Skylark IIF, I had ordered a Dart 17 for the Nationals in 1966 and had been faithfully promised delivery by April of that year. In the preceding March however, at the Annual Dinner and Ball at Cheltenham, was informed by Bill Slater, managing director of Slingsby Sailplanes, that it would not be ready in time. Having promised to sell my Skylark during the very next week I was left with no glider, until I heard that Alfred Warminger had been luckier and got a new Dart and was selling his Olympia 419. Hence it came to pass that I tried to fly an Olympia 419 in the Nationals after only three previous flights! It was still an enjoyable competition... and on one triangle with a turning point at Old Sarum I got to Little Rissington in time to direct the crew and trailer from the air, up a side road and through a gate at the end of the runway, in time for Bernard Warmington to be able to take the wing tip after landing before it had touched the ground. A Land Rover from control took me back for a cup of tea and to book in and by the time I returned to the trailer the glider was in its box and ready to roll. This was the sort of fun that was only mildly enhanced on learning that I was the first one to arrive.

Anyone who has flown the Olympia 419 will most surely have fond memories of such a docile machine; one that I often climbed in cloud at the lowest possible speed and which would often stall

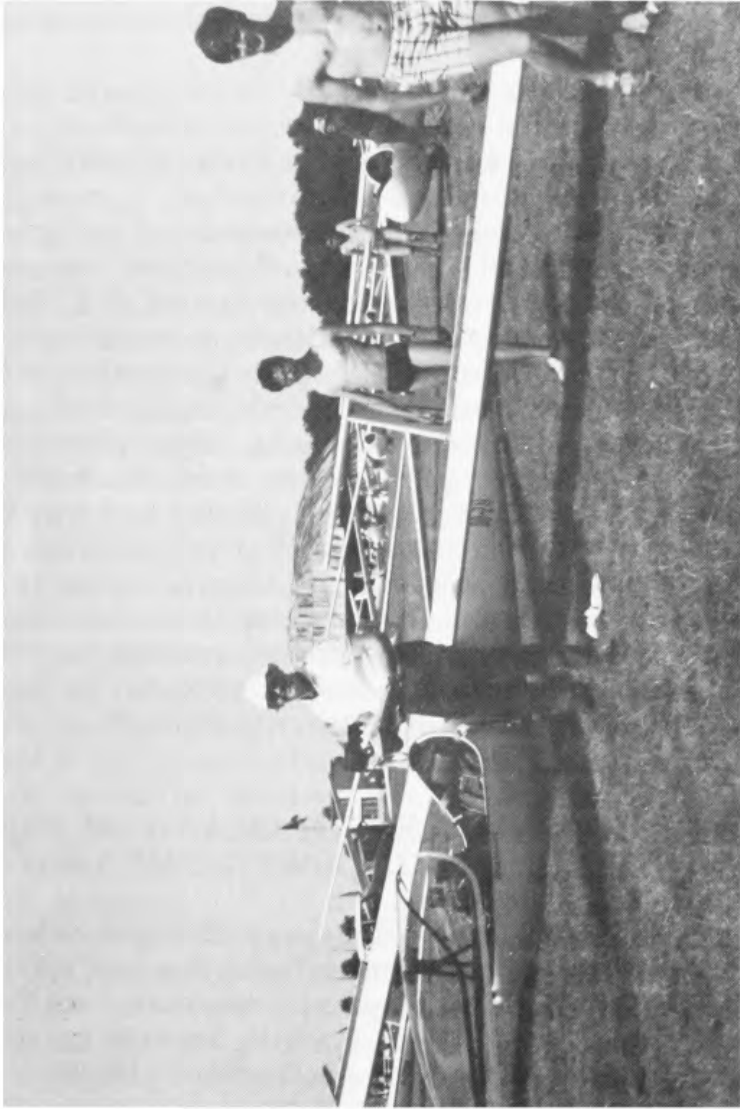
gently and recover with the minimum of fuss. One day I arrived at the Perranporth Club and found that Dave Pentecost had been there all day trying to get a Silver 'C' height so I took the 419 and suggested to him that I would take a deep breath and go inland and try and find some lift under the very encouraging looking clouds, and if it was 'working' he could follow whilst I waited around for him. This we did and he went to over 4,000 feet in cloud whilst I carried on upwards with my faithful and stable machine to nearly 14,000 feet when I broke cloud over Bodmin... naturally with my camera back in the car on the ground.

Idling back towards Perranporth, which meant entering cloud again en route, I called up to let other pilots know my approximate position (having previously given the Club a powerful ground radio for general use), and this was acknowledged. Almost immediately another voice intervened with the information that he was at 30,000 feet, and it was not until a year or two later that I found out it was a previous member of Perranporth Club in an R.A.F. Vulcan, which explained his reticence to comply with my request for identification!

On August 5th 1967 I made one more climb above 10,000 feet in the old Olympia 419 at Perranporth, and after one flight to Compton Abbas and several lazy flights around the county I began to think about a higher performance machine. Gradually I was getting the hang of this competition gliding and was finding that on the odd day was beating some of the so-called pundits. I now made a great mistake of choice... I plumped for a Diamant 16.5 metre in preference to an S.H.K. and awaited a delivery date. In the meantime I did some aerobatics at Perranporth from 5,000 feet for a B.B.C. film called 'View', and continued with the usual instructional duties like all the other instructors.

COLLECTING THE NEW DIAMANT GLIDER FROM ALTENRHEIN, SWITZERLAND

On July 8th Ruedi Seiler, at the age of 41, went to collect his Diamant and took it up for a test flight, flew under a cross-valley cable, caught his high tailplane and was killed. Only three days before, a Swedish pilot, Leif Holm took a tow in his new Diamant from the same site and died when he crashed into the mountains. It was now my turn and whilst waiting for modifications to the trailer, met Alan Davie who had come over to collect a Diamant 18, so we had several quiet conferences with our respective wives and my turn came first. I was careful about pre-flight inspections but as soon as we became airborne a soaring flight of about an hour left no doubt as to its pedigree.



My Diamant flown by a Belgian Doctor who bought it from me. This was at the Angers (France) competition 1979. Photo. By H.C. Mackinnon.



Ron Keeping (ever the smiling optimist) flew this K13 solo on a day when the North-West wind on the ridge even kept the keen pupils from accepting a flight. Attempting a cross-wind landing when a ferocious blast caught the glider and turned it over with Ron amazingly escaping with his life, but fairly severe injuries. Photo: Jon Woodrige.

ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN

Of course accidents happen in gliding as in any other sport, but contrary to popular belief they are much less than imagined by the public. Ann Welch's book on the subject is comprehensive and perceptive, but every C.F.I. in the country has the responsibility of ensuring that his members do not unwittingly, through lack of experience, knowledge, or both, expose themselves to undue danger. This is often overlooked by the new member or those who are especially anxious to make progress with their flying; progress which is often so frustratingly delayed by weather conditions. We have already referred to the unhappy accident of Peter Lanyon and the consequent loss to the Club of his cheerful presence but there was another pilot who also lost his life whilst a member of the Cornish Club. This was Bob Langhorne who on one blustery day was so anxious to fly, that after I had previously declared 'no flying', he cited our then resident instructor Jim Wingett, who although quite competent, had relatively little overall experience, as at least 'having some sort of spirit of adventure'. I shall never forget these words as he was displeased with my interpretation of the weather conditions, so I took him aside and told him just what I thought of his remarks. His reaction was to say that he would go to Dunkeswell for a week and fly there. As luck would have it the C.F.I. of Dunkeswell (Fred Breeze) was in our clubhouse, so I told him that in my opinion Bob needed more experience before setting off on a cross-country which I knew he was anxious to sample. Fred agreed with me, but, on his first solo flight at Dunkeswell, away went Bob (spirit of adventure) and a few miles on got low, flew through a hedge with the fuselage leaving the wings behind. I was told that next day he was found wandering around on Dartmoor.

Later, Bob called in at Keevil and Owen Harris the C.F.I. did not check his logbook before allowing him to take a passenger in the T31. On the approach the airspeed was allowed to decrease to such an extent that on the final turn in to land a spin developed and both occupants were killed. Bob left a wife, Mary, to bring up six children and was a sad loss to all his friends and a reminder to us all that although gliders are usually very forgiving machines there is always a limit not to be ignored.

TIME GOES ON

In 1968 I again entered the Nationals, this time held at Husband's Bosworth and in my new Diamant which, on the day before the competition was to begin, was visited by an engineer especially flown from Switzerland to make modifications to the ailerons in the

workshops at Peterborough. Only having flown the aircraft twice before and having one wife as crew, this caused considerable concern and the next day we were still rigging an hour after all the other competitors had left on the day's task. Taking a launch I decided to go 'like the clappers' and soon caught up several of the competitors and landed in the same field as Peter Scott, George Burton, Humphrey Dimock and Vic Carr when conditions 'switched off' rather suddenly. Ann Burns passed overhead and Vic Carr was already running towards a telephone on the road outside when we heard the uncomfortable sound of her new S.H.K., hitting the hedge. David Ince also tried to fly just that little bit further and ended up in a field of rape looking the wrong way but fortunately with no damage whatever to his Diamant 16.5.

This competition convinced me that I was flying badly and the non-delivery of the Dart as previously promised by Slingsby had lost me any chance of climbing the competition table from now on... the first thing was to change the glider (an uncomfortable beast anyway for someone with my bulky frame), and this happened quite fortuitously through an advertisement in S&G.

I trailed it to Dover and swapped it for an S.H.K. previously flown by a Belgian and never regretted the change, as it was one of the nicest gliders for both handling and performance. Many times at the end of the day having become resigned to an out-landing, I have drifted over the home airfield boundary wondering at its beautiful glide angle. Perhaps I had been lucky enough to get an exceptional one, but never once did it give me anything but a bit extra to expectations.

It was now 1969 and the B.G.A. celebrated its fortieth anniversary. John Nielan flew the first flight from Lasham to Perranporth in an Eagle. John was a test pilot on the then new Viscount Turbo-prop aircraft and also the author of an interesting article of the early gliding experiences of John Sproule, Joan Price, Robert Kronfeld and Lowe Wylde.

