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£3.25 Vol. 52 No. 3

ISSN 0036-7230



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The magazine of the
British Gliding Association

June ~ July 2001
Volume 52 No 3

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Your contributions are very welcome: please
feel free to discuss your ideas with us

Deadline Dates

August ~ September 2001

Articles	June 12
Letters	June 12
Club News	June 12
Advertisements	June 22
Classifieds	July 6

October ~ November 2001

Articles	August 14
Letters	August 14
Club News	August 14
Advertisements	August 24
Classifieds	September 7

Publisher

British Gliding Association
(email: bga@gliding.co.uk)

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

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S&G annual subscription: £20.00 in UK
US \$43 for airmail; \$33 for surface mail



If you're sharing a thermal and not turning tightly enough, you're as bad as the car driver who pulls out of a junction, forcing you to brake, then dawdles down the road in front of you, says Sam St Pierre. See p18 for his views. (This tightly-turning Nimbus 3 is courtesy of the white planes picture co.)

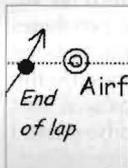
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In the first of two articles, **Sam St Pierre** explains why he believes most pilots don't turn tightly enough in thermals

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Ken Stewart suggests ways to benefit from being sitebound, while pilots from **Lasham** and **Husbands Bosworth** describe tasks you could try

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Glider pilots **Brano Jesensky** and **Tibor Fratrik** tell S&G about their club, Martin GC, and describe gliding in the heart of Europe

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Guy Westgate is an enthusiast for pan-European exploits. The latest tour in his DG-400 began with a longer-than-expected Channel crossing...

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David Innes feels the time has come to reveal what happened in the dark, turbulent depths of a memorable cloud – as far as he can. Do you hold the key to completing the picture?

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'Clear direction' for NPPL, says CAA

SIGNIFICANT progress towards the new National Private Pilots Licence (NPPL) is being reported. All involved are now optimistic that the new licence can be in place by early 2002, says the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). It attributes progress to three key decisions.

First, the representative associations (BGA, AOPA, BMAA, PFA, GAPAN and GAMTA) have formed an NPPL Steering Group to guide the licence through technical and administrative stages.

The benefits of the new steering group have been immediately apparent, with complete cross-party agreement on the technical structure of the licence overcoming reservations previously expressed by some of the organisations. The most significant change to the training requirements is that the previously agreed 32 hours training will be followed by separate navigation and general skill tests to give a total minimum package of around 34 to 35 hours.

Secondly, the CAA and the industry have agreed that the NPPL will be independent of all current licences. So, for a pilot to exercise the licence privileges he or she must actually hold a valid NPPL. This is different to other licences where, for example, an ATPL holder with only a valid Class II medical is able to exercise only PPL privileges. Existing licence-holders wishing to move to the NPPL will have to obtain the licence but will not to surrender their current licence. This can go into abeyance and can be resuracted at any time by the appropriate revali-

About the proposed new national private pilots licence

Restricted to flights within UK airspace during daytime under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) with a minimum in-flight visibility of 5km, or 10km under Special VFR.

Restricted to single engine piston planes with max take-off weight of 2,000kg.

Restricted to a maximum of three passengers, plus the pilot.

Restricted to simple aircraft types. "Differences training" will be required for more complex features, such as retractable undercarriage and variable-pitch propellers.

Revalidated automatically by flying a minimum six hours pa, four of which must be in command. A flight with an instructor must be carried out every two years.

ation and medical certification.

The drivers behind this decision are speed and cost. By keeping the NPPL independent the involvement of the CAA is minimised and the associated charges reduced.

Ron Elder, Head of the CAA's Personnel Licensing Department, commented: "If we had tried to integrate the NPPL privileges into current licences there would have been a considerable administrative burden on the CAA. The time involved and costs of that administration would have had to be passed on and, ultimately, would have been reflected in the fee for the licence. We believe that by keeping the NPPL independent of other licences the cost can be kept to an absolute minimum."

Thirdly, on the medical side, the association-appointed medical representatives will be the first line of communication for pilots or their GPs with queries about certification.

At present it is difficult to predict the number of medical queries. If there are many, or if there are difficult or contentious cases, it may be appropriate for the associations to form a Medical Review Panel.

The CAA Medical Division will provide support and advice.

Rod Dean, Head of the CAA's General Aviation Department, said: "The NPPL is now firmly set in a clear and sensible direction. The NPPL Steering Group has already proved its worth and demonstrated the significant benefits of the associations working closely together. We will now assist industry in getting the licence introduced as soon as possible."

Before the licence can be introduced, normal consultation will take place and legislation is required. The CAA and the NPPL Steering Group plan to complete all actions needed to launch the licence by early 2002.

Royal seal of approval for success in Europe



THE ROYAL Aero Club (RAeC) Diploma was awarded to Britain's successful 15-Metre Class Team, who came first, second and fifth in the European Championships in Germany last year. Pictured from right, above, are: team member and gold medallist, Steve Jones, BGA Secretary Barry Rolfe; HRH The Duke of York, President of the RAeC and presenter of the award; silver medallist Dave Watt; and team member Al Kay, who came fifth. A Bronze medal also went to Arthur Doughty (far right).

Teams for forthcoming championships

include Steve and Dave (18-Metre Worlds); Sarah Steinberg (World Class Worlds); Gill Spreckley, Sarah Steinberg; Lucy Withall; Rose Johnson and Jan McCoshim (Women's Worlds).

After many years of service, Bob Bickers has resigned as British Team Manager and Harry Middleton has been appointed.

Catch more news as it happens about the British Teams on www.racingsailplanes.com - a website created by team member Pete Harvey of The Frameworks and maintained by comps committee member Dave Allison.





Inevitably, there's a lot of coverage relating to foot-and-mouth in this S&G. See pages 22-3 for the latest news we could cram into this issue – including early May's modification of the BGA ban and a list of gliding clubs that were closed as we went to press. If you're still under "airfield arrest" you'll find suggestions for enjoying your local soaring (pages 20-21); Salutory Soaring addresses the subject of landouts on pages 48-9. There is more local information in Club News (pages 52-9) and details of cancelled events on page 9. Last but not least, see page 61 for some of the hazards the situation might create for glider pilots.

Helen Evans

Club visits on the agenda

A TWO-YEAR rolling programme of visits to clubs is being planned by BGA Executive Committee members.

The idea, masterminded by AGM organiser and committee member Claire Emson, is intended to give clubs direct, on-site access to the elected representatives who make decisions on behalf of British gliding. The aim is to develop harmonious relations between the BGA and its member clubs, to develop a greater understanding of the needs of individual clubs and to increase

understanding among clubs and pilots of the work and objectives of the Association (as well as of the constraints within which it has to operate). Improving communications and making the BGA more approachable were issues raised at the last AGM and which have been under consideration by the Executive for some time.

Each member has selected between nine and 16 clubs which they have undertaken to visit in pairs or small groups over the next 24 months. Given luck and fair weather, they hope to spend some time at the launchpoint, and in the air, as well as discussing the role of the BGA with club officials. Each Exec member's area coincides with those of the Regional Examiner system for administrative convenience.

Claire will be writing to clubs shortly to let you know who's on your regional team and explain the initiative. "We hope that this will give Exec members the opportunity to listen to and absorb your views," she said.

Winner of the BGA 1000 Club Lottery's March draw was B Bateson (£54.00). The runners-up (each winning £10.80) were: PJ Fincham; LP Woodage; MJ Wilshire; AM Blackburn; and RH Dixon. Winner of the April draw was M Davis (£53.75). The runners-up (each winning £10.75) were C Waller; J Delafield; C Smith; R Barrett and RH Dixon.

Committee chairmen

THE FOLLOWING chairmen of BGA sub-committees are currently in post:

Airspace: Carr Withall
Competitions & Awards: Ron Bridges
Development: Max Bacon
Flight Safety: Jonathan Mills
Marketing & Communications: vacant
Technical: John Bradley
Staff & Administration: David Roberts
Strategic Planning & Finance: Patrick Naegli

Peter Stratten has resigned from the Flight Safety post and Ian Godfrey from the Marketing & Communications role, both for personal reasons. Patrick Naegli has taken over Strategic Planning & Finance from David Roberts. If you are interested in the voluntary post of chairman of the Marketing & Communications sub-committee and have the time and skills for the role, please contact the BGA Secretary at Kimberley House, Vaughan Way, Leicester LE1 4SE or tel 0116 253 1051, email office@gliding.co.uk



THE FAMILIAR sight of "Nev" in the doorway of his trailer (above) will be missed at clubs this year. He and Lynn have sold Nevynn International to Airplan Flight Equipment, the company which last year bought RD Aviation as part of an ongoing expansion into the gliding market. AFE MD Jeremy Pratt said: "We have acquired the stock and sales orders and will run the business out of Manchester, our main mail order base. We aim to offer the same level of service as Nev, but with a bigger range of stock." It may not be the end of the road for Nev's trailer, though. "I hope we'll be seeing it at comps this year," Jeremy said. "We've taken it on but are looking for someone to staff it." AFE is also seeking a general manager for RD Aviation in Oxford.

In brief

THE FAI has now ratified three Open Class Glider records from the Mountain Wave Project (MWP) expedition to Argentina. All were in a Stemme VT S10 last November. The first is a Free O/R Distance, 1,550.2km, by Klaus Ohlmann and Ulrich Wieland, beating Klaus' 1999 record of 1,412.22km. The same flight was at a record speed of 122.39km/h over an O/R course of 1,500km. The third record is Klaus' famous 2463.7km flight with Alois Urbancik on November 26, beating Terry Delore's 2,049.44km in the Free Three Turn Points Distance category. For more on MWP, see the last two S&Gs.

We are sorry to report the death in a glider crash of Kenneth Goodrum, from Norfolk GC, in April. A BGA investigation is ongoing.

THE CAA's UK Register of Civil Aircraft is now available free via the internet. See www.srg.caa.co.uk/aircraftregister/ginfo.asp

THE government is planning a blood/alcohol limit for anyone doing a safety-critical role in civil aviation. The limit for aircrew, air traffic controllers and maintenance engineers would be 20 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood. This will apply, too, to people involved in leisure aviation. It also plans to give police powers to test for drink or drugs where there is reasonable cause.

A FREE copy of *Soaring – Your Sport for the New Millennium*, reviewed in the last issue (p13) has been sent to every UK gliding club courtesy of the BGA, which has further copies for sale at £5.00 each incl. p&p.

HAVE you ever wondered how much flying-related car registrations cost? At a recent DVLA auction, **B 727 FLY** went for £1,000, **JET 53 T** for £1,500, **125 JET** for £2,700 and **FLY 747 S** for £4,200. The sale's top price was £45,000 for **W 1 LKO**. The all-time record is £231,000 (**K 1 NGS**). If you fancy **FLY 3R** or **22 JET** see www.dvla-som.co.uk No surprise, then, that personalised plates have netted HMG more than £500 million.

Trailer recovery in the UK or across Europe can be secured if you are a member of Autohome, which provides services for niche markets such as horseboxes and vintage buses. Contact them for a brochure on 01604 232334. Remember to specify that you are seeking cover for a glider trailer, as the rates differ slightly from their brochure.

The Sailplane Restoration Group has been set up by Bob Kent to restore old gliders to exhibition standard. For more details, email sailplanerestoration@soaring.org.uk



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What a line up! Chris Rollings, Tom Knauff and Karl Striedieck
are offering soaring courses this winter.

Soaring and Cross-Country Master Classes and Instructor
Training will be provided in Florida this winter at Winter Haven
by Mile High Gliding Inc. Availability of courses will be from
November 2001 through February 2002. The Soaring and Cross-
Country courses will be each of seven days duration and will include
ground school, dual instruction in a Duo-Discus glider and, if condi-
tions permit, escorted solo cross-countries in one of our Genesis II's.
Details of the instructor training program are available on our web
site; the intention is to have courses suitable for both British and
American pilots.

The courses will be under the direction of Chris Rollings (Ex-BGA
Senior National Coach and five time UK Soaring Champion). Each
soaring course will also feature at least one guest instructor of inter-
national reputation; guest instructors on the Soaring and Cross-
Country courses will include Tom Knauff and Karl Striedieck.

For more information, visit our web site
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Gliding history

Despite a good response to the ad in the
last issue, I still lack some copies of *The
Sailplane and Glider* (1930s-1950s),
Gliding (1950-5) or *S&G* (1955-7).

If you happen to have spare copies to:

- donate to the BGA to complete the editor's
archive (which will go with the job)
and/or

- sell to me for my own personal archive
I'd love to hear from you on 01793 783423
or helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk.

In the meantime, thanks also to Peter
Everitt, John Cochrane, Peter Harmer, Ged
Terry, and Murray Hayes for all their help.

Helen Evans, Editor, S&G

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Turn the churn

I was interested to read Roger Coote's article in the last issue (Turning your club's churn rate, p12). I totally agree with the aim but I don't feel that the suggested remedy goes far enough.

My view of the situation is simple. Although we are supposed to have more leisure time than previous generations, I would argue that this is achieved at a price and the demands on it are higher. This means that anyone interested in taking up or continuing with gliding, needs, in many cases, to achieve the best return on their time and money. This is at odds with the way most gliding clubs operate, requiring, as they do, their members to invest time and effort so that everyone has the chance to fly on any given day. It is labour intensive and unless the individual obtains a reward (in terms of flying time) commensurate with the effort expended, it will take a lot more than coaching or discussion to make them feel anything other than the pain is not worth the gain in the longer term.

Now, I am not suggesting that the club situation is wrong. I just feel that maybe it doesn't fit in with the needs of many people today.

I believe that if many clubs are to successfully reduce the churn rate then they should address this issue.

Mike Daborn, HEADLEY, Hants

More churning

Roger Coote announced in the last issue that our club is to have the honour of testing measures to reduce "Churning" – membership turnover. Plat touched on a useful point, in the same issue: that it is probably wasteful in resources to pursue all trial lesson participants. People take trial lessons for a variety of reasons, not all of which will lead to a long-term interest in gliding.

Efforts to identify the reasons for "Churning" may best be spent on those who really want to glide. Their answers as to why they do or do not go ahead will be relevant, as will their experiences as they proceed through the bottom of the learning curve.

Gliding is, by its nature, a selfish pursuit. To succeed requires time, money, enthusiasm and a large measure of self-interest. If any of these prerequisites is reduced or removed, the result is an ex-pilot. There seems to be a culture in some areas of gliding of leaving people to fend for themselves in what is a complicated and confusing environment. Whilst this might have sorted out the men from the boys in earlier days, when different social conditions obtained, it may now eliminate those who are not sufficiently pushy by nature but may still have the makings of good pilots. Up to the point that any particular pilot is competent, it is necessary to remove as many of the potential obstacles to his or her continued progress as possible. If we don't do this, the British trait of complaining with our feet rather than our voices will prevail, and those



Should bars be fitted to all gliders which fly cross-country? See Barbed wire bars, below (photo of "used" bars courtesy of Servicecenter Terlet)

less than satisfied with their progress will slip silently away and become "churnees".

If we are expecting people to part with £500-£1,000 of hard-earned cash to get to solo, and a not dissimilar sum to get to Bronze, gliding may need to become more user-friendly, convince *ab initios* and early post solos that the next step is achievable and then monitor progress so that they stay with gliding and become the champions, instructors and administrators of tomorrow.

That this may call for modifications in the current role of the BGA, instructors and club administrators is just one of those things.

I, of course, am neither instructor nor administrator so can make these sweeping statements and risk only the glum looks from fellow Southdown GC members who are.

Geoff Weston

geoffwestonaspect@supanet.com

Barbed wire bars: for chickens?

Congratulations are certainly in order for the author of *Why you should beware of wires* (p29, April-May 2001): it's a miracle that he survived.

A friend of mine had the same problem when flying in Germany two years ago, but there the wires were at the edge of a forest and he only saw them when he was going into them. He was wounded in the face by the shattered perspex, but his life was saved by the barbed wire bars – or he would have undergone the treatment you Brits tended to give your kings and queens in the past.

I hear you laughing again: "barbed wires block your view!" Installing them has not been compulsory in The Netherlands for the last two years. For local flights only, in K-13s

Please send letters – marked "for publication" – to:

The Editor, Sailplane & Gliding, 6 Salop Close,

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Please include your telephone number and full postal address, and try to keep your letter concise.

The deadline for the next issue is June 12

or K-21s, that seems to be OK, but the Commission for Instruction and Safety urges our members not to go cross-country in a glider without them. Blocking the view: yes, but only to a very limited extent (no, we do not use two-inch steel pipes). I have never missed an object in the air because it was hiding behind one of them. "Spoiling the view" would be a better description.

Another friend of mine, whose landing run finished in barbed wire many years ago, still has scars almost from ear to ear and most of his teeth were ripped out in the action as well. That was the reason the Dutch started putting those bars in. Servicecenter Terlet, who do glider repair and maintenance here, have a case roughly once a year. Even in the US (big fields, but still...) recently a chap was tragically killed in the same way.

Would some thinking perhaps be in order now? We can give you the technical details on how to do it.

Bruno Zijp, WEESP, The Netherlands

Against the BGA ban

It is now clear that the foot-and-mouth crisis will not be quickly contained, and that the gliding season may well be over before the end of the epidemic is officially declared. The ban which the BGA has declared will therefore limit gliding activity to training and local soaring. Our sport unfortunately cannot be described as being in robust good health, and for clubs operating at the margin this may prove to be a survival issue.

I assume all S&G readers will have deep sympathy for the position farmers are in, and we all recognise the importance of maintaining the goodwill of farmers. However, on this occasion any goodwill has been bought at a very high cost, as the BGA seems to have chosen to place the interests of farmers ahead of its own members.

At the time of the last outbreak, any cross-country would have involved a relatively high risk of a field landing, if only because of the lower performance gliders being flown at that time.

I suggest that most pilots flying cross-country today are more experienced, and are flying much higher performance gliders. Most are quite capable of flying a limited cross-country on a reasonable day, choosing a route which keeps them in range of active airfields. They know who they are, and if they don't their CFIs do.

In these circumstances, to eliminate the possibility of restricted cross-country flying is regrettable. To extend it to turbo and self-launching gliders is folly.

Good gliding is about individuals taking decisions and taking responsibility. The BGA has decided to take that responsibility away from individual pilots, and in so doing is asking its members to write a blank cheque, the size of which cannot yet be calculated.

Jeff Warren, London NW3

See p23 for the latest from the BGA – Ed ➤

> Thanks for a good day

I have to put pen to paper (more correctly, fingers to keyboard) having just been to my first BGA AGM. This was a very interesting and entertaining day, in many respects, especially my first attendance for I did not know what to expect. It even had strong drama which, happily, was resolved by good argument and pragmatic problem-solving – but all the points were well made from the floor and are now in work. With such healthy debate the Executive will be on their mettle for the coming year and the BGA will become better and stronger – assuming the actions are completed and I'm sure they will be. I perceive real commitment at top level.

On content, a big thank you to all those who organised the excellent programme and venue, including the exhibitors. The external speakers, particularly Lembit Opik MP, who gave us his six-point plan, and Klaus Ohlmann verged on the evangelical in their sessions and I still can't imagine what it's like being in a glider for 14 hours, flying 2,460km on a couple of sandwiches and two litres of water. Is Klaus superman?

All in all, a good day which more club members should aim to attend. Enjoy the cut and thrust of your organisation and book the date – Saturday, February 23, for 2002.

Tony Lintott, DERBY, Derbyshire

By the way, in response to the editor's request for feedback on competition results (p8, April-May 2001), I think you have almost answered your own question. The BGA website is an ideal place to log data files. Anyone wanting to download data and text can do so via Adobe Acrobat (as a .pdf extension file). This can then be printed and read at leisure. Truncated results, as Jane Randle calls them, could still be in S&G with a cross-reference to the web address for the full data.

Whose words of wisdom?

During a holiday in Germany ten years ago, I bought at a garage sale a German translation of a British book about pioneering gliding in the UK in the thirties and after WWII. It was a personal memoir. Apart from a copy of one page, I have lost the book and have no idea of title or author. The part I copied told of the author's experience when he started to work for the War Office in the beginning of the war. He and a number of other gentlemen-amateurs were subjected to two speeches dealing with "discipline".

The first speaker, a general, told a story about survivors from a shipwreck rowing around in search of a safe island. The captain rejected a number of beautiful islands but relaxed when seeing a gallows on the shore of the third – now he knew they had found a disciplined society. The second speaker said very briefly that the word "discipline" comes from "disciple" meaning a pupil or apprentice, who follows his master because he trusts in him.

I would be very grateful if your readers

could recognise the quotation and inform me about the name of the author and/or the title of the book.

Erik Wolthers, COPENHAGEN, Denmark

Airbrake mod from Germany

We have just had a second paddle airbrake modification kit made in Germany for our Std Cirrus, at a very reasonable cost, which improves the braking efficiency by at least 30 per cent. The manufacturer, who is Schempp-Hirth approved, has asked me to survey early Nimbus 2 owners to see how many would be interested in a similar mod for their aircraft. This would apply only to Nimbus 2s from Works No 1 to Works No 147; after this number I understand the flaps did the braking. Anyone who would like more information drop me a line at Wishing Wells, 218 Newton Road, Torquay TQ2 7JN or email gfking@eurobell.co.uk

Godfrey King, TORQUAY, Devon

Beat that!

With reference to the letter from Bernard Smyth in the April-May 2001 issue of S&G about Nympsfield's 19-year-old committee member, we at Staffordshire GC can beat that by a long way.



Our Sally Longstaff has just been elected to the executive committee as a general member. Sally has also been managing our 100 Club since last year. She is a member of a sub-committee of young people (including Sally Cooper and Lara Davies) who look after grounds improvements and do most of the washing/tidying up in the clubhouse. Sally Longstaff (above) will be 16 this August!

So, a committee member at 15. Can anyone beat that?

Lee Featherstone, SECRETARY, Staffordshire GC

Soaring seabirds

Further to the correspondence on the flight of the albatross, some observations on the method of soaring used by the albatross's northern hemisphere relative, the fulmar, may be of interest. Many years ago on a voyage across the North Sea I was able to observe how these birds exploit pure dynamic soaring.

After a spell loitering in the standing wave behind the ship the birds, on spotting a trawler, would transfer to cross-country

mode. This comprised flying a rapid zig zap pattern in a crosswind direction, alternately climbing into/cross wind to perhaps 30-40ft, and then descending down/cross wind. The sea at the time was calm though the wind, and hence the wind gradient, was quite strong.

Unfortunately, as usable wind gradient extends only to some 50ft, this form of soaring would seem to be quite impracticable for human flyers.

John Cochran, COLYTON, Devon

As simple as ABC

I have followed with some interest the letters in the last few issues on cockpit checks, and feel an explanation of the A, B, C checks' history may help.

At Aboyne in the mid 1990s, at an instructors' meeting I chaired, it was felt that there was too much time wasted on the runway with checks along the lines of: "elevator up, elevator down, right this, left that, what is my ballast?"

It was decided to introduce some simple cockpit *pre-entry* checks prior to being pushed to the point of launch, along with a procedure to ensure the dolly was removed before flight, and the now-familiar Eventualities tagged on to the end.

The checks and reasons are as follows:

A: Airframe. Check its integrity – a walk round after a preceding flight, ensuring no obvious damage – and *note that particular aircraft's placards* (Folk often fly more than one aircraft type in a day).

B: Ballast. Check the cockpit load requirements, then add/remove ballast as required.

C: Controls. Check full and free movement of all controls that can be seen to be moved, trim, flaps, airbrakes, etc, and in the correct sense. Positive hands-on checks for the first flight of the day.

Once settled into the cockpit, at Controls in normal cockpit checks, just full and free movement of relevant controls, to ensure you haven't strapped yourself to them!

At Ballast in the normal cockpit checks, confirm your (already worked out) cockpit load, then call "Dolly OFF" to your cable handler. On a positive reply from the person outside, proceed with the rest of the checks.

I am sure that this will be discussed by the BGA Instructors' Committee at some time in the future, but would add that at Aboyne these procedures have helped safety, and turn-round times.

David White, DEESIDE GC, Aboyne

Say hello

Readers might like to visit pitch 133 on the Bayswater Road, London, on Sundays. I'm flogging paintings of various subjects – but gliders are selling well! – to visitors from abroad. They are told about British gliding and where to find it; clubs that would like me to hand out brochures are welcome to send me a stack. And do say hello when you're passing through!

Mary Meagher, OXFORD, Oxon

A different viewpoint

I would like to put forward an alternative view to that presented by Ann Welch in the April-May issue (*United we recruit*, p8).

Firstly I do not agree that there is no media interest in flying. My experience at the Royal Aero Club Trust is that considerable media interest latently exists if newsworthy reports are provided. They need news sent to them in publishable form; they will then ask for more!

Experience running the Trust's Photographic Competition shows that if good copy is provided they are only too delighted to publish.

I agree with Ann's call for co-operation. However does size matter? I think that different approaches are more important.

Many strive to encourage young people into flying but each tends to work in isolation and a decent network for information sharing does not exist.

Success rates are patchy and some fear for the ultimate demise of their sport. Some see apathy and expense as the key to low youth participation.

Perhaps inward-looking airports, failing to exploit the experience existing within national youth programmes, need to adapt to the younger generation.

Many youth organisations would gladly embrace airport activities and scope exists for partnerships between youth development agencies and airport activities. Remember that public policy prioritises schemes for developing young people rather than airports.

To promote new thinking the Royal Aero Club Trust has convened a National Conference on *Flying for Youth*.

The aim is to bring together delegates from airport associations, education and youth development organisations, fund-holders and policy-makers in order to share experience and best practice.

It is hoped to lead to the development of a national network to continue the work initiated at the meeting.

As part of its engagement with youth issues, the Trust is also in partnership with UK Youth, which works with more than half a million young people.

The first stage provides interactive software promoting all the airports to youth. An educational training module in a nationally promoted personal development project will follow. This will use flying, broadly defined, as its core content.

The Trust believes that such proactive approaches, in partnership with others outside airport, will possibly have a greater impact on young people's interest in flying.