JODEL G-ATSU

In June 1969 Stan Pickles and I flew to Fairoaks in a Cessna to look at what we thought was a reasonably priced Jodel 140D, an occasional 5 seater aircraft with a 180 horse power Lycoming engine. Having flown it to our own satisfaction and ensuring that it could be fitted with a tow-hook we came to an arrangement and bought it on the spot but still had to fly back together in the Cessna as Stan had not got his P.P.L.

Stan and I flew all over the country in this forgiving machine and I personally did over 100 aero-tows for the Club as soon as the hook was approved. It was a superb machine for aero-towing with its



Charles Schofield in Spain - Relaxing.



Flying with my instructor son Mike, at Booker.

rapid rate of climb and unusually low petrol consumption. It also had the advantage of being able to take on most formidable cross-wind components on take-off for a 'tail dragger', but Stan was haunted by considerable pressures from his four hotels and other business commitments and could not really get down to learning to fly and I could not afford to keep the aircraft on my own. It was sold in February 1970. The Club were continually taking forward steps only to discover that considerable tenacity of purpose was essential to make things viable and that 'trial periods' were simply an indication of lack of confidence or determination. Facts and figures were inevitably produced by the negative thinkers - and the progressives, who were in the minority (but not in experience) were invariably overcome.

Meanwhile to overcome frustration I set out for a flight in the 419 to Compton Abbas on one of the few 'bubbling' days that Cornwall produces. It was a most enjoyable flight and when I felt confident that I should reach Compton I called my crew on the radio (Dr. Pat Pearson and Denis Bolton) and suggested that they go only as far as Dunkeswell if I could arrange an aero-tow from Compton on arrival. I had landed at Compton, the tug had been laid on, and after a quick chat with my many friends there, was towed back into the lively and buoyant air and set off for Dunkeswell after confirming my intention with the crew. A superbly enjoyable flight ended at Dunkeswell with the crew waiting with the doors of the trailer already open. My thanks to the crew, a good meal on the way home and all tension had evaporated... "If you can't stop the tide... move the beach!"

Mike Armstrong had bought a Beagle Airdale for aero-towing and then sold it to the Club and it served us well until a structural failure in 1972 caused new thinking.

THE PIVOTAL POINT

The centre point of all these little diverse tales when in Cornwall, always is Perranporth and its nearby airfields, as one would expect, and one day in Spain I met an ex R.A.F. pilot interested in gliding, who told me the following story when he learnt of our mutual interest. In the summer of 1943 he was patrolling the Bay of Biscay with 218 Squadron at St. Eval when operation 'Beggar' started with Halifax four engined aircraft towing Horsa gliders to Gibraltar, prior to the Sicily invasion.

This protection force was briefed to fly as far as 46N and out to 11W by which time the planners estimated they would all be beyond the reach of any Ju 88's, or FW 190's operating from Brest.

The Beaufighters used had of course to fly as slowly as possible to

keep just 12 feet from the water (to offer no tell-tale prop wash), and yet weave around underneath the gliders at -4 boost which just kept the generators charging; the life blood of the machines. Revs were about 1400 to maintain a speed of 140 knots. Below the detection of enemy radar they could also see any enemy aircraft much better from this position. . . but he described the flying as 'just like flying a soggy pancake'. The mission was well carried out and he returned to E.C.F.S. and managed to get his first experience of light gliders, when someone got hold of the Rhonbuzzard in which Kronfeld had made so many record flights. Many of the instructors enjoyed the different flavour of flying a glider and one, a S/Ldr Henry, used all the field in an indifferent approach, so turned around and landed down wind ending in a ground loop which the old Rhonbuzzard took without flinching. This same chap then took up a Stirling bomber, did a fast beat up with all four propellers 'feathered' and turned in to land successfully and asking the glider chaps "Whats all this about gliding then?"

The ex pilot who told me all this ended the war as S/Ldr Charles Schofield, Commanding Officer of 621 Squadron (Warwicks) in MersaMatruh, and now occasionally takes me out in his yacht, based in the Mediterranean on the Costa Blanca. For several years he wanted me to join forces and start a gliding club in Spain which he considered ideal. Whilst I agreed about the weather conditions, I had had enough of starting gliding clubs already!

CHANGES IN TUG AIRCRAFT AS WELL

Tiger Moth G-ANFW, the stalwart for so many years... and still towing elsewhere in 1986 was eventually flown over the horizon to a new owner, the committee having decided (at the same time being compassionate enough not to tell me about it) that the time had come for a change. To me, this decision was about the same as a surgeon having amputated the wrong leg of his patient. Anyway, everyone knew my views on the subject pretty smartly and they will never change, but the next move was even more remarkable.

I was elected to a panel of four to investigate the best tug to replace the Tiger. Being at Lasham one day, I went with Bill Scull to Blackbushe to see a Workmaster that had been taken out of the Lasham fleet of towing aircraft that Frank Horridge (now managing director of Dan Air) used to hire out to the Lasham consortium. A good look at the aircraft convinced me against the advisability of purchase and on the way back to Cornwall called at Compton and saw a nice little Auster at less than half the price of the Workmaster. A further call at Plymouth next day and Russell Hocking showed me a superb Auster at the same price as the

Compton machine. Both Austers had tow hooks so this surely was the answer.

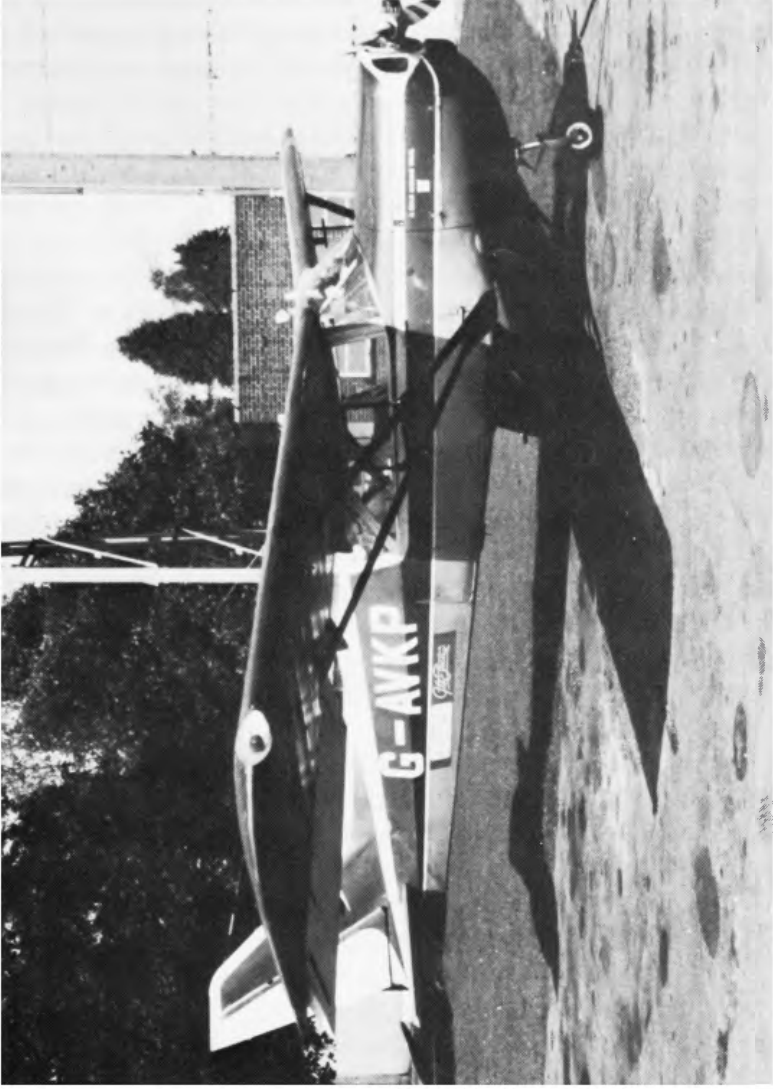
The following week the other three members flew to Blackbushe, saw the Workmaster and recommended that the Club should buy it. This was done against the more logical solution and cost more than both the Auster aircraft which I advised we should buy. The Workmaster clearly needed money to be immediately spent on it, and in my view, the negative thinkers had won and we had taken several steps backwards. It was not an easy aircraft to fly accurately and this was due to the fact that many modifications had been made to improve its rate of climb whilst towing gliders, at which it was good.

One day a tug pilot was about to taxi it out for towing when I suggested that for a 'tail dragger' there was a fairly strong cross wind and that perhaps with his limited experience of towing he might like a check circuit before starting. He agreed and on the first landing we were lucky not to have made a mess of things, so we repeated the exercise with similar results. The next approach and landing he just said "You've got it, I just can't land the ruddy thing". We put it back in the hangar for the rest of the day.

The Committee then gave permission to the former pilot to take the aircraft away for a flight to another airfield for an engine check. Alone, early one morning this pilot got the aircraft out of the hangar, prepared for flight, and then tried to start it by swinging the propeller. Not starting immediately, he advanced the throttle and swung again...and again, whereupon the engine gave a healthy burst of power as it started, ran forward just about becoming airborne before overturning and narrowly missed toppling over the cliff edge. That was the end of the Workmaster.

We had got it in March 1970 and replaced it with Mike Armstrong's Beagle Airedale G-AVKP at the end of the same year. This aircraft had the obvious disadvantage of being expensive to operate, but being a tricycle undercarriage, (known as an 'aerial perambulator' on its inception) had the great merit that it could be safely flown by pilots of much less overall experience, especially in cross winds. Being an examiner and able to check and sign log-books it looked as though we were gradually getting a little more self-supporting and more pilots were converting to towing although we were never able to equal the old roster of Tiger days when on each Saturday and Sunday there were two pilots available and on Thursdays, one tug pilot.