Bob Daniels, TRUSTEE/ADMINISTRATOR, The Royal Aero Club Trust

The RAeC seminar, Flying for Youth, is on June 8, 2001 at the RAeC in London and anticipates welcoming delegates from youth organisations as well as RAeC members. More details from:

www.royalaeroclubtrust.org or
administrator@royalaeroclubtrust.org

Dates for your diary – and ones to alter

UK and International competitions

Glider Aerobatic Nationals	Saltby	May 31–Jun 3
Regionals (motorglider)	Bidford	Jun 9–17
Club Class Nationals	Hus Bos	Jun 16–24
18-Metre World Champs	Lillo, Spain	Jun 18–Jul 1
3rd World Class Worlds	Lillo, Spain	Jun 18–Jul 1
Glider Aerobatic Worlds	Lillo, Spain	Jun 18–Jul 1
18-Metre Nationals	Tibenhams	Jul 14–22
Enterprise*	North Hill	Jul 21–28
Regionals	Hus Bos	Jul 28–Aug 5
Open Class Nationals	Lasham	Jul 28–Aug 5
Regionals	Lasham	Jul 28–Aug 5
Regionals	Sutton Bank	Jul 28–Aug 5
1st Women's Worlds	Lithuania	Jul 27–Aug 12
2nd Junior Worlds	Issoudun	Aug 6–18
Standard Class Nationals	Nympsfield	Aug 11–19
Inter-Services	Bicester	Aug 11–19
Regionals	Dunstable	Aug 18–26
Regionals	Gransden Lodge	Aug 18–26
Two-seater Comp	Pocklington	Aug 19–26
Junior Championships	Aston Down	Aug 25–Sep 2
15-Metre Nationals**	Booker	Aug 25–Sep 2
Regionals**	Tibenhams	Sep 1–9
Mountain Soaring Comp	Deeside	Sep 2–8
Aerobatics, Saltby Open	Saltby	Sep 8–9
27th Worlds	South Africa	Dec 18–31
2nd Club Class Worlds	Germany	August 2002
Europeans	Hungary	2002
3rd Junior Worlds	Slovakia	2003
2nd Women's Worlds	Czech Republic	2003
4th World Class Worlds	New Zealand	2003

Bold text above indicates changes from the last issue.

* See www.Comp-enterprise.com/ for the latest situation.

** Moved because of foot-and-mouth.

As we went to press, the Club Class Nationals at Hus Bos was to go ahead. There was no indication whether or not foot-and-mouth would affect any other UK comps.

Vintage GC events have not so far been directly affected by foot-and-mouth, although the first meeting was cancelled due to a waterlogged airfield. They suggest you check with organisers of individual UK events before finalising arrangements. International events should be unaffected. For more details see below.

The Inter-University Task Week (Aug 4-12) at Saltby, is hosted by Nottingham Uni GC: acyssaf@nottingham.ac.uk

Oldies but goldies: events from the Vintage GC calendar

May 26-June 3	VGC National & Slingsby Rally	Phil Lazenby, 0113 284 2132 or lazenby@btinternet.com
	Sutton Bank	
June 16-17	Whispering Wardrobes Rally	Graham Saw, 01628 776173 or Graham@servotech.swinternet.co.uk
	Booker Airfield	
June 23-30	Camphill Vintage & Classic	Ian Dunkley, Ian_Dunkley@pgen.net
	Glider Rally	
July 6-8	Popular Flying Association Rally	www.pfa.org.uk
	Cranfield	
July 7-15	Oldies but Goldies	Risto Pykala, rpkala@edu.lahti.fi
	Jami, Finland	
July 22-29	Rendezvous Meeting	Jorg Ziller 089 95928229, Joerg.Ziller@t-online.de
	Aeroclub Zwickau	
July 31- August 9	VGC International Rally	Aeroklub Zbraslavice: tel + 420 327 92 12 86;
	Zbraslavice	fax + 420 602 95 44 7; info@zbraslavice.vztlak.cz
Late August	50th Anniversary Oxford GC	contact: David Weekes, David.Weekes@booker-tate.co.uk
	Weston-on-the-Green	

The annual **Popular Flying Association Rally** – the largest fly-in event in Europe – is cancelled due to foot-and-mouth.

The PFA felt it was inappropriate to encourage visitors from all over Britain and Europe to the international event, due to be held on July 6-8, especially if members could not operate from several airfields and farm strips. To continue with the rally would have placed the PFA in a high-risk financial loss position. The PFA will not be rescheduling the event this year. Plans are under way for the 2002 rally.

A new competition to take place in alternate years to Euroglide is planned. The **Teuge Transcontinental** aimed to cover more than 2,000km over The Netherlands, Germany and Poland from Jun 4–16. But Teuge was in a foot-and-mouth restricted area as we went to press. Contact the organisers on teugetrans@dolfijn.nl for more information.

RAF Odiham in Hampshire is to host the next **Military/Civil Air Safety Day** (MCASD), on Jun 6. The main focus will be shared use of lower airspace. Glider pilots are welcome. Priority will go to people who have not attended a MCASD day. You are welcome to fly into the event. For more details or to apply to attend contact: Project officer, MCASD: fax 020 8838 7617. A further MCASD day for 2001 is planned.

The **31st Annual Exhibition of Aviation Art**, from the Guild of Aviation Artists, will be at the Carisbrooke Gallery, London, from Jul 17–27. Open from 1100hrs-1900hrs daily except Thursdays (closes 2100hrs) and July 27 (closes 1400hrs).

The **Coupe D'Europe**, the two-seater contest, will be held by the gliding section of the Aero-Club du Poitou, Jul 29–Aug 11, 2001. Paid entries, limited to 40, must be received by Jun 30. See www.multimaria.com/cepb for more details.

A **gliding camp** in Castilla (Spain) will run from Jul 7–Aug 26 this year. Advertising itself as "a benevolent set up by French and German pilots," it's at Campolara airfield, 30km from Segovia. If you speak French, call Benoit Giraudmailet on 00 33 5 59 02 49 14/email benoit.giraudmailet@wanadoo.fr Otherwise, call Dominique Doleac on 00 33 6 76 16 49 33

If you'd like to know more about the **13th Benelux Glider Contest** at Keiheuvel airfield from Aug 4–11, 2001, contact Rudy Jennen, 17^e Esc Lichtvliegwezenlaan 8, B-2490 Balen, Belgium. Tel 00 32 14 81 25 67 or email jr@tjtd.com Min experience: 150hrs solo + 1,000kms; last entry date is Jul 1.



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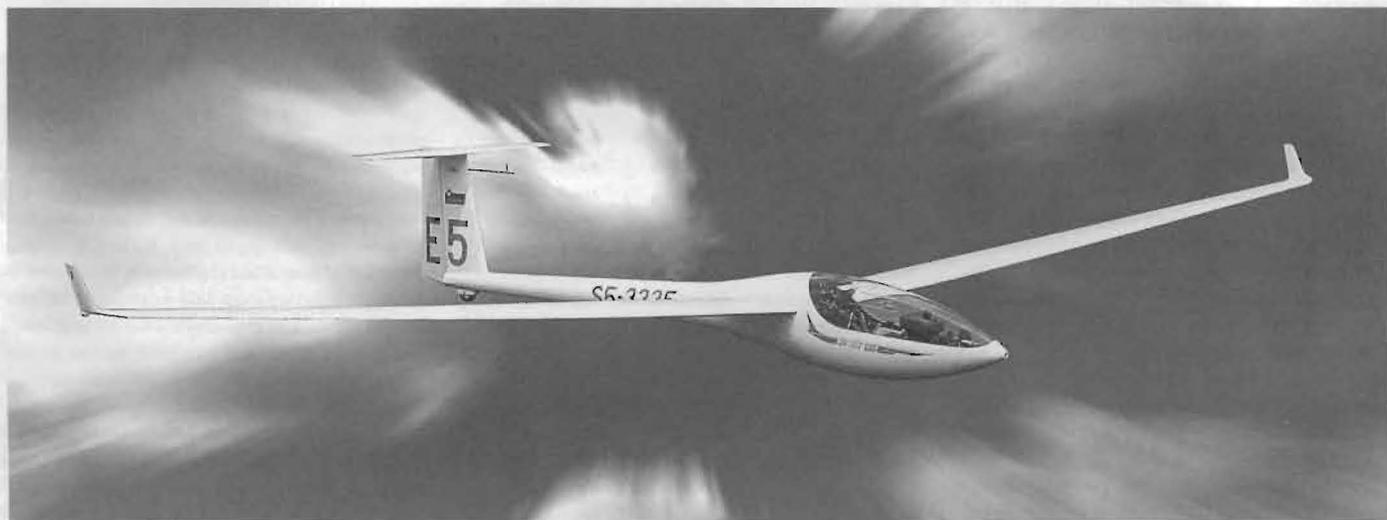


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What the CROW Act means for gliding

THE COUNTRYSIDE and Rights of Way (CROW) Act received Royal Assent in November 2000. The Act, (also known as "The Right to Roam Act") gives people the right to walk over large areas of "access land" (generally mountain, heath, moorland and downland).

The gliding movement has always been concerned lest that right should be deemed to allow open access to gliding sites, where uncontrolled ramblers could present a significant hazard to gliding operations and additional risks to the clubs concerned.

The original Bill gave some comfort by making provision for "excepted land" – notably, land used "for the purpose of a golf course, racecourse or aerodrome," where open access would not be granted.

The Countryside Agency has now published a pamphlet, *New rights – new responsibilities*, setting out how the new Act will work. It lists the types of excepted land as being excluded from access rights granted by the Act. Railways and tramways, airports and aerodromes, golf courses and racecourses are all included and we are advised that: "landowners and farmers can apply to restrict access when it is essential

for reasons of land management, safety or fire risk."

So what is the procedure? Does one need to register a gliding site as excepted land? I have spoken to Paul Johnson, Senior Access Advisor at the Countryside Agency, who assures me that the mapping process for Access Land is expected to take several years and that there is no immediate necessity to register excepted land.

However, gliding clubs are advised to write to their local Countryside Agency office – you can get the address from me if you need it – in order to make sure that gliding activities are recognised and to ask that their sites are treated as "excepted land" when the definitive Countryside Access maps are finally produced.

The British Gliding Association will keep discussions going with the Countryside Agency on this matter and will inform members of any new developments.

Electronic site ops manual

Robert Leacroft Systems has now produced an electronic version of the *BGA Site Operations Manual* so that clubs can edit and produce their own site-specific manuals

for the benefit of their members. As was originally intended, clubs will be able to use the *BGA Site Operations Manual* as a basis for publishing their own club operational regulations or flying order books.

However, while a club will obviously need to make many of its operational regulations site specific, there are certain sections, such as the Health and Safety at Work Act, which need to be protected, particularly as a great deal of help and advice from the relevant authorities went into the production of the original manual.

The electronic version is available on PDF so that some sections can be open to amendment and other sections (the law or specialist advice) can be safeguarded to remain incorruptible in their original form.

Access to the software for the electronic version of the *BGA Site Operations Manual* is available via the BGA office.

How green is gliding?

Many thanks to all those who responded to my green piece in the last issue. This is clearly a subject close to the hearts of many glider pilots.

Roger Coote, BGA Development Officer

Promoting the sport to local schoolchildren

MARKETING to a younger audience is a subject that crops up again and again in the gliding movement.

Over the past three years, Burn GC has taken on the challenge of attracting young members by offering half-price lessons to school groups, scouts and other youth organisations, and by running end-of-term activity weeks.

Now the club has begun a further initiative by organising a graphics competition open to 15 local high schools.

"For GCSE Design and Technology Graphics, a pupil has to produce a final assignment," explained Burn's Rod Salmon, a former technology teacher.

"It's down to the individual to identify a need and produce a solution – in this case, a graphic design. We are asking them to come up with a corporate identity for the club. Designs could include business cards, voucher cards, letter headings, information leaflets, posters, certificates, car stickers, vinyl logos for gliders, banners, signboards, free gifts or a website. If they think of other items, all the better."

The designs are submitted as coursework to the examining board then to the club for judging. Each pupil works on only a limited number of items since, on each, evidence of research and development must be shown.



Burn GC's youngest member, 14-year-old Adam Walker, under instruction with Tony Flannery

This gives the pupils a real life project – some designs, with permission, may be used by the club although the intention is not to get graphics "on the cheap" – and no extra work is created for pupils or staff.

Final results won't be known until this time next year, when coursework assessments have been made.

"The response from schools has been very encouraging," said Rod, "and every-

one who takes part will be invited to the club for research purposes."

The first prize will be three aerotow trial lessons, with two lessons each for second and third places.

"When we have finished judging, the award winners will be invited to the club on a specific day, with parents and school representatives, to take their flights," he added. "We'll try to get publicity for the schools and the club by inviting the local media. We also intend to display selected work in local towns, perhaps in a supermarket, bank or building society.

"We hope this competition will help the club make contact with many pupils, not just those doing the project, as well as with parents, teachers and members of the public. We are very excited at the prospect of seeing the results as there are some immensely talented students in our schools, with lively and fresh ideas."

One aspect of the generation gap still needs addressing, though. "Pupils who visited last year us were always thrilled with their flight and very mature about safety issues," explained Rod. "However, getting them to calculate their weight in pounds was quite a task. Perhaps we should change to kilos!"

For more information about the scheme, contact Rod on 01977 662637

Results of the IGC meeting

DRUGS IN competitions, new distance diplomas, FAI restructuring, warnings about the fitting of GPS aerials, and plans for an international pilot ranking system all featured at the latest International Gliding Commission (IGC) meeting.

The drugs issue arose because of a positive doping case at last year's European Championships in France, after a pilot took a cold remedy. FAI General Secretary Max Bishop warned that all countries should make competitors aware of how to check for banned drugs before taking medicines, as the rules are strict and don't take into account the intent of the pilot.

A Swiss proposal that distance diplomas should now be in multiples of 250km from 1,000km (1,250, 1,500, 1,750 etc) in addition to the existing 1,000km and 2,000km diplomas, and follow the same rules, was agreed. They will not be records, though. An Austrian proposal to add a record triangle with Free (non-declared) TPs to the existing out-and-return and three TP distance tasks was, however, rejected despite Klaus Ohlmann's recent record that started as a 1,700km pre-declared flight but finished as a 2,463km free TP achievement.

The meeting was told that a survey of more than 400 IGC data files from nine countries had revealed that in 27 per cent of cases there were anomalies in the GPS altitude figures recorded. This is not due to any problem with America's GPS system, but was almost certainly due to poor antenna positioning by pilots.

Cases were quoted of GPS antennas placed under the instrument panel cover amongst the instruments and other wiring, and antennas mounted behind the pilot in compartments covered by carbon sheet (impervious to radio waves).

Pilots were asked to check their altitude traces and if GPS altitude appeared not to be



Vintage GC president Chris Wills, here seen opening the club's 28th international rally with a traditional ring of the bell, was awarded a new diploma at the meeting

following baro altitude, to check their antenna installations before fixes were dropped altogether which could lead to TPs being missed.

IGC GNSS committee (Bernald Smith, USA) floated the idea that GPS altitude could be used for high-level altitude records instead of the traditional pressure altitude. This will be researched with a view to making a positive proposal in the future. The concept is that up to, say, the tropopause (the demarcation between the atmosphere and the stratosphere, 11,000m on the ICAO standard atmosphere), baro altitude would be used as usual. But where the top altitude of a gain or absolute achievement was above 11km, GPS altitude above the ellipsoid would be used instead for both low and high altitude points in the calculation.

An IGC pilot competition ranking system, a sort of international rating list, is to be set up. The web-based list will not only rank the world's competition pilots but also give

details of comps flown, publicity for sponsors, and some personal details. A gliding "hall of honour" is also to be started and will be available on the web. It should keep a record of all world gliding 'greats' such as Philip Wills.

Details of a new ultralight glider were revealed at the Lausanne meeting. The Apis WR, a 13-metre machine built in Slovenia, has a claimed best glide ratio of 38:1 at 86km/h. It weighs just 120kg empty with a single wing quoted as being 28kg.

Vintage GC President Chris Wills was awarded the IGC's new Pirat Gehrigher Diploma, together with Max Bachmann of Switzerland. Klaus Ohlmann was awarded the Lillienthal Medal for 2001 for his world record flight and Angelika Machinek was given the year's Majewska Medal. The William Ivans Gold Medal, an international award administered by the Soaring Society of America, was presented to Piero Morelli of Italy in recognition of his work for the World Class gliders.

The FAI is being restructured to make it better able to meet the needs of its members, said Max Bishop. The Council is being replaced by an elected Executive Board to manage FAI affairs. As a result of the new structure, the Air Sport Commissions will have direct votes in the next FAI General Conference.

Tor Johannessen was re-elected as IGC President. Brian Spreckley continues as its First Vice President. Larry Sanderson was re-elected as Secretary. Ian Strachan retains his position of GFAC Chairman. Alfred (Fred) Gai of Germany joins Terry Cubley (Australia), Eric Mozer (USA) Tapio Savolainen (Finland) and Roland Stuck (France) as an IGC Vice-President.

The full minutes of the meeting, which was in Switzerland in March, are available at www.fai.org/gliding/meetings/

Would you buy a low-level chart?

THE CAA is getting feedback that its low-level chart, discontinued some years ago because of low sales, was well-liked. This depicted only airspace below 5,000ft AMSL. The CAA is asking for your views on whether, if it were resurrected, would you use or, more importantly, buy it? Email Chart Editor Paula Eversfield, via the CAA website, with your comments.

The UK VFR charts, the 1:500 and the 1:250 versions, are reproduced over a two-year cycle. Those that are more popular and have more amendments are produced more frequently than others.

Nevertheless, any chart that produced is

out of date as soon as it hits the streets for sale, due principally because of the lead times required for production, printing and lamination.

The CAA is now using the internet to help keep you up to date. When you buy your chart, log on to www.caa.co.uk/dap and go to Aeronautical Charts, which will list the amendments for both the VFR series since their publication date. It is meant to be a useful aid for pre-flight planning, although they stress that in the interests of safety, reference should always be made to the UK AIP, AICs, NOTAMS and Pre-Flight Information Bulletins as normal.

Slow start for the Ladder

THE NATIONAL Ladder has, quite rightly, taken second place to the foot-and-mouth crisis. Scores received so far are for flights made back in October. However, I have not been idle and have developed an interactive on-line version of the ladder. The aim is for club ladder stewards to enter scores directly onto the system, so allowing pilots to view their scores more quickly than previously possible. The site also holds the latest official rules and Ladder handicaps. Please take a look at www.bgaladder.co.uk. Clubs not yet on-line may continue to send their scores to me every two months, as before. Next submissions, please, if appropriate, by the end of July 2001.

John Bridge, National Ladder Steward

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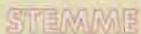
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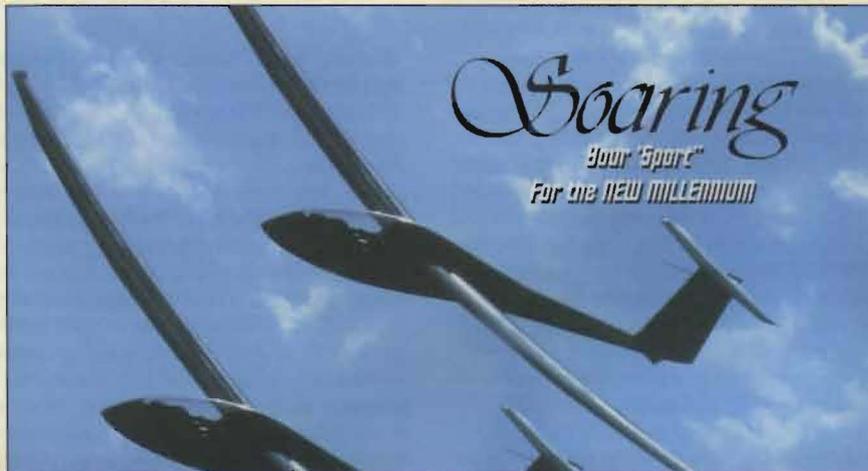
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TAIL FEATHERS

by Platypus



How to stay sane

THE GLACIAL slowness of the two-month publishing cycle of *S&G*, and a lead time of several weeks between writing and printing, mean that keeping an inky finger on the fevered pulse of this great movement of ours is impossible.

If you pen something erroneous that you wish to retract just after it has gone to press, then the retraction will appear at least three months after you have written it. Bland generalities are needed if you are eager not to end up looking rather silly. So the approach for someone who has a licence to be irresponsible, and wants to avoid bland generalities, and doesn't care about looking silly, is to ignore the problem entirely.

Thus my piece in the last *S&G* about the miseries of muddy land-outs in Easter cross-country competitions was overtaken by events of much greater misery, where the mere idea of land-outs became a distant, nostalgic dream. My own Easter was in any event blighted by a monster cold (what others call flu, which it hardly ever is) so I kept the blinds drawn and prayed for heavy overcast, which in the main was what we got.

I refuse in this column even to name the dread disease, itself little more than a bad cold – or flu – to the animal, deadly only to the legal exportability, and therefore the price, of its perfectly-edible meat. Ask a fastidious cannibal whether he (or she) would be prepared to eat a platypus, or a Platypus, that had once in its turbulent medical history had measles and the odd bad cold – or flu – and the answer would be: "Of course, old boy, lay out the silver and let's get stuck in. The only thing I like better is a brace of gamy pheasant or a haunch of venison. I trust the beast was well hung?" (*Watch it, family mag and all that. Ed.*)

Sorry, back to my theme. (*A theme? That'll be a first. Whatever next? Copy arriving on time, and to the right length? Ed.*) Oh yes – ignoring sarky editors – I thought we might still be looking for ideas as to what do within the local area so long as cross-country flying is verboten. But first, what about the

established favourites, spot-landings and aerobatics?

Spot-landing competitions

My club is doing a spot-landing contest this Saturday. This is an excellent idea. I imagine it goes back to pre-war days; it was very popular in the 1950s. The winner is whoever gets the glider's nose closest to the Spot, usually marked by a large paper cone. Why they don't use our bright yellow mobile control-tower instead of a flimsy paper cone I can't think. It's lovely and visible and would certainly concentrate the minds of the competitors, and curb our somewhat lax attitude towards overshoots.

Spot-landing has changed over the ages, my lads, he says, pulling out a pipe and



blighted by a monster cold

warming to his subject. Ah, yes, I remember that the old wheel-less gliders, like the Kite 1, had to be flown with great precision, there being no question of rolling smoothly up to the spot, then hauling on a wheel brake. You stopped in a few feet after the skid touched the soil. There was some disapproval on the part of Kite pilots of the questionable sportsmanship of using more advanced gliders with wheels and, a later innovation, wheel-brakes, in spot-landing comps. (Yes, son, believe it or not there were many gliders with wheels and no wheel-brakes, bizarre as it may seem. On such ships the brake was of course the nose skid, violently rubbed in by vigorous application of forward stick.) The temptation with wheel-less gliders was to fly just above the ground as slowly as possible till very close to the cone, then yank out the

spoilers and drop gently, or not, as the case might be, onto the spot. This stall-in method was not often used except by those desperate to win at any cost. But at least it took guts, which gently rolling in from 100 yards away in a glass ship, and using a powerful modern wheel-brake so as to kiss the cone, does not. There is a way the gnarled old-timers can stymie these jumped-up smoothies, however, and I shall mention that under *Putting the boot in* in just a moment.

I myself shall stand aloof from the competition, however. Platypus is grateful merely to get a glider on to an airfield at all without clobbering a parked tug, a tractor or the Manager. I have difficulty enough doing that just towing the ship about on the ground with the car, let alone when barrelling in at 70kts in a crosswind with the sun in my eyes and rain all over the canopy. Besides, showing off in public is not my style, unless I have a few drinks and a microphone.

Eliminating the Weakest Links

Now there's a thought. If the organisers give me a few drinks and a microphone I could do an expert but also devastatingly witty commentary over the Public Address system, also to be heard by the competing pilots on their radios as they wobble in nervously towards the Spot in front of a vast crowd. Part of their ordeal would be to spot-land without being flustered by a stream of criticisms delivered in an icily superior manner. This could become a big-rating television game show: Anne Robinson meets Gladiator meets Waldo Pepper.

Putting the boot in

The bookies should have a field day. The trick, if you are a betting man who will stop at nothing, is not to nobble the gliders or the pilots but to do something clever the previous night with the terrain on the last few yards before the Spot. This could settle the hash of the Smoothies, who to the uninformed would be sure-fire favourites to win. We take our cue from the way that in our noble sport of self-defence (cricket) bowlers of other nations (not the English, heaven forfend) surreptitiously gouge the

pitch with their spiked heels about eight feet in front of the stumps. The cricket ball can then go absolutely anywhere at dangerous speed and trajectory after it hits the roughened patch. Likewise the glider. Of course you have to be in cahoots with the guy who decides where to place the cone. Well, heck, you make sure way in advance that the Committee or the CFI has chosen you for the honour of selecting the Spot.

I have had a further thought; at certain clubs there is no need to monkey about with the turf, and risk a run-in with the police, to produce an erratic arrival that upsets the odds. At Booker and Dunstable, and maybe other sites are similar, there are quite a few areas ready-sabotaged; all you need is to inspect them the previous day and decide where you will place the cone accordingly.

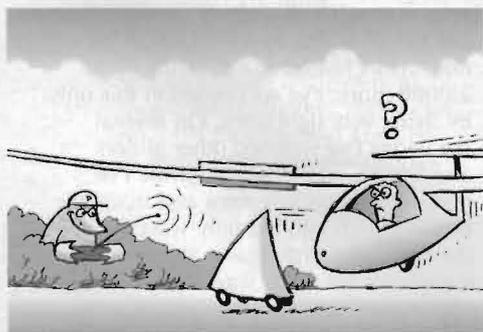
One super-rut at a Booker competition finish in 1996 collapsed my undercarriage and stopped the glider instantly. If it had been a spot-landing contest the air would have been full of bookmakers' hats.

Indeed, I can now seriously recommend a deliberate undercarriage collapse as a way of not going through a barbed-wire fence if the wheel-brake is feeble.

Aerobatics

Plat has not done any aerobatics for about 40 years. I used to enjoy doing them in the Prefect in the late 1950s. Terrific! The sun in your face, the wind in your hair, and vomit all down the outside of the open cockpit. The struts made a terrific howling noise above 60kts; people thought it was me hooting for joy. Apart from it being useful to have an audible airspeed indicator, the built-in headwinds on old wooden ships – and fully speed-limiting airbrakes – made it almost impossible to get up to dangerous speeds. I would never attempt even simple loops in plastic gliders; even if they are much stronger than the old ships, they are far too slippery for my slow reaction times.

As for negative G, don't talk of it to me. The bottom part of an outside loop is a great time and place to discover where that missing screwdriver has been hiding since the annual inspection. No thanks. Do birds do bunts? No. They have more sense, or rather they are not engineered for it. Nature knows better than to force blood into the cerebral cortex under pressure when you



stymie these jumped-up smoothies

are already having a hard time trying to think coolly. I tell you, if the Good Lord had intended people to do negative-G manoeuvres He would have put our brains in our backsides. Of course that could explain a few things about dedicated aerobic pilots.