A quick trip to Waikerie in Australia during the year gave me over 60 hours flying (mostly instructional) and five solo flights over 300 km and two over 450 km. A welcome break in the politics of our little club, which however remained as always, first and foremost in the world for me; knowing it as I first did, as a deserted waste with no one in sight for miles.



The Beagle Aredale which was damaged during a forced landing on Bodmin Moor after repair and now based at Bicester where Dick Crossman (Chief Technical Officer of the B.G.A.) carried out successful tests using Mogas for aero-towing.

At Waikerie Australia I met John Homewood and we both had some enjoyable gliding in magnificent flying weather. John was flying commercially out of Singapore and also doing some gliding in T31 two-seaters at a local airfield where incidentally my son Michael went solo, both in gliders and Chipmunks. Before leaving for England John gave me a parachute to take home and on two aircraft (Ansett & British Caledonian) this caused quite a stir as I confidentially marched up the gangway with brief case plus a parachute slung over one shoulder. Twice I explained that I never flew anywhere without one, but in each case it was stowed where the head steward could keep a watchful eye on it - and no doubt on the owner as well!

THE YEARS ROLL ON

They do indeed and I began this year by trying to find an acceptable alternative to getting older. From 1957, the first year of the Club's operation, I had been C.F.I. until 1968 and the B.G.A. Secretaries had been Yvonne Bonham, Anthea Russell, Frances Leighton (later to marry John Furlong) and Inge Dean. Inge so very sadly, after great devotion to her duties with the B.G.A. died after a long illness at the early age of 42 and was greatly missed by not only the big clubs, but by smaller clubs like Perranporth, where many members had reason to be grateful for her friendly approach and help. Indeed, the B.G.A. has always enjoyed such nice people and Inge was followed by Gillian Howe and presently Barry Rolfe.

Meanwhile the Cornish Club was entering a different phase after the completion of the new clubhouse. Dave Short came as a cheerful example of an ever willing instructor. However, the beard, cigar or bow tie were in vogue at the bar. Without either of the latter it was unwise to imagine that any speaker had even a remote knowledge of flying. Whilst Castro was getting his own people in Cuba to give up smoking in no uncertain way, he was busy exporting cigars to the outside world as fast as possible for his revolution.

"Le cigare, symbole des capitalistes, finance la révolution castriste".

CLUB CO-OPERATION

Co-operation was always close between Culdrose and Perranporth and whilst with some clubs there was undisguised rivalry and sometimes ill-will, real friendly interaction was always apparent between our two clubs and is happily extant.

It was in this spirit that I accepted a flight in a helicopter to have a

look at the hospital at Treliske with a view to finding the most suitable landing place for such aircraft taking hospital cases to Truro. We found one and went down to within a couple of feet above ground when one of the crew noticed that a nearby pile of sand was being blown into the adjacent nurses quarters. The visit was cut short with no discussion, but the area was subsequently accepted.

Back to gliding with Peter Wells visiting Perranporth from Culdrose with the hope of flying a Silver 'C' distance. Suggesting an aero-tow to Bodmin we set off (May 16th 1970) and I released him under a fat cumulus cloud which whizzed him up to over 6000 feet and he was soon back at Culdrose and claiming his 'Badge'.

The Cornish Club has always since been invited to the Culdrose 'week-end' at Land's End where they supply the tug aircraft and we fly each other's gliders. Tremendous fun for everyone, especially when the weather is good and this includes the airfield's owners and staff who unfailingly supply the necessary and welcome aids to flying that real pilots always offer each other.

In 1970 Ron Wingfield joined the Cornish Club and brought a motor glider which proved to be a little less reliable than usual and when a visiting Cessna 172 tried to aero-tow the machine it assumed an alarmingly steep climbing attitude. Fortunately there was enough (barely) control left for the pilot to make a fairly controlled contact with the ground. Later, when I was no longer C.F.I. and after Ron had joined the Bodmin Club, a car was outside the Perranporth clubhouse and after about a week it was discovered that it belonged to Ron who had taken off from the field without booking out and flown to somewhere in the North East, crashed and been killed together with his passenger. A plaque to his memory hangs in the clubhouse at Bodmin Airfield.

UPS AND DOWNS

I made several cross-country flights around the country in excess of 100 km. with the delightful S.H.K. and in June 1971, once again competed in the Lasham Regionals, which was won by Derek Piggott. One flight of interest was a task into wind of at least 40 knots at 2,000 feet and at Stonehenge having taken over 5 hours already, decided to land and take advantage of as many of the visitors to the site as possible to help in holding the glider down safely until my crew arrived; a decision that proved sensible. Only one pilot, Derek, completed the task and it took him several hours to reach the first turning point and only a few minutes to get back to Lasham. Bobby Coles got as far as the chalk figures at Havant and called to ask his position and was only told by Godfrey Harwood (an administrator of the cut out hillside figures) where he was, after

extracting a promise from Bobby that he become a future member of the preservation society.

At home in this year of 1971 Peter Arthur did his 5 hours, Brian Farrow his Silver 'C' Harry Hooper and Bil Lewis Silver heights and Peter Rasmussen and self took the K13 to Fowey and back. We also flew to St. Mawes and back on another day. Bill Lewis has since flown to a Diamond 'C' height at Aboyne in Scotland and now owns a Mini Nimbus glider.

Then, sadly, the death of Major Ted Berry became known and a tribute paid to him in an obituary in Sailplane and Gliding which although true in every detail, could never fully cover his continuous concern for the future of the Cornish Gliding Club which he had so dearly taken to his heart. I truly believe, that from the very day he resigned as Secretary, the Club has never operated in the same objective way.

BEAGLE AIREDALE G-AVKP

Originally bought by Mike Armstrong and then bought by the Cornish Club this aircraft with tricycle undercarriage was simple to fly. Hopefully it would enlarge the list of tug pilots and soon after its arrival we organised an 'outing' with several gliders to the new airfield at Bodmin which had been initiated by Mike Robertson. Ron Brewer did the first stint of aero-towing without incident and then I took over, whilst he had lunch, to tow Dave Pentecost. At about 1600 feet there was an 'uncommon bang' in the Beagle and an alarming vibration which necessitated lowering the nose and going through all the 'drills' including switching everything off, but the vibration continued violently and I incorrectly diagnosed a broken crankshaft, but also realised that at any speed below 100 knots pre-stall buffeting was beginning, so at high speed lowered the flaps and landed amongst the moorland sheep.

The first glider pilot to arrive shouted about 'running out of petrol' in the middle of nowhere. Having noticed that the propeller had sheared on one side (wonder where that great metal bit landed) I thought that a joke at his expense was not out of place so told him that I had simply forgotten to change tanks and as my batteries were flat...would he please give me a swing? He went round to oblige and then he saw the real problem. I don't think he has forgiven me yet!

BEAGLE AIREDALE G-AROJ

This aircraft was bought to replace the previous one and on first inspection it was obvious that it had been well used by its previous owner(s) and was going to cost money...and it did. My first flight in it and immediately it became known as the 'blue brick' and it had gone within a year...and then began the 'winch-hunt'! We were asked to sit back and believe that for Perranporth a winch could successfully replace a tug aircraft...a course pursued by the Committee; yet another lesson in self-discipline for some of us and an expense to the club that continued for years and years and years. Every engineer who could remotely lay claim to such a title came with a succession of modifications which surely cost the club a great deal more than buying a new tug aircraft. So we plodded on...

COMMITTEES PROBLEMS AND MORE GLIDING

During the past few years at Perranporth the dichotomous nature of the various committees was becoming more and more apparent. At first the dichotomy was fairly pure, i.e. equal numbers of those with some flying knowledge and those without, but gradually it was inclining to the latter as the older members faded out. Colonel George Tuson had been a tremendous influence for rational decisions and supplying statistics, and a succession of treasurers from a local bank had ensured a constant picture of the true finances of the Club. George had died suddenly, and almost without noticing, we had blindly been carrying on with many projects that his wisdom and experience would have prevented and for some reason we had decided to have a treasurer within the ordinary members. So we rather plodded on and the old chestnut about a winch being the saviour of the Club began to gain support, with myself again being in the minority of one; a stand from which I never wavered despite the unpopularity it seemed to engender!

On August 10th Gerry Leat telephoned to ask me to come to North Hill to carry out a rating test, something that I had been doing for many years for the South West of England as the Senior Regional Examiner. Jokingly he said that I was supposed to be able to fly cross-country in gliders, and he would expect me about mid-day in my S.H.K. The next day the weather was fair, and having a friend staying with me who said that he would drive the trailer for me, I set off from Perranporth a little optimistically and had a bit of a struggle all the way to Crediton where I found what was to be the last cloud which took me to 6000 feet. Calling Exeter in passing the local airway I was greeted over the radio by Eddie Edlund in A.T.C.

who recognised my voice from the old days of flying with the R.A.F.V.R.

A straight glide to North Hill in calm stable air was preceded by a call from them to identify my position, as on their field, the sea breeze had arrived and nothing but circuits had been possible all day. My elated feeling at this information was followed by some aerobatics before landing to the usual hearty greeting that one had come to expect from the members at North Hill. The rating test was equally successful and my friend, S.H.K. and self trailered back to Cornwall.

FORMATION OF THE DEVONSHIRE SOARING CLUB

John Homewood, retired from commercial flying in Singapore, formed the Club at Dunkeswell, a large airfield owned by Basil Pring who like myself used to fly in the R.A.F.V.R. at Exeter before operating his own flying club at Dunkeswell. The gliding fleet consisted of a Blanik, a Standard Cirrus, an S.H.K. and two Super Cubs, G-AR0J and G-AREO for aero-towing. I undertook to be the first C.F.I. It was a short-lived but happy venture.

After three years, John felt the urge to fly the old DC3 aircraft commercially from Exeter or Hurn mainly to Jersey and during a strike of seamen I went with him to Jersey and found difficulty in getting aboard to return home, such was the load of tomatoes!

After this came Mike and Barbara Fairclough with Dave Binson as C.F.I. to continue gliding at Dunkeswell. They used two Slingsby T53 two-seaters during this time and only retired in 1984.

A REAL MOUSE THAT FLEW

Richard Stead came to the Cornish Club with his RF5 which was known as 'The Clockwork Mouse' and it would be fair to say that he flew 'steadily' in this little motor glider, but there was a real mouse that flew...if only as an unpaying passenger.

One fine day I set off in the S.H.K. for Culdrose from Perranporth, and when lowering the wheel on the approach heard a squeaking noise from the wheel bay. Seeing a Capstan also preparing to land I retracted the wheel and soared away to wonder about the noise but a solution was not found, so repeated my approach procedure when the same noise was heard. I landed very gently in case all was not



G. T. COLLINS
CHIEF FLYING INSTRUCTOR

Devonshire Soaring Club

Dunkeswell Aerodrome - Honiton - Devon

Telephone: LUPPIT 643



*The S.H.K. parked at Culdrose after landing
with the mouse that flew. (no. 171)*

well below but on coming to a stop at the launch point a little mouse dropped out of the wheel bay and started its own take-off run hotly pursued by Jock Pilch, a Culdrose instructor who finally caught it. We gave it a piece of bacon from the bus-canteen which it accepted and then set it free...and that was a lucky little mouse as I afterwards discovered that she (I suspect) was about to set up home in one of the foam cushions of the S.H.K. and had already started the chewing process!

INTERNATIONAL ATMOSPHERE

In November 1973 I was gliding at Mora in Spain and only three months later was to meet their C.F.I. at Waikerie in Australia during the International Championships. It was good to be back at Waikerie where I had done a lot of instructing under C.F.I. Maurie Bradney and his deputy Bob Martin and had learnt the compass did not in fact read backwards as was rumoured in Britain.

It was January 1984 and my wife and I had bought an old car in Adelaide for the journey which included a stop at the house of an ex-Perranporth member to ask for an early morning cup of tea. This was the likeable Brian Wotton and when he heard that we intended to spend a few days at the gliding Club at Gawler he was there on the next day. That fine instructor, Gordon Redway, gave me a check flight and then Brian and I were soon soaring away to find his house and waggle the wings for his children to see. My wife flew with Gordon whilst I talked to Mike Valentine (ex U.K.) who has been given a responsible position in the Australian gliding movement and he told me about his car trip alone across the Nullarbor Desert starting from Perth. Nullarbor (Spanish) means 'without trees' and Mike said this was certainly true.

Our next stop was Waikerie where beside doing quite a bit of instructing I flew single seaters whenever they were not wanted by members...which was usually late in the day when the weather was not up to par. In spite of this I cruised around eight triangles, each over 250 km, and one of 464 km when I landed out just short of the field. This flight was on February 28th and my logbook tells me that I was told the result of the general election in Britain whilst still trying to make the last leg.

Then on to Tocumwal where again Ingo Renner got me going on the RF5 to check people out and I also soared to 8000 feet with my wife before she complained about the tightness of the turns and an early landing was necessary. At Tocumwal I had a varied menu of aircraft to fly including the IS28B for instructional purposes and a flight with Ingo in the Caproni two-seater.

Next stop was Benalla where Ed Keogh had just become the C.F.I. and a flight in their new Hornet enabled me to wander around the area, find the dead centre of the town (cemetery) and make a note of the route to the well known art gallery which we afterwards visited preceded by a swim in the town's swimming pool. Driving somewhere around this area we saw a car coming towards us with a tall figure at the helm instantly recognised as Bill Scull. We both stopped like true Englishmen and said good afternoon after which we both continued on our different courses. Bill Scull was then a national coach for the B.G.A., a responsible position in which he endured a constant stream of telephone calls at his private home in Alton, Hampshire. Over the years he has always been ready to give the Cornish Club all the help and advice that he could...perhaps we should have asked for more!

My gliding hours for 1974 were initialled in my logbook by Dave Pentecost who had become the new C.F.I. for the Cornish club. The total was over 200 hours and the Cornish Club had now survived for 18 years and 1975 was with us almost unnoticed. My own flying was mostly from different sites in Europe where there were no problems...at least to a visitor. After conducting several category checks in England I went to France, stopped at Rheims (where Cessna 150's are made under licence) and at the adjacent gliding field was soon airborne in the now familiar Bijave two-seater and taking a good look at the city itself. On to Nancy, not to the usual site at Pont-St. Vincent as it had closed but the other side of the City to the Pleine de Malzeville where many of the St. Vincent members had moved. A check flight in a K13 and then away in a Standard Libelle for a long flight to Metz and back after which I thought a visit to Fayence (which I had previously sampled 17 years before) would be enjoyable.

On a hill overlooking the field, listening to Mantovani on the car cassette player and hungrily chewing my 'casse-crouete' - it was a satisfying experience indeed. Activity on the field had begun and wave was appearing and on arrival I showed my honorary membership of 17 years ago, was made welcome and after a check flight in the K13 was away to some 'easy' high flying in a single seater...well above diamond height. On landing I said to the C.F.I., "It looked good enough to have flown to Geneva and back" and his casual reply was, "Oh, yes, I did that yesterday!" Having had a good look at the mountain peaks I realised what decisions he would have had to make correctly to do such a flight even with the Janus glider that he had used. Eric Shore from North Hill showed me pictures of such a dual flight from this site that he had made and they were truly breathtaking. Both he and Phil Gardner from Lasham are regular visitors to Fayence, but my year ended with flying a Cessna 150 from Alicante along the coast...not thrilling, but extremely pleasant.

A HOLIDAY IN AUSTRALIA

In January 1976 the idea was to show my wife a bit of Australia, but there were the odd visits to gliding sites. Having bought the old car in which to travel from Adelaide to Canberra we stayed with Wally Wallington and his wife Joyce. He was a Professor of Marine Biology and lectured at the University. He later showed me a picture I had taken of him in a glider whilst I was aero-towing one day at Lasham several years previously. Then on to Peter Hanneman who used to fly Shackletons from R.A.F. St. Mawgan before joining Qantas in Sydney - and out in his boat on the river at Illawong.

Regrettably (in one sense) most of the more interesting gliding activities I have either witnessed or taken part in have been recorded on 16mm cine film and many 'shots' that I would otherwise have included would require such lengthy searches and processing that of necessity they will have to be left dormant in their tin boxes and not included in these writings.

At Tocumwal I was instructing in two-seaters and flying the RF5 in the hot weather which made our hired caravan (it was the second time in two years that we had hired the same caravan), unbearably hot on our return from the airfield. I used to hose it down with water to reduce the inside temperature before entering. It was great fun and each evening we ate at the local hostelry, the 'Farmers Arms', which produced wonderful food and a noisy, boisterous atmosphere. The flying was relaxed but disciplined under Ingo Renner and the owner of the operations, Bill Riley. Bill was an ex-Sunderland pilot who had flown out of Mountbatten, Plymouth, during the war so we had much to talk about.

One day I recognised a figure in the distance so hurried across to the hangar to find that it was Chris Hurst who had been so often an adversary in the English National Championships, and had emigrated to the better gliding. On February 9th, I gave a check flight to Sam Woods and my log book reveals that he too was ex R.A.A.F. and flew Sunderlands at Plymouth. One out and return flight of 450 km and one straight glide from 11,000 feet to cover 56 miles at speed were the only real interesting flights I had, although several others exceeded 300 kms. The Kestrel and Pik 20 aircraft were the same as flown in two years previously ...but were only available on the 'duff' days which fortunately often surprised everyone and visitors then got a look-in!

Joe Zarubika, from California got a good thermal in a Standard Cirrus one day and smacked his head so hard on the canopy that it broke...the canopy of course!

Joe was anxious to visit Waikerie flying club so I agreed to go with him for a few days. We both enjoyed the good flying weather and I got roped in for some more instructing. One out and return in a two-

seater took us over the town of Truro, and having flown over Truro in Nova Scotia many years ago in a Rapide I took a picture of this one, but have since discovered there are two towns of the same name in the U.S.A. The Truro in Cornwall was my old boarding school. Dr E. H. Magson was Head Master of Truro School in my day, and one of his many sayings that I remember was... "Always be intelligently lazy". This meant of course that things should only be done once, but correctly.

Truro School built an Ultralight aircraft of which the boys were justly proud, and I would of course as an 'Old Boy' have welcomed an invitation to fly it, but this honour went to Phil Irish who helped with the engineering at his own airstrip between Truro and St. Agnes.

Anyway, Joe and I returned to Tocumwal for more of the same...instructing in the IS28B and some solo flying in the Kestrel and Pik. March 4th, shows an out and return of 300 km. in the Pik and the next day we motored down to Bacchus Marsh Gliding Club and asked the timekeeper if there was any chance of flying from their site. The timekeeper asked us where we came from and it subsequently transpired that he was born in Perranporth and had left there with his father, Bob Gledhill, at the age of eleven. Bob was the very person with whom I had negotiated the take-over of the old hangar where he had conducted an upholstery business before emigrating. Within minutes the son had found the counterpart of the British National Coach in Australia, Geoff Strickland and we were flying together in a K13 and having a good old chat whilst gently climbing. He pointed out the local game reserve which on landing we visited before driving back to Kyabram, the small town that we had grown to like together with many of its inhabitants.

So the time came once again to leave Australia from Melbourne in a 747...this time with a difference...in the middle of a violent thunderstorm through which we weaved.

Back in England I had one flight from Lasham of 200 km. passing the then peaceful airfield of Greenham Common en route. At Culdrose Paul Williams gained his full category.