In case anyone writes in to say they remember seeing me doing (very bad) aerobatics in more recent decades, I assure you that the unusual attitudes which some people mistook for Immelmans or flick-rolls were in fact my earnest attempts to take turn-point photos, for which I was a notorious penalty-earner in cross-country contests.

Seat of the pants

My own small contribution could be called Back to Basics: competitions with small speed triangles using minimum legal instruments – in particular, no variometer of any kind. And following on from that, a game any two people can play if you have a two-seater, especially one with GPS. One person has all instruments switched off or covered up. That person then has on a number of occasions to estimate current height, airspeed, ground-speed, wind component, current and average rate of climb or descent, heading (magnetic or true). A score-sheet is marked by the other pilot. Then you swap. Add a version of one of the Reichmann tests: try to predict the average rate of climb that you will achieve (without vario) under the next cloud.

Trust us

All that should help keep gangs of aimless, drifting glider pilots off the streets, don't you think? No? Oh well, there's always the London Gliding Club poker school, long in the tooth, wheezy in the chest but still as mean and crafty as ever. Just bring folding money. As the CFI says to stale glider pilots – which includes me – we are interested in your currency.

Fan-mail, hate-mail and fake mail

I am indebted to those kind people who send letters to me in response to my outpourings, usually telling me what wonderful stuff I produce. "Keep up the good work etc," they say, often adding some useful gobblet of information that I can add to my column when inspiration flags. This happens constantly – well, at least once a year. However what keeps me from getting complacent is my firm belief that there is a much larger number of people sending furious screeds asserting that the column is total rubbish and demanding that I be replaced by anyone or anything, such as a picture of Ralph Jones. Those documents are of course addressed not to me and my famous shredder, in which they would be bound to end up, but to the Editor of this organ or to the BGA Chairman. Such attacks are not communicated to me by the recipients, either because they support me to the hilt



gangs of aimless, drifting glider pilots

and wish to spare my feelings, or more likely because they are keeping all this ammunition dry, ready to detonate it under me when the moment is ripe. "Alright, Plat, we really ought to put you out to grass. Time for a change, hm? There is a ground swell of opinion..." Paranoia is something we inherit from the days of sabre-tooth tigers, I suppose. Those who were not paranoid got eaten early in life and so failed to pass on their genes. But paranoia is not a one-way street. The Editor and the BGA Chairman know how desperate Plat is to retire from this treadmill so that he can take up a life of wine, women and song before his voice gives out. They therefore suspect that many of the letters calling for Plat's immediate removal may not be genuine. They are genuine, though. My enemies just cannot help picking up my slashing, vituperative style; it's infectious.

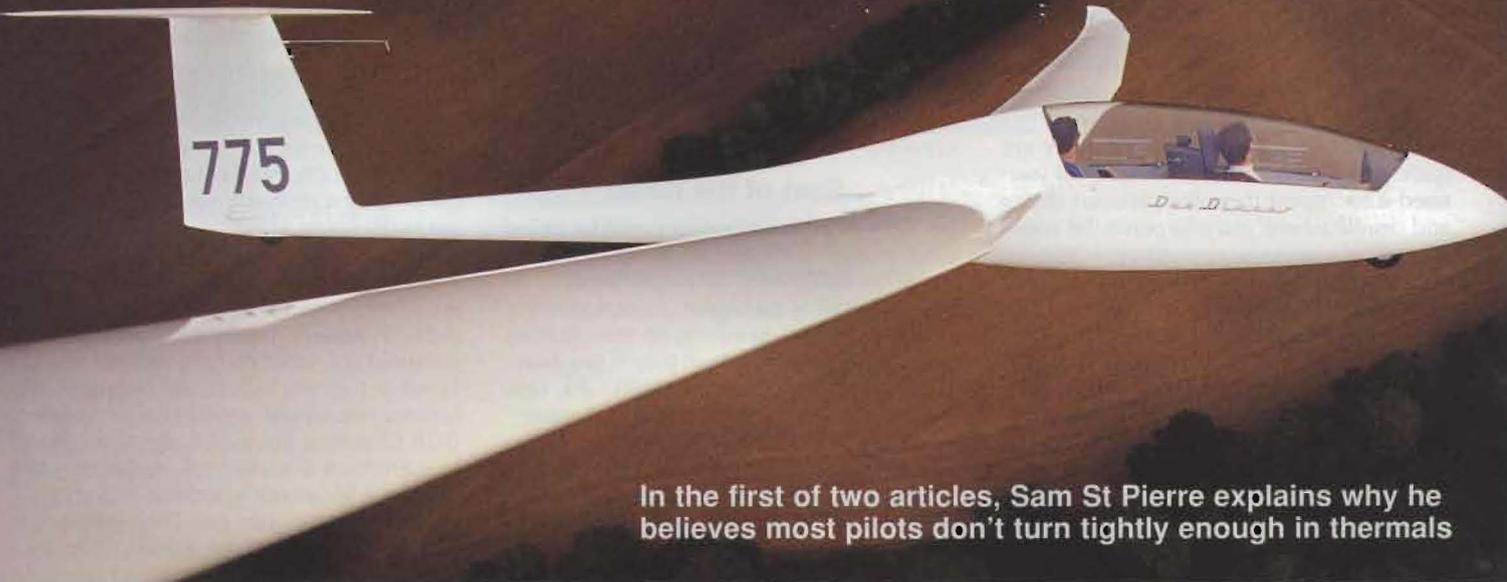
Thirty years ago Mrs Platypus used to edit Woman's Realm, a magazine with a million circulation – today a sad shadow of what it was. Every now and then a bunch of Oxford undergraduates would send in a fake reader's letter in the hope that it would appear in the Problem Page. The bogus letters never made it to the agony-aunt column; they were instantly discovered since they were spelt properly and used semi-colons. Battered housewives from Peckham and victims of incest in Bodmin don't use semi-colons. Today's students might get away with it, however, since they are functionally illiterate and indeed probably were victims of incest in Bodmin.

In the case of the letters I receive I usually go through the courtesies of writing back and asking these people, can I use what they write and secondly, can I mention their names? This takes time, and the decision to use their stuff is usually at the last minute. So please let me give you notice that I shall feel free to use what you send me, with or without attribution, unless you specifically request otherwise at the time.

The Platypus Papers: fifty years of powerless pilotage (hardback, 12"x8.5", 160 pages, 100 cartoons by Peter Fuller) costs £19.95 plus £3.50 p&p. See www.hikokiwarplanes.com or tel 020 8748 6344, fax 020 8741 1757 or email mlbird@dircon.co.uk

Also available from the BGA on 0116 253 1051 and securely on-line at www.gliding.co.uk

Bank on tighter turns



In the first of two articles, Sam St Pierre explains why he believes most pilots don't turn tightly enough in thermals

the white planes picture co.

I CAME into gliding in an unconventional way, with 26 solo flights before my first dual. No – I wasn't one of the pioneer self-taught aviators. I was already an RAF jet pilot.

It happened on my way to what was meant to be a sailing holiday, in Germany in 1953. With a day to spare at Buckeburg, I went for a walk, and came across a group of servicemen flying an SG-38 primary. Seeing my interest, and having asked about my flying experience, they offered me a go. After three medium hops without disaster, I found myself flying circuits with none of the aids – or encumbrances – that previous flying had accustomed me to.

Well, that was it. The Buckeburg pilots flew only at weekends, but said there was gliding all week at nearby Scharfoldendorf. So, sailing cancelled, I made my way to the Scharfoldendorf stop, distinguished from the generally-deserted countryside by no more than a signboard. But I saw a glider flying along the ridge behind the sign. There seemed to be no road and so I scrambled up what felt like a minor alp, only to find when I reached the top that the hangar doors were just being closed.

Next morning I met the CFI and told him my story. Bad news. "All the two-seaters are unserviceable". Then the good news. "I'm just going to do an air test on the Grunau, if it's serviceable you can fly that. Watch what I do, and I'll give you a briefing when I land."

So I watched, he flew round the circuit and landed. The briefing was thorough: speeds to fly, heights to aim for at the land-

marks round the circuit, use the airbrakes only when you are wings level on the approach, and so on. The final words were: "if you get more than 600ft on the launch, do a few turns over the winch to lose height – there's no-one else flying."

I strapped in, and watched the tractor leave the winch. It then disappeared down a gully for an eternity, before reappearing a few hundred yards ahead. There was a long wait between "up slack" and "all out" while the cable spanned the 200ft-deep gully. But the launch went well, and I released at around 800ft.

Something one learnt in RAF training was to follow the briefing – exactly. If you were

"You English pilots are all the same. I launch you into a good thermal and you don't get the wing down, so you lose it"

told to go off solo, climb to 20,000ft and do half a dozen spins, you climbed to 20,000ft and did half a dozen spins. Those instructors had eyes, and spies, everywhere. So when I did my first turn to lose height, I was disconcerted to find I hadn't gone down. There was a little green ball bobbing up and down in an instrument which from schoolboy reading I recognised as a Cosim variometer. "Must be one of those thermal things," I thought, "what to do?" I widened the turn. "That's better, but the green ball is still showing some of the time. Widen the turn some more. Good, it's red all round now." Of course, I hadn't been briefed to use the airbrakes – except on the approach.

So I descended to 600ft and flew the rest of the circuit as briefed. While we were closing the hangar doors at the end of the day, the winch driver came to speak to me. He was an ex-Luftwaffe Me109 pilot. The Germans were still banned from flying at that time but when no-one official was around they let him have the odd launch. "Ach, you English pilots are all the same," he said. "I launch you into a good thermal, and you don't get the wing down, so you lose it." What could I say?

Forty-eight years on, and nothing much has changed. I believe the majority of UK glider pilots still don't "get the wing down" enough in thermals. There are practical and theoretical reasons for this belief. I do turn tightly, as a rule, and rarely if ever find gliders below catching up with me. I frequently find myself balked by gliders joining above flying wider turns than myself. The ones I don't catch up with are those flying tight turns. I have occasionally found thermals continuing well above an inversion, when the climb rate has dropped just below it. Above the inversion the climb rate has increased again, giving up to 2,000ft more. I've succeeded in this only by flying very tight turns. On several occasions I've watched other gliders ambling round below me, while I've corkscrewed up in a rotor and made the breakthrough into the only wave flight of the day. Tight turns again, although it is sometimes the other way that works best into wave.

The theory is lengthy (see next issue for that) but it is worth asking why T-21s, K-8s

and Olympia 2s climb so well. Is their min sink so much better than the average glass ship? Have you ever been outclimbed by a hang glider (I'm told the very best of those has a minimum sink of 1.5kts plus)?

These all climb better because their slower speed means a smaller radius of turn at a given angle of bank. This, I believe, is the most significant factor when thermalling – getting close to the core.

Objections I get when propounding my ideas include:

- If you can climb better in tight turns, why don't you do better in competitions? Answer – *mea culpa* – I screw up between thermals, usually pick the cloud ahead that starts decaying just when I reach it, hang on too long before leaving a thermal, leave the flaps at the wrong setting, and so on. You name it, I'll manage to do it.

- "I climb as well as anyone else, and I only use 20-25° of bank". Answer (*sotto voce*) – because you get in the way of anyone flying a tighter turn. You may think you are being helpful, or perhaps you aren't confident of your ability to fly steeper turns, but if you join a thermal at around the same height as a pilot already circling, then fly with a lower rate of turn (which for gliders of comparable performance means with a smaller angle of bank), what you are doing is stopping someone climbing faster.

We could argue forever about what angle of bank will achieve the best rate of climb in thermals. Your glider's basic performance, the strength and radius of a particular thermal, and the air's vertical velocity gradient pattern in that thermal all affect your glider's achieved rate of climb at various bank angles. Strengths, radii and gradient patterns will differ in individual thermals, and cannot be determined. Even in one thermal, the best angle of bank will change with time.

New Soaring Pilot (Welch and Irving) suggests as a general guide that the best angle for a Libelle is "a little over 30° in wide thermals and up to 10° more in narrow ones". This would indicate a little over 35° in average-width thermals, or about 40° in narrow ones.

But, regardless of theory, the pilot who has found and centred on a thermal and is making a tight turn will have made his decision on what bank angle he wants to use. Maybe he thinks this thermal is narrow and needs a tight turn. Perhaps he finds centring easier with tight turns.

Whatever the reason, he found the thermal and he should be allowed to continue with his chosen angle of bank.

What happens when another glider joins him but then turns more gently? The first pilot will be flying faster round a smaller circle.

Even when the new arrival joins directly opposite it will not be long before the first pilot catches up with the newcomer, overtaking on the inside. The first pilot will have to take avoiding action. Tightening his turn to overtake on the inside means not



Without an operating artificial horizon or other means of measurement such as a Bohli compass, says Sam St Pierre, your perceived angle of bank is generally much greater than the actual bank used

only that he will lose sight of the glider he is overtaking, but also that his original, centred circle will be disturbed. Tightening the turn would give a chance of recentring quickly once past the other glider, but it's a pretty scary idea. To have any chance of gaining enough height to be safely above before catching up again, rapid recentring would be necessary. This would entail reducing bank and flying in front of the other glider, which would then be out of sight behind. He would then have to rely on the other pilot not to suddenly tighten his turn, to be looking out in the right direction, and perhaps even to take avoiding action as the overtaker slid back to his original turn. Trying to get past on the inside is fraught with danger.