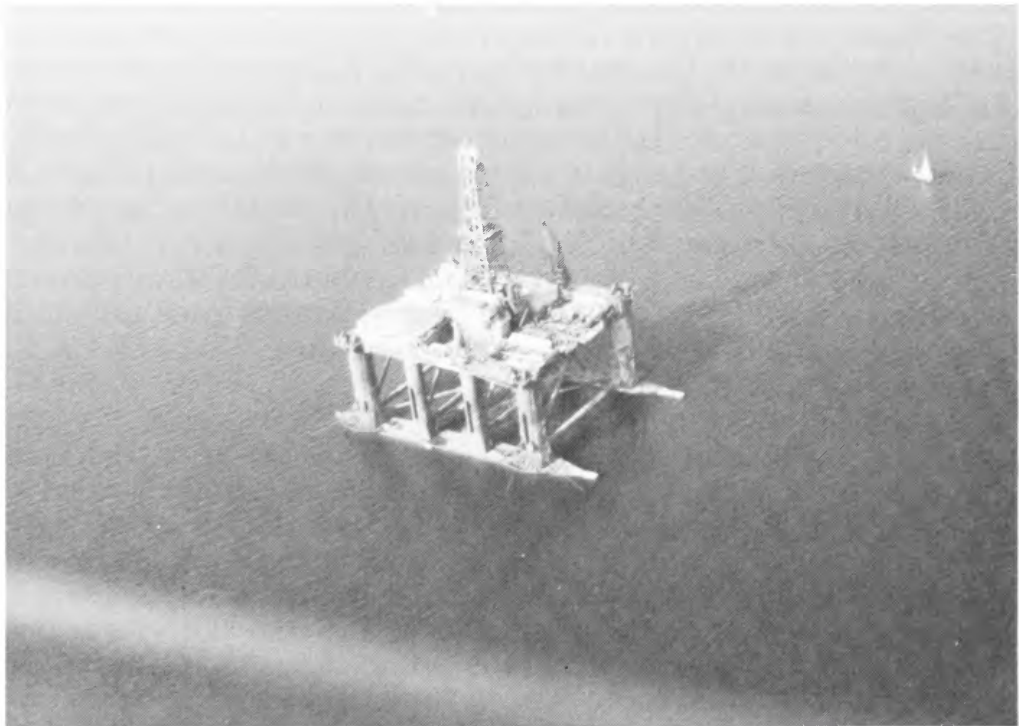
A QUIET YEAR IN THE CORNISH CLUB

This was 1977, undisturbed all round and an instructors meeting at Bicester gave all of us the chance to fly the new Twin Astir and Mosquito. At another site I had the distasteful job of failing a full category aspirant and came home to find that I had been awarded a B.G.A. Diploma for Services to Gliding in the South West.

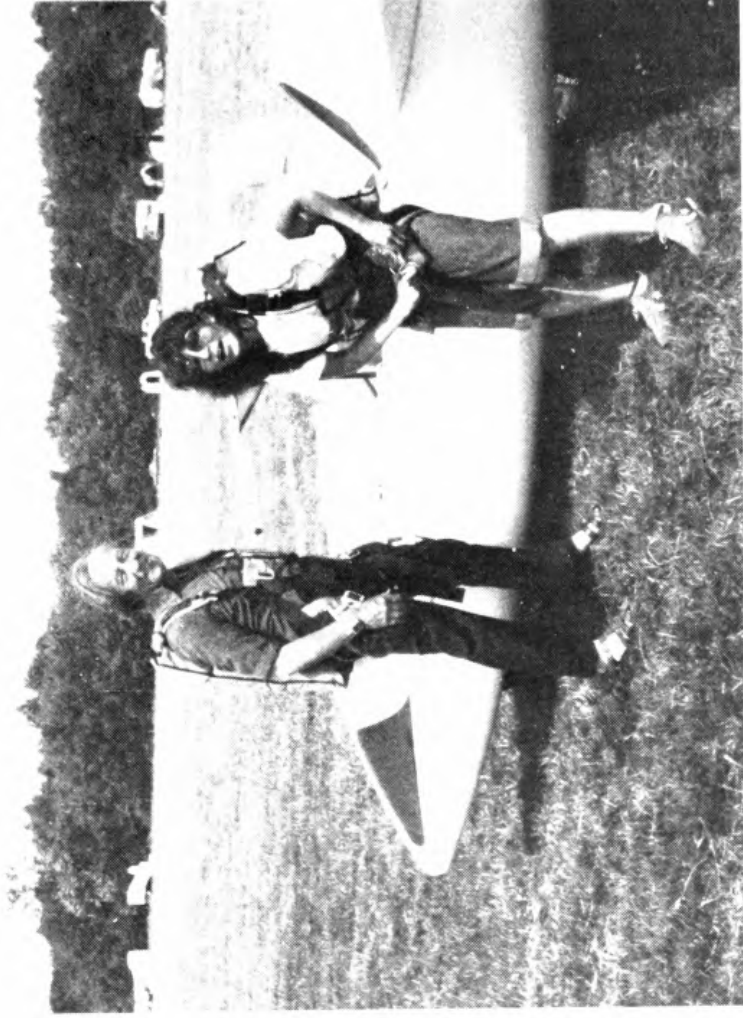
My logbook showed that I had flown in 12 countries at 92 sites



Truro School taken from the Motor Glider.



An oil rig off Falmouth harbour...also from the motor glider.



*Derek Piggott with a lady pupil.
He is smiling as usual. .but who wouldn't!*

and 56 aircraft types and 112 different gliders besides 12 motor gliders, but the important item seemed to be that Britain was no longer getting its share of glider production.

Everywhere one went there were foreign gliders at home and since the death of Fred Slingsby in 1973 his old firm seemed to struggle from one crisis to another. On the eve of what must be the 'computer revolution', Britain is still without a glider manufacturing firm.

Back in Cornwall we battled against a few more self-imposed difficulties and many temporary committee decisions that seemed to become permanent without being promulgated. George Kosak at Cudrose followed the able Bob Green as C.F.I. and Mawgan Vale closed down. Bill Hosie and his son joined us from that club and bought a delightful little monoplane, Colt G-ARNI, then a K6Cr glider, then a Libelle, then an RF4 single seater motor glider, G-AVLW, a Rallye Minerva in 1978 G-AYYN, then a Rockwell and maybe others that I have forgotten. Then came a Piper Super Cub which did some aero-tows and raised club members spirits temporarily, but they were short-lived as it flew away over the horizon to another club at Booker.

The Committee decided to build a new winch, sadly on several false assumptions, the first of which that it would replace a tug aircraft with much less expense. It operated reasonably well for one course season when it was driven by Colin Mackenzie, but was a constant source of trouble when taken over by anyone who wanted to 'have a go'. It wasted a lot of money and for a long time looked like a 'rusting dinosaur' outside the old hangar and never adequately fulfilled the expectations of its advocates. The thermals were still inland and mostly out of reach.

Doing some flying myself at Bicester and Dunstable relieved the pressure a bit and then I went to North Hill where Peter Cooper completed his full category. A few months later he was inexplicably involved in a fatal accident which left members and others who knew him well, temporarily stunned. He was on a solo flight behind the tug aircraft when he released before reaching normal height and then drifted gently into the nearby hillside. His wife had been a wonderful worker for the club and I was particularly sorry for his son David with whom I had set up a rapport which always meant that when I went to North Hill in August or September he would invariably potter off and return with a bag of mushrooms for his 'Uncle George'.

THE BURDENS OF A C.F.I.

Having been a C.F.I. at three clubs for a total of over 24 years I feel

able to talk on this delicate subject with reasonable objectivity. John Turner had held this position with the Cornish Club following Dave Pentecost and tried in his own way to revive some of the old spirit that he had known himself when he cycled long distances to get to the club in time to get on the flying list. He established a satellite field near Lanivet which clearly had potential for good soaring conditions, but the back-up publicity never evolved and many members including myself had little idea of the operation until it was abandoned. All through the years of the Cornish Club the pendulum has swung periodically; understanding, then neglecting the need for communication between committee and members. Never has it settled in equilibrium for a long continuous period apart from the first few years after formation and in a small club the need for such liaison seems to be absolutely essential.

John resigned for reasons that were not made public and I was asked to take on the responsibility yet again, which I did after first explaining that I was committed to a visit to the U.S.A. in September. Pat Wybrow and Harry Hooper both came back to the club and I was able to renew their full ratings and Joe Zarubika paid us a visit and had a good flight. We laboured on with a fleet now made up of a Blanik, K13, Ka6Cr, Ka6E and a small winch and the monster winch in process of construction. Permission to use Newlyn field was obtained from the tenant farmer, William Elliott, and as soon as the winch was reliable enough we were all set to go inland and use the thermal conditions during the Summer. The winch was never really trustworthy so we never made the trek.

The only 'away' sites that the Club ever used satisfactorily had been Davidstow and Newlyn fields (previously) although several sites had been suggested. One at Hell's Mouth was basically just a change in scenery but organised by Noel Ellis to try and inject a little enthusiasm and another at Tresillian by Dave Pentecost next to a field previously discarded by myself as only a possibility. Dave himself bent the tailplane of the Olympia 463 in his choice of field so it was rejected!

MORE TRAVEL

My visit to the U.S.A. was for purely nostalgic reasons. I wanted to visit the old deserted airfield at Clewiston, Florida where I had trained so many years ago, but my first stop (after getting an American licence to fly) was at Sebring where Derek Johnstone had set up his own gliding operation on a commercial basis. Some good gliding in a Pic 20 was terminated by a forecast long period of dull weather, so I decided to fly down to Clewiston in a hired Cessna 172 from the same field and two other 'Brits' asked to come along. They were Ron Wills (who flies from Eastleigh in his own aircraft and in



Gliders at Sebring in Florida.



The field (outlined) that I rejected before Dave Pentecost tried to use the fields in the foreground. Near Tresillian.



Barry Pearson at Eaglescott (wearing headset) with a pupil in the Grob



The field at Eaglescott.



The writer with Martin Thomson ready for a flight category test in the Grob 109 motor glider at Eaglescott.

1984 flew in a glider from Lasham to Perranporth) and John van den Broek who let me roam around for an hour after landing on the old airfield. The swimming pool had collapsed as had most of the buildings, but I could still make out where I used to sleep and the control tower was intact. After take-off from Clewiston we had a good look around the area before flying back to Sebring and from Sebring, with the weather still below par I decided to follow the trail of one of our members a few months earlier and go up to Lakeland for a Seaplane course at Jack Brown's Seaplane Base. With lots of little lakes dotted around the area it was quite an interesting course and I followed this with a quick visit to Disneyland in the car I had hired in Miami. Then back to an ex-instructor at Clewiston who went on to fly with Eastern Airlines, Marti Bennett and his son Bob, also an airline pilot. Marti took me to Richards Field near Miami where I flew again in a PT17 (Stearman) which I had last flown in 1941 and then in an AT6A (Harvard).

Having satisfied a longlasting wish to revisit the old sites, a brief stay with Marti and a re-union with several of the old instructors that he had invited for a film evening and it was back to Gatwick on a D.C.10 and then to Cornwall. Here my first job was a full category test for Barry Pearson who now runs his own commercial flying centre at Eaglescott, mostly with gliders and motor gliders.

In October my wife and I paid a family visit to Canada. Our base was Edmonton, Alberta, and on the first free Sunday the President of the Alberta Soaring Association, Michael Apps, took me to the Chipman Field where the very first thing I saw was the trailer of Sigma...and sure enough the original glider was inside. Dr. Marsden, the present owner had modified it to his own liking and promptly broken the Canadian 500 km triangle record. He had also designed and built a two-seater (named Gemini) and a microlight. Mike Apps had me checked out at Chipman and issued an invitation to travel down with him with a glider in tow to a wave safari at Pinchers Creek, a government aided site near Calgary. We here had some superb flying in thermal and wave during which Canadian television had a helicopter buzzing around all over the place. At one stage I was asked to simulate the effects of a rotor on a glider approaching the Livingstone range of the Rockies, which I did at least to my own satisfaction, but was not able to see the results on the 'box' as we left for a tour of British Columbia and the Rockies before returning to the U.K.

At home, a trip over to St. Merryn and a flight in Cherokee G-SAPK belonging to Bob Partridge which soon saw a change of ownership to Jack Glanville and Richard Glanville his son, who got their P.P.L.s at Bodmin airfield and fly happily when time allows.

THE CORNISH CLUB THINKS ABOUT BUYING A MOTOR GLIDER

As most progressive Clubs have motor gliders, the Committee decided to take a step forward in this direction and buy one. Actually this was a decision that had been taken at least ten years previously, only to have been cancelled by the Chairman and C.F.I. two days before a normal Committee meeting! I had been upset by this precipitous action which I still look back on with dismay.

Anyway, here we were with Don Johnson allowing us to fly an Ogar (G-BECB) which has a pusher propeller at the rear and was delightful and easy to fly. Had it not been for the fact that after the first day's flying I received several telephone calls complaining about the noise, there would have been little doubt that the Club would have bought it. This was in July 1981 and was quickly followed by a visit from Bill Scull with the Super Falke G-BHAG. No noise problems but only one of expense, so a visit to Lasham where there was a Polish Club Falke G-AYYK for sale, a deal quickly agreed and it was soon in the hangar at Perranporth.

Three category checks at Yeovilton were completed and my attention turned to the Falke, which Bill Lewis had virtually taken in hand as its 'foster parent' in the servicing sense. Having been such an advocate for purchasing a motor glider over the years, my obligation to regain my full power rating was soon accomplished, and all my spare time seemed taken up by flying this machine.

At Culdrose Ian Reid did a 300 km distance flight to somewhere near Benson and at Perranporth we managed an odd Silver 'C' leg here and there, whilst I visited Turweston airfield (where I once flew Wellingtons during the war), and flew in a T21 with Albert Tarnow, a frequent visitor to Perranporth with his father, and then nipped over to Bicester to fly the Janus two-seater with John Dry. The Janus is perhaps the best two-seater for performance flying in the world at the time of writing (which presently is in Spain, with a strong catabatic wind from the mountains rocking the pine trees, giving a clear warning that the swimming pool will need cleaning in the morning!). Spain has been, in my opinion, one of the most neglected soaring countries for many years, but at least seems to be coming alive mainly thanks to some German enthusiasts establishing themselves at Fuentemilanos under the Australian champion Ingo Renner who flies there from June-September each year using the tramontane wind as well as thermals. Having flown in Spain as far back as 1960 in Sabadell, and also since, at Alicante, (the original airport before the international was established), and also been gliding at Mora, near Toledo, and Campolara near Munopedro, I have both felt in the air the wonderful waves and seen them far more whilst motoring down to the south...where often they have been active well out to sea on arrival.



The writer and Instructor Brian Farrow in the Ogar.



the Falke G-AYYK at Perranporth.



Removing the ice in the morning from the Blanik...at Pincher's Creek.



Over the Livingstone Range of the Rockies.

My Club duty for 1982 appeared quite obvious...to fly as much as possible in the Falke for financial reasons (not my own I should add), and this I did. John Turner had fought the usual battles of a C.F.I. and some others as well, I suspect.

Another visit to Booker and then down to Lasham provided another look yet again at the method of operation of bigger Clubs. The first is managed by Brian Spreckley and the latter by the ever smiling Derek Piggott as C.F.I. ...author of several books on gliding, books of great merit and truth.

THE NEW LOOK

Returning from Spain in mid-March 1983 it immediately became obvious that the club had adopted a completely new approach to its organisation. Brian Penrose had become the new C.F.I. and a new member (Mike Dance) although not being a glider pilot was floating a syndicate of 25 members to operate a Rallye tug aircraft. The problems which would arise from such leadership were immediately apparent, but being supported by a new chairman I felt that the balloon had already left its moorings.

Gary Polkinghorne was engaged as resident instructor and had at his disposal a full-time winch drive. Gary had instructional experience in Australia and also had motor gliding experience and the average amount of course flying was done which was fortunate as the year showed that the total number of launches, apart from the course flying was less than one third of those carried out in the second year of the club's operation. Brian Penrose handed over the job of C.F.I. to Peter Arthur before the year ended, the club's bulletin no longer appeared, no reference to our club appeared in Sailplane and Gliding, only three or four members seemed to be allowed to fly the tug aircraft which incidentally I never saw do a spin. In the view of several members it was...words, words, words...and there was a lot to do in 1984.

The new year started rather morosely in atmosphere in that the members seemed to be in charge of the flying rather than the C.F.I. Being qualified to carry out motor gliders tests I was not asked by anyone to do so, even though over 25 years as an examiner on gliders I have never, ever refused to do one. In spite of this attitude I continued to fly the motor glider during the week when visitors wanted to fly.

In June 1984 my son and myself set off for Spain to visit Fuentemilanos where we met numerous pilots awaiting their licences which (like our own) should already have been sent from Madrid to the field. On recommendation from Ingo Renner we went to Segovia to have our passports photographed together with the



The field at Fuentemilanos...with the Guaderrama mountains



My son Michael with Alfredo in the Robin tug at Campolara.



Anyone going back to the village please?...



Studying the map before a cross-country in the Standard Cirrus.



Mike with the President of the Gliding Club at Mora.

normal passport pictures...but still no reply. I think perhaps they took one look at my picture and decided that I was unfit to fly (my son's comment) so after a further wait we went to another site at Campolara where we flew without any investigations. Staying locally at Munopedro, a little nearby village, was a super experience and each morning at about 7 a.m. we were woken by the cows passing...each one with a mellow-toned bell gently ringing round its neck.

The tug pilot at Campolara was Alfredo, a character of amiable disposition, always ready to tow and a pilot of the 'enemy' during the last war. We had a great deal to talk about and it was all good fun especially in the evenings when we all dined together. But Campolara had limitations without us having licences, so we went to Mora where I had flown before and Mike had a flight with the President of the Club in the Blanik before we set off for the coast to enjoy some swimming. This we did and after a few days decided to go back through France to Nevers where the club enjoys a particular reputation for its welcome to visitors. Unfortunately, the weather en route was much too hot for driving as the tarmac on the roads was melting and a further delay as we were beathalysed by the French police. Suffice to say that we went to Fecamp, had a swim and then caught the next ferry from Dieppe to Newhaven.

CLUB POLITICS

Nothing would be easier than to write a few pages in which imprecise meanings could ensure the safe path of the author, yet to avoid the subject altogether (despite previous intentions) would be evasive. Watching world politics, it is painfully plain that some individuals have the charisma to engender tremendous forces and unite masses of opinion. Similar phenomena in a small club, easily recognisable by the discerning, only vanish when all members have a common objective.

Recalling the early days of the Cornish Club (which has taken all my spare time over so many years), there was a warmth and sincerity as together we strove to create something out of very little; something that would blossom into a Club that not only the members, but the County of Cornwall itself could be justly proud. We made it, but then were plagued by short-term members of the committee and a plethora of fast changing chairmen. In short, the club was starved of both continuity and commitment...and we are now disorganised in method and administration. Gone are the days when one could walk out and be sure that the C.F.I. was in fact the Chief Flying Instructor.

Now there is another problem after the death of the airfield owner, Charles Milner-Haigh, who whilst he was living, assured everyone that his will would provide security of tenure for the gliding club. Such is not the case. Inevitably some names spring to mind when thinking of the Club's future. Bill Lewis of course, Brian Farrow with his unending loyalty, Tony Turner as the course instructor who was always there, Carl Knight with his little winch ably assisted by Stuart Keogh and Dave Puttock, John Turner whose methods were unique at times, Denis Jenkin the unflappable (at least when on the ground) and Jane Pollard our first course secretary. As to the past, Mike Armstrong, who died in 1984 and of course Bill Robins who died in 1983 at the early age of 60 and whose brother Harry still carries on his interest in aviation, restoring vintage aircraft.

To name many others would include those who have come to the club full of promise, ideas and persuasive confidence that many of the newer members would follow and approve. Like the fairies at the bottom of the garden they quickly disappeared when the real work faced their promises, but the disturbance and uncertainty they left behind them was far reaching and meant even more thought from the 'faithfuls'.