On the other hand, trying to overtake on the outside of the turn is futile. As soon as the overtaking pilot reduces bank to do so he will no longer be overtaking because he is now flying round a larger circle. He will be dropping back relative to the other glider, but in so doing will be flying into the weaker part of the thermal, and will lose height relative to the other glider.

The best he can then do is sit on the other glider's tail, and hope that the other fellow gets so worried by having lost sight of him that he leaves the thermal. Or he can drop far enough below that he can safely tighten his turn again. Whatever he does, he has been effectively balked and his climb has been spoiled.

Some figures for gliders with min sink of 1.1kts at 45kts in straight flight are shown:

Angle of bank	Min sink IAS in turn	Turn radius (feet)	Time (secs) for 360°
30	48.4	359	27.6
35	49.7	313	23.4
40	51.4	279	20.2

Note that the airspeed differences are quite small. The significant factor is the difference in radii and therefore circumferences of the circles being flown.

The first pilot in the thermal, using 40° of

bank, is gaining 3.2 seconds in each 360° turn on a pilot using 35°. He was half a turn or 10.1 seconds behind the second pilot at the time of joining. So he would catch up in a little more than three turns, or just over a minute. This is not usually time enough for a better rate of climb to put him safely above.

If the joining pilot uses only 30° of bank, the first pilot is gaining 7.4 seconds per 360 and will catch up in less than one-and-a-half turns.

So, please, when joining another glider at about the same level:

- Join on the opposite side of the circle;
- Initially use more bank than the other glider, so that you start to catch up in the turn. Then reduce your bank until you fall back to an opposite position again. Adjust your bank angle to maintain this position for a few turns;

- If the thermal changes and it becomes apparent that re-centring is necessary, give the other pilot a chance to re-centre first. If you do make the first move, return to the original angle of bank as soon as possible.

A thought for discussion. In any thermal with more than one glider at around the same level, the pilot turning tightest is not getting in anyone's way. He is pulling, in the turn, further ahead of those behind, and catching up with those in front – which he can see. If he is using more bank than the thermal warrants, he will be losing height relative to those using less bank, so he will soon be clear below.

So if you see someone below in your thermal, turning tighter than you and climbing faster than you are, wouldn't it be a good idea to tighten your turn?

The most likely reason for his climb being faster than yours is that he is using a more suitable bank angle than you are. If you tighten your turn, your rate of climb should improve and you won't then be blocking his climb. The glider (if any) behind you should, on seeing you start to outclimb him, have the wit to tighten his turn – and so on round the circle until the whole gaggle is climbing better.

You won't then have the situation where the one who has caught up starts dodging around below you to see if there's any way to get past safely. This could of course be a ploy to distract you to the extent that your rate of climb gets even worse and you all go away and leave him to it!

If you can't cope with more than gentle turns, perhaps you could move out of the way until the others get past you – then, when you land, ask for an instructional flight.

Of course, if there are just two of you, and he is above you, turning tighter, and leaving you standing – well, what an ideal time to practise steeper turns than you normally fly!

Sam, a member of Yorkshire GC, has 13,000 power and commercial hours flown in all five continents, 3,000 gliding hours and a list of types far too long to fit on the page...

Max fun in min distance

THE RESTRICTIONS on cross-country flying caused by the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease have added to the usual frustration of what always seems a longer winter than usual. Most cross-country and competition pilots are in danger of resembling caged wild animals. What they need is some exercise to at least give them the feeling of freedom.

Assuming that your club is one of the lucky ones which can continue operating (and some cannot) then you at least have the chance to keep in "cross-country" practice by local soaring. A contradiction in terms? Not really! Most of the skills and judgments (except for navigation) can be practised without being out of gliding range of your home airfield.

Although we tend to think of such exercises being conducted by pilots not yet cleared to fly away from base, there is no reason why already proficient cross-country and competition pilots cannot benefit from local soaring. Sounds boring? Read on.

In April last year, a one-day survey was carried out on the activities at gliding clubs all over the UK. (*How was it for you? S&G*, August-September 2000, p26). The weather was unhelpful. The fields were sodden and muddy. At my club, high hopes in the early morning were dashed by approaching upper cloud. Lots of single-seaters were launched but only two cross-countries were flown. However, it was while de-rigging gliders and later in the bar that the tales relating to this article emerged.

Comparing notes showed that those pundits who had launched and decided not to risk ending up in a muddy field, didn't land back after a short period. Many soared locally for a couple of hours or more in not very enthralling thermals. So what were they doing? One was practising cloud flying ("his weak point"). Another was getting used to a new glider (he had only 120 hours in it!). Others were testing or familiarising themselves with new instrument fits installed over the winter. All of them were practising their thermal techniques. They knew that the better days and the first competitions were around the corner and then would be too late to cure faults or to perfect techniques.

For my part, I abandoned any attempt at a training cross-country in the club's Duo Discus after several starts followed by long glides in still air. My P2 benefited instead with a couple of hours of "survival" soaring training on a type new to him.

So what cross-country techniques can be practised while you remain close to home?

Thermalling is probably the one everyone thinks of, and one that covers a multitude of skills and judgments. Thermal selection, sky-reading, centring, climbing fast, exiting – all have to work well when

Ken Stewart suggests ways to benefit from being sitebound, while pilots from Lasham (below) and Hus Bos (right) describe tasks for you to try

you do eventually try for that Diamond Distance. What an opportunity to practise outclimbing others, now the whole fleet is compelled to stay in the same area...

Then there are speed flying techniques, such as speed-to-fly, dolphin flying, street flying and final gliding. "But how can you practise these when restricted to the local area?" I hear you ask. The point to realise here is that you can get a lot of kilometres into a small area!

It has always been accepted that in your average wooden glider (K-6 or Pirat, for example) you can cover 4nm for every 1,000ft of height loss. Therefore allowing a generous 1,000ft for the circuit, you can be 4nm away at 2,000ft and still get back to the airfield at circuit height. With a 3,000ft cloudbase, you have a band of 1,000ft in which to practise cross-country techniques. So you can afford to select a series of turning points up to 4nm away and still be safe. For instance, if your task is a Tiny Triangle with the airfield at its centre and each leg is the same length, that gives a task size of almost 40km. Not much! Then let's see you go round it eight times at increasing average speeds. If you can, you have done over 300km AND never "left" the airfield.

There is no reason why your task has to be a triangle. It can have as many turning points as you like. Higher cloudbases will offer larger "local" tasks with less need to repeat the circuit to clock up kilometres. Final glides can be practised at the end of each run, arriving at your safety height and trying to climb away again for another practice start.

So what about the "glass ship" pilots? You are the lucky ones. Sometimes, the performance of modern gliders makes it difficult to realise that you are still local soaring. With best glide angles (which diminish little with speed) anywhere from 38:1 to 60:1, you have so much scope for local tasks of considerable length. You have the ability to dolphin fly large parts of any "mini task". You have every chance to practise speed flying. So, fill your water-ballast tanks and go for it.

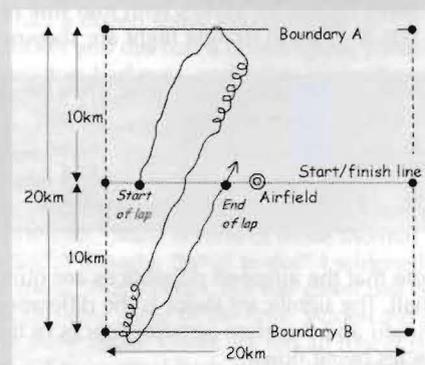
All this might sound fine for the pilot interested in badges or longer distance flights, but what's in it for the frustrated competition pilot? Answer: almost everything except the scenery. Mini-tasks can be flown in groups, competing against each other while comparing performance and techniques. They can be used to get used to, or back in practice at, gaggle flying. For those lower down the ratings at the end of previous competitions, there is a chance to duel in thermals with your club's top pilots – even for short periods when they pass you on their second time round the track. (You'll show that Andy Davis chap next time around – won't you?)

Lastly, how many times have you teamed up with another pilot in a competition to benefit from pair-flying and it hasn't worked out? In his article (*Team flying techniques*, *S&G*, June-July 2000, p26) former World Champion George Moffatt says team flying is worth a lot of points. Other pilots make it work because they are practised at it – so why not you? Surely mini-task flying is a good time to get that trust and rapport going with your flying partner?

Maybe with a little imagination and enthusiasm we can benefit from this period of "airfield arrest".

Further hints on soaring can be found in The Soaring Pilot's Manual, by Ken Stewart, available from the BGA

Line racing is a fresh challenge if



THREE pilots flying from Lasham have tried what they call "line racing". David Masson (chairman of Surrey & Hants and brother of Club Class World Champion, Peter), John Simmonds and Ed Foxon faced a day when the clearance didn't arrive until lunchtime and was then slow to move.

"This type of task is probably for you if you hate small triangles and like wandering off track to follow the energy," says David. "We set ourselves a two-hour, 32km lap, east-west line race with an earliest start time of 3pm. I think it worked very well. I managed five laps in 2:08 for 75km/h. I was doing all the things

SO THAT WE may continue to do racing tasks while the foot-and-mouth crisis is on, pilots at Husbands Bosworth have devised the following task. The rules are quite specific with regard to safety considerations and margins to prevent landouts. The rules fully conform to the BGA directive and have been approved at CFI level.

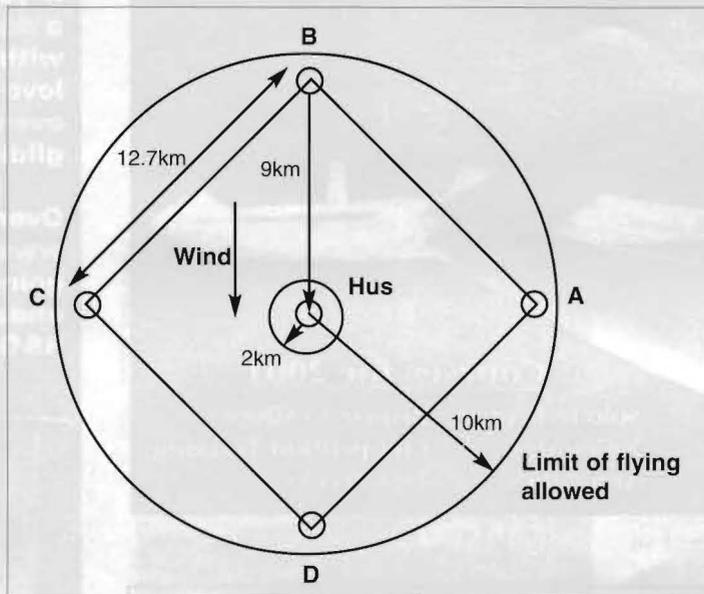
The task is designed to – and must – ensure a pilot returning to site from the furthest part of the flying area, once at artificial floor level (AFL) height, will arrive at 800ft – circuit height – using a glide ratio of 85 per cent of the published performance of the lowest performance glider in the task group. This effectively gives a 100 per cent margin for the lowest performance machine trying the task.

The AFL is set at a minimum of 1,800ft QFE, or higher if tasks are being set for lower performance gliders or a very high cloudbase is expected. A suggested maximum is 2,500ft; this would be suitable for cloudbases of 6,000ft. The recommended AFL to set is 1,800ft for a common task group of Pegasus or better. The task outlined below is suitable for this task group only.

Following the above rule and using an AFL of 1,800ft for 40:1 and better task groups, the size of task is as follows. The basic task is to fly round four turning points (TPs) positioned symmetrically 9km away around the site (1km inside the maximum perimeter of allowed flight) or a designated point upwind of the site – depending on the wind speed/direction. The designated point will be moved upwind by $A/54 \times B$ where A is the forecast or actual wind speed in knots and B is the maximum radius of allowed flight. This has roughly the effect of moving the designated point

Playing by pylon rules

You can still race your mates if you're affected by the ban – but keep a good lookout and stay safe



In the diagram above, HUS is the home airfield, and A to D are the turning points

upwind by 1km per 5kts of wind. There is a 10km circle around that point to mark the maximum extent of allowed flight, irrespective of altitude.

Please see the illustration above, laying out the basic task. The start is a 0.5km radius circle at HUS with the outbound leg to one of the four TPs predetermined. Circling in the 0.5km start sector is prohibited above the minimum start altitude ($1,800 + 1,000 = 2,800ft$). The direction of

circling would not normally be specified, but with a large task group and co-operation from the duty instructing team, circling in the same direction as that of the lap may be specified.

Thereafter, the task proceeds clockwise or anticlockwise, as predetermined, around the square lap. The four TPs have 0.5km radius sectors, making each lap 51km. After a predetermined number of laps have been done, the pilot returns from the last TP to the airfield. Only when the pilot has entered the sector of the last TP can he fly below the AFL for the final glide. So the task is effectively 9km out, 51km per lap and 9km back, where there is no wind offset.