WHAT NO CLUB CAN AFFORD

Over the years an occasional new member has joined our club with previous flying experience of a high standard and should be regarded gratefully! Most members just join without any idea of what is in store for them, and obviously there is no system of selection such as the R.A.F. demands. . .and so the club is in exactly the same position as the new member, it does not know what the new member has in store for the Club. A balance has to be struck which keeps both parties comfortable and which in some cases simply is not possible if the officers of the club are not aware of their delicate task.

One new member, Tim Major, was obviously a competent pilot with above average ability and self-discipline. He soon became familiar with our operations and was clearly going to be an asset to the club until he decided to set up his own airstrip nearby and with a colleague flew a beautiful little open cockpit monoplane G-SUZY and also a Condor which was fitted with flaps and decorated with German wartime markings and camouflage.

This was a loss that few clubs other than the larger ones can afford and hopefully will not be repeated in the Cornish Club. It may seem odd that I cite one individual example. . .but why should it be odd? . . .a club is made up of individuals and thrives or fails by



Suzy merrily flying along the Cornish Coast.



Tim's home-built hangar.



The Condor...fitted with flaps.



*F/Lt Harry Robins with a Mosquito at St. Mawgan Air display.
(Hands in pockets). (Photo T.A. Moya.)*

patterns of behaviour and Bernoulli's equation is matched closely by $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$. . .the pendulum seems to be swinging dangerously low in this year of 1985. I am sure that the signs are seen by many and that sufficient effort will overcome the problems inherited over the past few years and that gliding will continue in Cornwall.

OPINIONS AND FACTS

What has keeping bees to do with flying organisation? When I look at my bees, there are perhaps 60,000 bees working happily together and in unison, and yet when books are written about the subject it is rare that one finds any such unison amongst the writers. Dr. Johnson wrote "More rubbish has been written about bees than any other subject except perhaps women". Human intervention spoils the scene, but in gliding books, facts far outweigh opinions and this has to be, to make the sport as safe as we humans can do.

With members of gliding clubs however, opinions are inextricably mixed, as a constant flow of new committee members is the inheritance of all clubs. The results can be involved, and remembering that man is amongst the minority of animals on the earth that cannot fly, this is understandable when one tries to conquer Newton's Law of 'what goes up must come down' . . .a law made of course before space travel began.

The early pioneers of flying were encouraged by overcoming the problem momentarily, then merely delaying the actuation of the law, and it was with the onset of the first world war that aviation developed rapidly and not only was prolonged, and directional flying made possible, but adaptation in many ingenious ways to military uses was accomplished with varying degrees of success.

At the cessation of this first war there were many scientists, engineers and pilots who wanted to continue in aviation and did so with further improvements to aircraft construction and design, culminating perhaps in the famous Schneider Trophy races and Lindbergh's Atlantic crossing. Light aircraft and helicopters, the latter following the Spanish Cierva autogiro, also developed in step with the military designs but it was the second world war that saw the phenomenal difference in both powered aircraft and to a lesser extent, gliders. The effort and pace of development continued in civil aircraft afterwards, and today we have the simple-to-fly private aircraft, turbo prop and jet civil aircraft with their selective commercial uses. This is a subject far beyond the scope of this book, but is included to serve as an indication that flying was becoming gradually more expensive.

So many pilots have wanted to own high performance gliders which today are beyond their means that this is a hindrance to the

popularity of the sport. There is a constant wish to lower flying costs, together with a wish to improve glider performance, hence the problem.

It was this picture that perhaps prompted Francis Rogallo to design a parawing of fabric which gave the impetus to hang gliding, which at the time gave the so-called 'purist' glider pilots the idea that it was all too simple. Today we are witnessing the re-birth of the aeroplane with two vital differences from the originals. Firstly, modern technology of methods and materials for construction are far better. Secondly, engine reliability is accepted as normal and many professional minds have actively been engaged in various development schemes which have resulted in flying costs being reduced, with thousands of newly interested individuals becoming 'hooked' on the sensations of flying on one's own. From Rogallo's wing has come a succession of ultra-lights which is still continuing and will eventually find untold uses and plenty of scope for diversification. Again, it is necessary to limit the imagination fairly sharply as discussion could go on for ever.

Being slightly conservative, I feel the biggest brake to their usage at present is their apparent inability to cope with the unexpected turbulence that sometimes occurs with such little warning or none at all, but am equally sure that the present band of tenacious pilots and engineers in this field will come up with an acceptable solution.

THE SHADOWS LENGTHEN

To be able to finish these meanderings and local history on an optimistic note would be ideal, but all too often our airfield now looks as if the match is over and all the crowd and players departed. The uphill battle of the Cornish Club has been beset with indeterminate political differences which have been puzzling to the members, liaison has been confined to the notice boards with many unsigned directives; the bulletin has died and the Committee managed to start the 1985 courses with one only serviceable glider...the K13, and no course instructor engaged. A last-minute request from the C.F.I. and I managed to suggest someone who came to fill the gap and save the day.

The Club was at its lowest ever ebb, most of the soaring season over before the single seaters appeared and then within a few weeks the K6E was pranged and damaged enough to ensure its absence for the rest of the Summer. The Blanik languished in the hangar waiting for small parts instead of earning money in its rightful capacity and so...no cross-countries, no soaring except on the 'nursery slopes' of the ridge. The Falke too was damaged near the end of the season.

Members disappeared without comment and no-one asked why...our C.F.I. Peter Arthur clearly felt the strain and his working duties precluded his regular presence on the field. The new Chairman, John Trenchard was still discovering his orientation and 1986 is with us and without a vital leadership, will give rise to many misgivings. Perhaps we shall find it in time!

In my own 40th year as an instructor (not including the war years) I feel that I have done my stint, as 27 of these years I have served as senior examiner for the B.G.A. in the South-West region. I have also completed 13 years as C.F.I. for the Cornish Club at different times so I have a clear conscience in putting myself into the bracket of those who only fly when they want to fly! If I were asked whether or not I would do the same things over again the answer would be a positive negative! The first 7 or 8 years were a tremendous challenge which an utterly loyal band of instructors overcame...putting the Club first at all times and working for the same end...and never accepting any financial reward, as it has always been in my case.

To Ted and Robbie, if they are looking down... "We did it for free and aimed for a goal"...but without your help we didn't quite keep it. Having completed 24 years as C.F.I. at 6 different sites, there was certainly some satisfaction, but as to the future of the Cornish Club, even the umpires have gone and a surge of effort by the new members is our lifeline. The Club is looking for a new fast bowler!!

THE PAST AND FUTURE

During the past three or four years with a seemingly diplogenic committee, (recognised by some discerning members) the Cornish Club pursued a duality of purpose which with declining membership appeared to be ill-advised. A bad season weatherwise, a sparse instructor's roster and a difficult course season all gave cause for concern. With aircraft repair charges increasing alarmingly, our 'home' inspectors Peter Rassmussen and Dave Clowder undertook an increasing workload with determination and success.

It must be said however, that some Clubs outside Cornwall were going ahead rapidly...and at Booker on May 28th 1985, several 500km triangles were flown, and I believe one 750km triangle by Chris Rollings which emphasised the very first 500km triangle flown in Britain (from the same airfield) by Dr Brenning James in a 'Diamant 18' many years previously. In the magazine 'Sailplane & Gliding' an enormous number of badges was recorded, but sadly not a single one from Perranporth.

Thus a fervent wish to report a thriving situation at Perranporth will have to be delayed until hopefully someone waves the magic wand of opportunism and enthusiasm. Such people are hard to find!

My own flying was brightened by a series of literally 'flying' visits to clubs in France and Switzerland. In the latter country, at Grenchen, I was airborne within 20 minutes of arrival for a check flight with Danny...and we soared the Jura Mountains very closely until he let me take him inland to enjoy some really robust thermals which quickly took us to cloud base. Next day I explored the region on my own and the weather was still co-operating well when I finally left to call at St Auban, (flew there in 1952) one of the two National Gliding Centres in France. Then followed a visit to Fayence (Hon. member since 1965) where the Mistral was beginning to blow...this is the wind which pours down the Rhone Valley and meets first the Hautes Alpes and then the Basses Alpes, to provide some of the finest 'wave' soaring in Europe. From Fayence I went to Gap-Talland where there was a strong German presence. I profitably made friends with the French owner of a Twin Astir and also saw the JanusM...a new motorised version of the Janus two-seater being flown by some Italians. From Gap I went to Nevers (in the middle of France) for a soaring flight with M. Druceaux...a most amiable character of my own age group, possessed with a superb singing voice which he exercised for most of the flight. Then back to England and a visit to Duxford and Tibenham. At Tibenham I was



Capt. John Morris at 34000 feet in a BAC 1-11 returning from Faro to England



Bill Scull Hon. FRAeS. Preparing for flight . . . away from his many duties as Director of Operations for the British Gliding Association.

hoping to meet Alfred Warminger and his new Ventus glider...but he was at home fettling his instrument panel when I got him on the end of the telephone. Typically, he immediately invited me to come with him to Aboyne and share the gliding with him. Reluctantly I refused this offer as I was on the way home, via Talgarth...a visit which was aborted just before the Severn bridge because of a poor weather forecast, and immediate torrential rain. I had however managed to fly 18 hours solo in gliders, enough to retain an Instructors' category.

Back home and helping with the course, I had a pupil 'freeze' on take-off which resulted in a heavy landing and the aircraft being out of action when most needed. This was only my second such experience in 40 years instructing, yet still very frustrating.

Nationally, the big aviation news was the recovery of a Wellington bomber from Loch Ness where it had ditched during the war, and having flown the old 'Wimpy' many times at night over the same area, I could imagine the feelings of nostalgia felt by the watching Group-Capt. Marwood-Elton D.F.C., the surviving pilot, as it broke the surface water. I could picture the scene well, as during the war I had enjoyed a trip through the Loch and the Caledonian Canal with a friend captaining a naval motor-minesweeper. So, the Group-Captain left the scene to return to his home near Lostwithiel in Cornwall to bed down his bees for the winter!