For a good day as an example, the task may be four times round the lap, making $(51 \times 4) + 9 + 9 = 222km$. The minimum allowed altitude (AFL) around the task area is 1,800ft above the airfield. If a pilot drops below the AFL, he must return directly to the airfield circuit to either climb back up or land. After climbing back up to a minimum of 2,800ft (1,000ft above AFL), the pilot may restart by passing through the HUS co-ordinate 2km radius and then can continue to the TP that he or she was going for before getting low. Landing back at the airfield and re-lighting is *not* regarded as a landout and the pilot may

continue on task after passing through the 2km radius above 2,800ft (1,000ft above AFL). He may also restart the whole task from scratch, as long as this is made clear before re-launching. Falling below AFL and not returning expediently to the circuit or flying outside the designated area results in a "landout" scored at the point in question.

To design a task for a 30:1+ task group, the setter has the option of using the task above but increasing the AFL to 2,100ft. Significantly reducing the size of the flying area (and hence the lap size for the 30/1+ task group) is not recommended, because this would put the task legs too near to the circuit. The smallest task should be a 9km radius flying area with TPs placed 8km away from the reference point and an AFL of 2,000ft. Lap length in this case is 45km. The benefit of a different task for each task group is that the density of gliders on the lap will be reduced – useful if a lot of pilots are likely to take part.

The BGA 1000 point speed task scoring system defined in the current *Competition Handbook*, is to be used. Windcapping should be used where the organisation has the capability of calculating it, that is, has a computer scoring system.

See p61 for important safety advice about hazards created for all pilots by the current outbreak

you don't like flying tiny triangles

"I'd do on a bigger task – thinking, working hard, trying to pick the best climbs and planning my route. The only difference was staying a bit higher than usual and often having to look behind to plan ahead. It was good practice, I learned something, and it was fun."

The idea and rules are simple and it is easy to set it up on your GPS using relative waypoints and routes.

The idea is to race between parallel lines. If the lines are 20km apart, a lap is 40km, regardless of the route you travel. So long as you stay within the boundaries of the

task you are free to choose your track. The diagram (left) shows the general idea and an example "lap".

The boundaries, task duration/distance and earliest start time are agreed before launch. Aim to cover as much distance (whole laps) as possible in the agreed task time or to complete the agreed distance is fast as possible. "Landing out" is landing back at the airfield – nowhere else! – before the task duration expires or the task distance has been completed.

The concept is still under development. Full rules on www.soarmail.demon.co.uk



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Ban is modified for some

The BGA Executive's statement about foot-and-mouth after its meeting on May 2 is given here. Please check www.gliding.co.uk for later developments

WE ARE pleased to announce that, on Wednesday May 2, 2001, the BGA Executive Committee decided to modify the cross-country ban so that cross-countries can be flown under some circumstances. This modification was effective from 06.00 on Saturday, May 5.

Certain conditions apply and pilots should be aware that these may become more or less restrictive, depending on the foot-and-mouth situation.

The situation will be reviewed weekly by the BGA's foot-and-mouth liaison group and the website will be regularly updated.

Conditions of modification for Scotland (north of the Forth-Clyde valley):

Because of the different circumstances in Scotland, the Executive also accepted with immediate effect a modification applying to parts of that country. It allows cross-country flying, subject to restrictions, in gliders based in clubs north of the Forth/Clyde valley. See www.gliding.co.uk for details.

Conditions of the modification for the rest of the UK:

1. Cross-country flights must not be made from airfields within MAFF-designated infected areas. These areas can change daily and are identified on its website. Clubs must check this website daily before cross-countries are flown and in addition their local MAFF Animal Health Office as detailed in 4 below. No gliders/trailers may be taken from an infected area to another place for the purposes of flying cross-country.

2. Cross-country pilots must remain within gliding distance of a gliding site which is open, or an airfield which has given permission for gliders to land, or a field where the landowner has given permission for gliders to land. Such sites must not be in an infected area. Except in the interests of pilot safety, outlandings should be made only on such agreed sites/airfields, not on agricultural land. Pilots should fly conservatively, but if you do find yourself in an outlanding situation, safety and good airmanship are paramount. Do not attempt to stretch the glide.

3. All cross-country tasks should be set, given the flying conditions on the day, with the above strictly in mind. In addition, only pilots and aircraft which, in the considered opinion of the CFI/Duty Instructor, have suitable experience and performance should be given permission to carry out such tasks.

4. The BGA website gives details of all the MAFF Animal Health Offices and their areas of responsibility; pilots in any doubt about the suitability of their route or the status of their gliding site should consult the appropriate office. A map of infected areas is issued and updated regularly by MAFF on their website at www.maff.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/fmd/cases/map.asp. The BGA will endeavour to find out daily if there are any new outbreaks and make direct contact with affected clubs.

5. It is recognised that the modifications to the ban are best monitored at club rather than national level. Therefore, the following procedures must be followed. All cross-country flights must be authorised by the CFI/Duty Instructor at the club from which

landowner. It should be noted that disinfectant chemicals used for the control of foot-and-mouth are toxic and pilots should avoid contact by spillage on clothes or skin, inhalation or ingestion. Any such contact may result in the pilot becoming ill.

8. All clubs are to place disinfectant mats/baths at club entrances.

9. Notwithstanding local procedures and agreements with landlords, clubs are to impose the strictest control measures on visitors and visiting aircraft to their sites. These conditions apply to gliders, turbos and SLMGs.

10. Pilots are reminded that landings in infected areas or upon infected farms may result in the glider being impounded. As soon as is practicable, any outlanding in an infected area must be reported to the CFI of the site the glider launched from and, by him/her, to the BGA office. The pilot may be detained upon the farm for whatever period the farm may remain on the infected list. Comprehensive disinfection of the glider may be carried out which may result in serious structural damage.

We would like to thank pilots and clubs for your understanding of the plight faced by farmers and the responsible action you have been taking over the past weeks. We are glad to have good news for some of you, but we ask you to keep farmers' needs and concerns at the forefront of your minds in the weeks to come.

BGA Chairman David Roberts adds:
We are delighted to be able to make these changes, but our long-term goal still has to be the protection of our ability to fly cross-country and land in fields – not only this season, but in all the seasons to come. If you're one of the pilots able to take advantage of this modification, everyone is relying on you to make the right decisions on every flight. Please continue to act responsibly and to be sensitive to the very real issues facing the rural community.



the white planes picture co.

Several gliding sites, some grazed by sheep, were still closed recently because of foot-and-mouth. See overleaf

the take-off is made. The CFI/Duty Instructor is responsible for monitoring and enforcing control measures and the BGA will support him entirely in this.

6. The pilot is responsible for ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken, prior to launching, to minimise the risk of infection.

7. In the event that the retrieval of a glider is required, the crew should take all reasonable precautions to disinfect the car and trailer if requested to do so by any

Stay up to date via the internet

SINCE the last S&G appeared there has been a proliferation of web pages devoted to the crisis. I find www.channel4news.co.uk/ consistently sets the news agenda and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/> gives a comprehensive UK picture. The MAFF website has grown hugely: it's worth finding your way around <http://www.maff.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/fmd/default.htm> Its contacts page makes interesting reading (from the Border Collie Rescue Service to the Customs & Excise/Inland Revenue helpline for businesses affected by the disease). On www.foot-and-mouth.org.uk/ click on 'Is foot-and-mouth windborne?' for maps linking wind direction to disease spread in Anglesey. See www.scotland.gov.uk/agri/footandmouth/ for the picture there. Check out the Orwellian-sounding News Co-ordination Centre at www.co-ordination.gov.uk/ for the overall official view. For info from the Netherlands, in English, see www.minlnv.nl/international/ Specifically for glider pilots, BGA updates appear on www.gliding.co.uk and there's a link to the UK newsgroup at www.gliderpilot.net/ as well as to club websites. Adrian Hatton's www.field-landings.co.uk is worth a look. Airspace restrictions can be found at www.ais.org.uk/ Finally, my apologies for two mistakes in URLs in the last issue: the correct ones are listed above.

Helen Evans

The impact on UK clubs

Fewer clubs are closed than when S&G last reported – but what will it mean to them? Helen Evans investigates

THREE MONTHS after the devastating foot-and-mouth crisis began, nearly one in six of the UK's gliding sites was shut as a result of the disease.

Many of the clubs which had suspended operations at the start of March have now re-opened, but 14 out of 92 clubs – 15 per cent – were still closed by the outbreak in the last weekend of April. (See map, right.)

These clubs, most in the north or west of the country, have a membership (full flying) of 1,180 pilots, according to BGA annual statistics. The UK movement has 8,975 full flying members. Clubs have closed for a variety of reasons: some because stock graze on the airfield; others because they are on open moorland; others in deference to local concerns. The largest is Devon & Somerset GC at North Hill, with 223 members; the smallest is Carlton Moor GC, on the edge of the North York Moors, with just 14 members. One, Midland GC in Shropshire, has been forced to lay off staff (see story, far right).

Some of the open clubs, including Andreas and Bowland Forest, were hoping to restart operations in May. In the meantime, several of them, including Bath, Wilts & North Dorset; Bowland Forest, Cranwell; Devon & Somerset, Midland and North Wales, have organised or been offered flying from other sites such as Bannerdown, Barkston Heath, Bicester, Caernarfon, Cornish, Clevelands, Denbigh, Dunkeswell, Herefordshire, Heron, Lakes, North Devon and Seahawk.

Many of the open clubs were, at the time of writing, imposing restrictions because of the crisis: from changing entry points to

CONFIRMED CASES OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH BY COUNTY (28 April 2001, figures from MAFF)

Anglesey	13
Berkshire	2
Borders	8
Cheshire	11
Co Durham	85
Cornwall	4
Cumbria	645
Derbyshire	8
Devon	157
Dumfries & Galloway	166
Essex	11
Glamorgan	3
Gloucestershire	78
Herefordshire	42
Kent	5
Lancashire	16
Leicestershire	4
Monmouthshire	20
Northants	1
Northumberland	39
North Yorkshire	21
Oxfordshire	2
Powys	41
Shropshire	11
Somerset	1
Staffordshire	47
Tyne & Wear	16
Warwickshire	4
West Yorkshire	3
Wiltshire	7
Worcestershire	24

excluding visiting aircraft or refusing to allow vehicles on the field. The club status list at www.gliding.co.uk is a useful starting point, but anyone intending to travel to an open gliding site should also check directly with the club beforehand.

Members of tiny Carlton Moor GC are grounded by the disease. "We're up on top of the open moors and we don't know how long it's going to be before we can operate again," said secretary Jim Evans. "The moorland roads are open to traffic and walkers, and sheep and cattle are all over the place. But the footpaths leading off the roads, including our access track, are closed. We've got access for ground

maintenance but, if we start to fly, other people will follow us up the track.

"We're resigned to the fact that, to keep the goodwill of local farmers, which is important to us, we're keeping our heads down. We're keeping going as best we can."

Charles Ferrier, the secretary of Dumfries & District GC, on Forestry Commission land near one of the worst-hit areas, hoped as we went to press that the club would be able to restart its operations soon. "Around the start of April, they started getting cases very close to us. Last week they culled all the animals around us," he said. The 19-member club, which operates primarily on Sundays, has been driven into the red by eight weeks of inactivity, despite saving a little on insurance. They hope for a pro-rata rent reduction. "Overall, the financial situation is iffy but not disastrous," he said.

Bowland Forest GC stopped operations at the start of the crisis. In April there was a case of foot-and-mouth just 400 yards away. Their tenant's animals were culled as a precaution.

Dartmoor Gliding Society, with 50 active members, has no access to its Brentor site and no date for resuming operations. Sheep are grazing the field and the landlord has been forced to have other animals, next to an infected farm, culled as a precautionary measure. "We'll survive," said the club's acting secretary, Mark Arnold. "There's too much invested in the club not to."

The exceptionally wet winter has made its mark on UK gliding, too: several clubs say waterlogging is a problem. The Upward Bound Trust, which did close temporarily because of foot-and-mouth and still can't take visitors, flew on April 29 – the first time this year the field was dry enough.

As one club secretary says in this issue's Club News: "We have survived floods and pestilence – so what's next?"

See pages 52-9 for the news from other clubs

The Silver distance that was achieved just in time

BOB SMALLMAN is glad he acted swiftly on his resolution to get Silver in 2001 – he did what's thought to be the year's only home-grown distance badge flight before the BGA's cross-country ban was imposed.

Bob, from the Scottish Gliding Centre, reckons he's a slow developer: soloing in 1993, doing five hours and Bronze in 1996 and Silver height in 1997. Cross-countries, though, only got as far as a 22km in 1998.

Last September, he went on a cross-country course run at Portmoak by SGC pundit Kevin Hook. "I bought my own barograph and decided I really would give Silver Distance a go in 2001," said Bob, 59.

"On February 20 the forecast was for

north-westerlies, a good direction for wave at Portmoak. I loaded up the club's Pegase and got to 6,200ft but dropped out at the second bar, and then the cloud closed in".

"The next day, the wind was still north-westerly and the sky was a lot clearer. I managed to get into wave again and up to 9,950ft above Glenrothes. I thought: 'Well, that should do it,' and headed off north-east."

A second climb to 8,000ft took him over the Firth of Tay to Angus with plenty of height to look for a safe field. (Without a camera or GPS, flying home to claim the badge wasn't an option.) He landed after 62km at Friockheim, and was retrieved by Fred Joyntes and Dave Clempson. "I felt very

elated," he said. "The farmer was very hospitable and I'm glad to say there's no foot-and-mouth in either Fife or Angus so obviously I haven't spread it!" Two days later, the BGA ban was announced.