The Cornish Club was visited by Ken Stewart, a National Coach, to give some lectures to three aspiring pilots aiming at a full gliding instructors' category...and I heard from the Secretary of our association of past pilots who trained in Florida, that some 16mm colour film that I had taken over 40 years ago was to be put on video by the R.A.F. Museum. It was time for me to sit and reflect a little. My various logbooks showed about 6000 hours and just approaching 50,000 kilometres of cross-country flying in gliders and since 1981 I had held an examiners authority from the Civil Aviation Authority. The latter involved considerable time and expense, but although the Cornish Club possessed a motor-glider not one member took advantage of this free facility in the first instance. So, before renewal is due in May (1986) I shall be opting out and not sending the three-figure fee necessary to continue. Instead, the money saved will be used to finance a trip to the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University where I flew my first 300 hours and was classed as a beginner...or in R.A.F. slang...a 'sprog' pilot! The occasion is the 60th anniversary of the institution and a British contingent is being organised by Ray Searle, one of the 'old' pilots, now security officer at Gatwick Airport.

So, now, we look to those at the helm of the Cornish Gliding Club to revert to some of the old pioneering spirit and not only outsoar the herring gulls and black-backed gulls on the cliffs, but also to venture inland and really fly gliders as they were meant to be flown.

Gliding is fun, but to be sailing through the air miles from home is both a stimulating challenge and an exciting experience that no glider pilot should ever miss or forfeit. I hope in these writings to have given the reader some idea of the history of gliding in Cornwall from the early days, the work involved...but most of all, the feeling of freedom, alone in a glider, and silently sailing...towards a known goal which once achieved can be relived and enjoyed many times over.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS TO:-

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W.J. Glanville. F.C.I.Arb. Barrister at Law. For his overall reading.

Hugo Irwin for his advice and regular 'proddings'!

Frank Lipman...who originally told me to 'get on with it'.

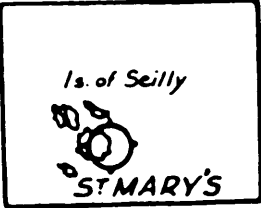
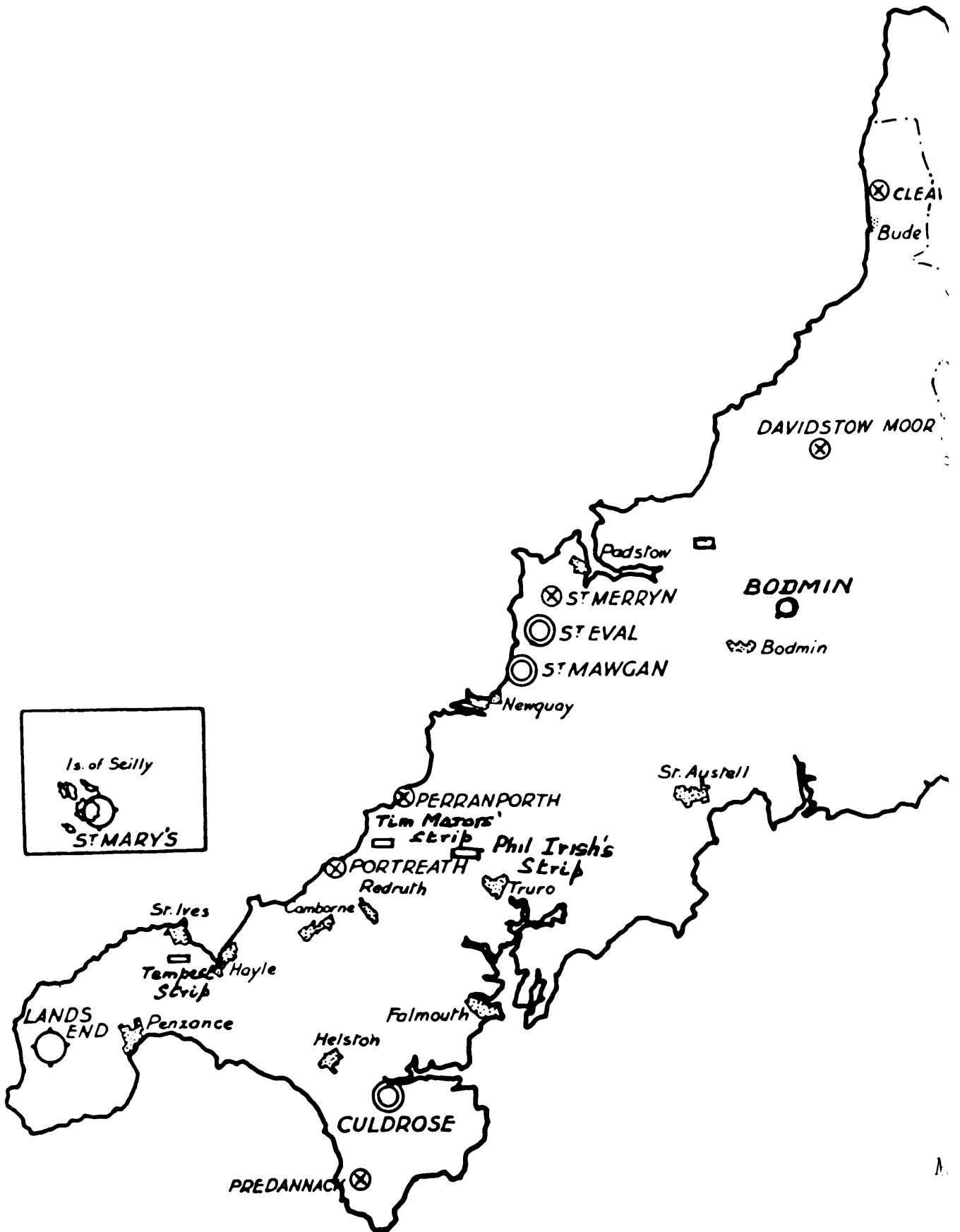
Fred Sloggett with his descriptions of the chequered history of the Albatross Gliding Club

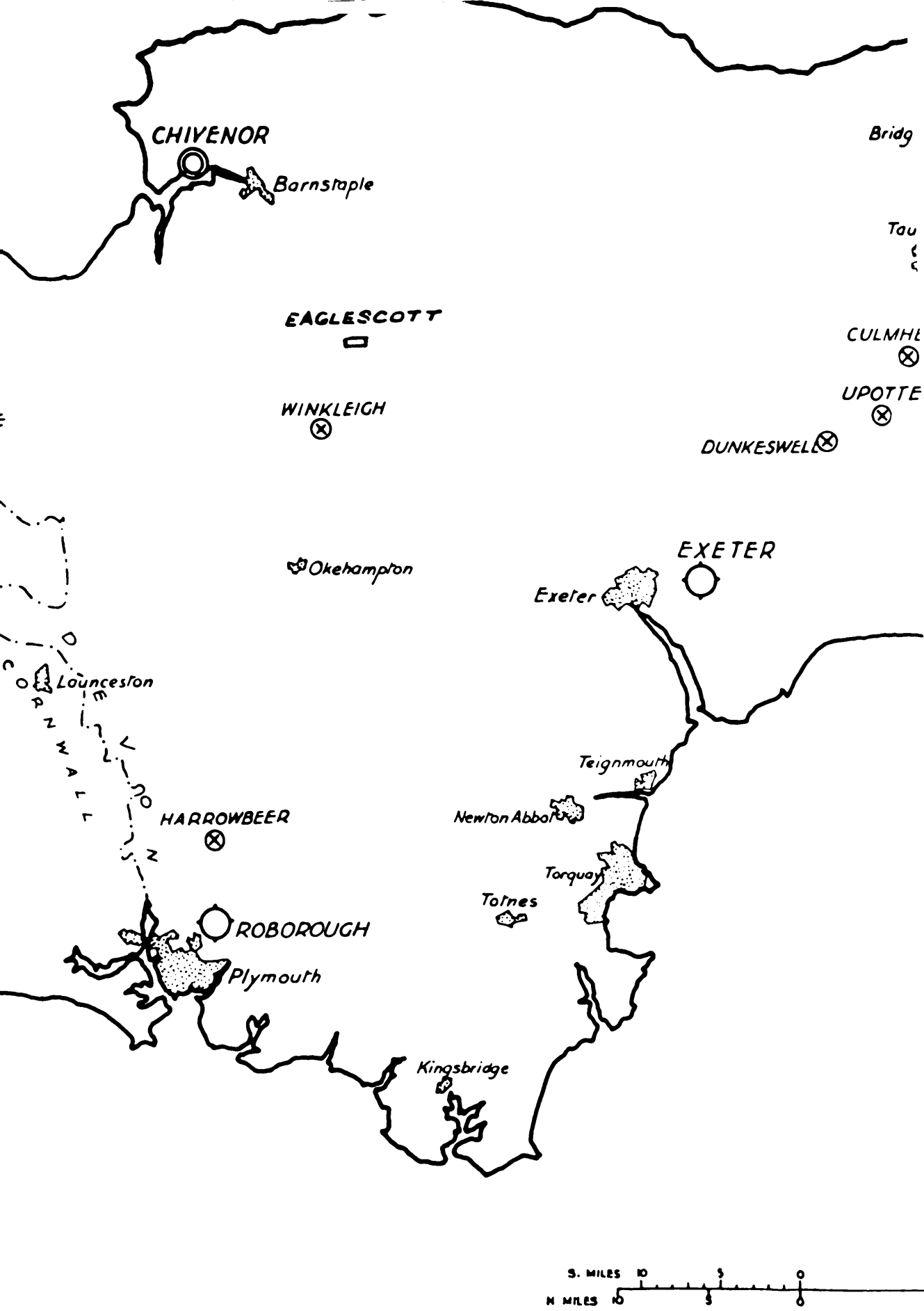
Caroline Collins B.A. (Hons). A conscripted daughter-in-law for proof reading.

My wife, Elizabeth, for many hours typing.

To many friends at home and overseas for the warmth and sincerity of welcome when visiting their various flying sites.

Lundy Is.





Most of the Airfields and Airstrips mentioned by the Writer, in Cornwall and Devon.