"I think I was very lucky," said Bob, "to get a chance at a perfect day just before foot-and-mouth closed down cross-country flying".

And his next goal? In due course, to do 100km out-and-return.

Right: Bob in the Pegase at Portmoak



Total shutdown at the Mynd

FROM THE start of the crisis Midland Gliding Club, mindful of the interests of its farming neighbours, voluntarily ceased all operations from the Mynd.

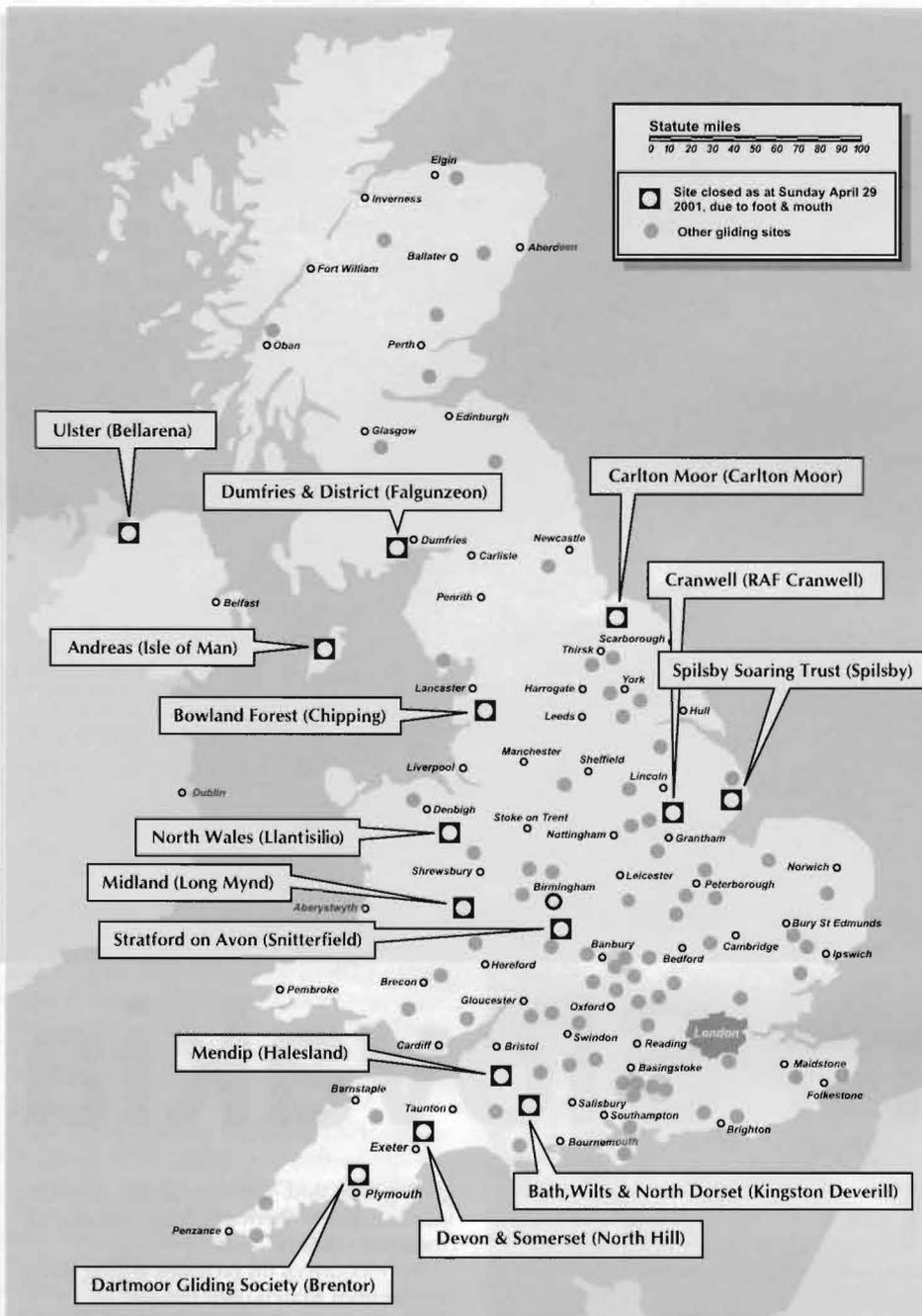
This was not an easy decision, considering the potential loss of revenue and the consequences for its professional staff. It could not have come at a worse time – just as the course season was starting and as members were asked for their subscription renewals. MGC relies heavily on course income to supplement subscriptions.

Now the club is losing substantial sums every week and has laid off all but two of its staff. It has taken steps to reduce outgoings to a minimum and implemented drastic reductions in all operating budgets, including marketing and advertising. MGC does carry insurance against consequential losses resulting from an outbreak of foot-and-mouth but it is triggered by a statutory body closing the club down. So far none is prepared to make such a demand.

On the positive side, MGC has made arrangements with Herefordshire GC to base a K-21, a K-23, a Discus and the Falke motorglider at Shobdon for continued weekend and occasional midweek flying. Several members have made arrangements to fly abroad and all seem to support fully the BGA cross-country ban. Most of those booked on courses have chosen to postpone rather than cancel.

The club website has been keeping members informed: hits have increased to around 500 a week. The local press and media have been supportive and MGC has featured on both local radio and regional TV. We have had more publicity in a few weeks than in the last few years. This increased interest is welcome but the real challenge will be turning it into visitors when the crisis is over.

Jon Hall, Midland GC



Steve Longland

Improvisation is a key word as the Dutch nationals go to Germany

APART from Great Britain, the European country worst hit by foot-and-mouth is The Netherlands, writes Bruno Zipp. The virus probably got here from England via France.

As soon as suspicions were aroused, the gliding community responded: no cross-country flights or other potentially risky activities – we want to maintain good contacts with the agricultural world.

Many gliding clubs have taken voluntary precautions in consultation with farming neighbours. The MoD limited recreational use of military airfields. There are prohibited areas from ground to 2,000ft AMSL.

As of 25 April, 26 outbreaks have been reported, most of them in the North East

Veluwe area and in North Friesland. Tens of thousands of animals have been killed – or vaccinated to be killed later. There are no funeral pyres here: all animals go to special rendering factories or abattoirs.

The Dutch Nationals (May 14 to 23), normally held at Terlet, cannot take place there and have been moved to Rudolstadt in Germany. In gliding, improvisation is suddenly the key word.

The gliding circuit at Teuge aerodrome, near Apeldoorn, lies inside the “forbidden triangle” between Apeldoorn-Deventer-Zwolle.

Terlet, near Arnhem, was closed on March 22 by the Dutch Forestry Commission and

reopened with restrictions. Aerotowing is forbidden: it allegedly scares local wildlife – but Air Force Chinooks continue flying at nearby Deelen...

At first, there was no gliding on military fields, but it was partly resumed at Easter.

In addition to the often tragic social impact and the influence on businesses in and outside stricken areas, many clubs, especially Terlet, are faced with serious financial problems.

Nobody knows how long the outbreak will last. We pray for high temperatures, which shorten the life of the virus to days, but even then it may be many weeks or months before operations are back to normal.



Soaring Slovakia

Glider pilots Brano Jesensky and Tibor Fratrik tell S&G about their club, Martin GC, and describe gliding in the heart of Europe

TO MANY people, Slovakia is simply one of those emerging central European countries which appears occasionally in the news headlines. But for Slovakian pilots Tibor Fratrik and Brano Jesensky, the break-up of Czechoslovakia in 1993 has left them with some of the best soaring terrain – where East meets West in the centre of Europe.

Take what they've dubbed the Fatra-Tatra gliding highway, for instance: 150km of mountains; 10kt-plus thermals; cloudbases to c3,000m (9,800ft). If you prefer your flights a little gentler, pointing your glider's nose south leads to open, friendly flatlands. Despite the country's relatively small size – it's 428km (266 miles) long and 195km (121 miles) wide – 750s have been flown and its inhabitants have the 1,000km barrier firmly in their sights.

Tibor and Brano are based at the Aeroklub Martin at the base of the Fatra mountain range. It's one of Slovakia's busier

gliding sites and, not surprisingly given its location, offers thermals, ridge, wave and 'mountain breeze' soaring.

The mixture of lift provides a long flying season from March until the end of October to mid-November, a time when most other clubs in the country have been closed for a month.

Flying from Martin is much like Alpine soaring. The best thermals are over the hills

and mountains during the day, but in the evening the katabatic winds slide down the slopes to meet in the middle of the valleys to produce lift for a

final glide home. The site enjoys wave throughout the year but, as with many European countries, the best soaring is in the spring and autumn. Conditions are so good that it's a sort of Slovakian version of Aboyne – with many visitors travelling there for wave camps.

Diamond heights are normally flown when the wind ranges from north-west through to north-east, but even easterlies

'It's a sort of Slovakian version of Aboyne, with many visitors travelling there for wave camps'



Steve Longland



Left: VS-10 number 14 above the mountainous terrain
Above: vintage Orlik glider at the launchpoint



Above: VS-10 Osa, 14, launching from Martin in spring behind a yellow-and-white Zlin Z-142, one of two club tugs
Below: LF-107 Lunak, OK-0927, reprieved by a change in regulations from a lifetime suspended in the hangar roof

and southerlies can produce fine wave. The best height achieved so far has been more than 7,000m (23,000ft) above site. And if the wave isn't working, there's still plenty of ridge running to be had – even under dismal grey October skies.

Now, inspired by Klaus Ohlmann's record-breaking wave flight (*How I flew 2,463km*, p40, February-March 2001), the club's pilots plan to explore cross-country wave flying. There hasn't been much of this type of soaring until now because humidity is often very high, leading to poor ground visibility. But they expect to do more in the future.

The thermal flying season tends to be from May until August, with the spring month being very volatile but producing cracking days for long-distance flights. The best, most predictable weather occurs in the warmth of July.

Slovakia has 24 gliding clubs operating under its National Aeroclub umbrella, and most incorporate power or airsport activity. There are currently 774 glider pilots – the country has a total population of some five million – and there are 155 club gliders. It was put on the gliding map when the 1997 European Women's Championship was held in Prievidza. (For an account of that contest, in which British pilot Gill Spreckley came second in the Standard Class, see *Adventures in Slovakia*, p349, December 1997-January 1998.) In 2003, the country will host the Junior Worlds.

Martin GC itself is 2km (just over a mile) east of the town whose name it bears and has an 800m (2,625ft) grass strip oriented north-south, elevation 418m (1,370ft). Its quaint wooden hangar and tower are from Czechoslovakia's olden days which, according to Tibor and Brano, gives the club a romantic atmosphere of early gliding years. Indeed, the area has such a sense





Tibor on final glide home in his and Brano's Ventus 16.6m, TB1

End of the day at Martin. Brano, a former Junior national champion, and Tibor also share an LS-6, TB2

➤ of history that WW2 films were shot there in the 1980s. The 2001 movie, *Behind Enemy Lines*, was filmed in the area: filmgoers watching scenes of American helicopters patrolling above beautiful mountains with white calcite rocks aren't looking at Kosovo at all, but at Slovakia's Fatra range. These mountains – the highest is more than 5,000ft – have helped the club's 10 most active members fly more than 22,000km and notch up around 1,000 hours. On the best day of 2000, Brano flew 500km at 105km/h over this mountainous terrain – and regrets not declaring 750km.

This year, Martin celebrates its 50th anniversary, but gliding in the region dates back to the 1930s on Stranik hill, where the Slovak Gliding School was established to train the country's first glider pilots. Today, Stranik is a Mecca for hang-glider and paraglider pilots.

Martin GC has four Blanik L-13s, three VSO-10 'Osa' Club Class gliders (these are the predominant machine in Czech and Slovak clubs) and a Standard Cirrus. There are also two older gliders – a Lunak and VT-116 Orlik – run as large syndicates by a third of the club's 43 members. Until a few years ago these two veterans were hung on display in the roof of the hangar, but a change in regulations allowed them to be restored to flying condition. The wooden, 16-metre Orlik, thought to be the only one in the country; has a best glide of 33:1 and is said to be ideal for weak ridge lift – easily outclimbing glass 15-metre ships.

There are also a few modern glass gliders such as the Discus and Ventus – Brano and Tibor share a Ventus – and, as with many British clubs, Martin GC is working on 'plastification' of the fleet with particular

emphasis on Club Class machines.

Launching is by two tugs, a Zlin Z-226 and Zlin Z-142. It's a matter of pride, too, that in the last 15 years there have always been between one and three Martin club members in the national gliding team.

The break with the Czech Republic fractured the structure of the country's gliding movement and now pilots are in the process of reconstructing it. There's no gliding magazine to provide a focal point, so Tibor and Brano are building a website, www.gliding.sk (which should be up and running as *S&G* goes to press), to operate as a meeting place and provide updates for the Slovak gliding community.

Last year, for the first time since the break-up, Slovakia entered a team in the Czech Nationals and Czech pilots joined in

the Slovakian Nationals. Slovakian pilots are hoping to build links with Hungarian and Polish competition organisers, as well.

The country is not immune from the problems facing gliding nearly everywhere: declining membership and increasing costs are exacerbated by the generally lower incomes in the 'transforming' economies. But now that Slovakia is becoming better known in soaring circles, its pilots hope that the numbers of visitors will increase and enjoy the delights it has to offer.

Our thanks to Tibor for providing the information for this article, and to Brano for supplying us with his photographs.

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Pre-flight checks on a club Blanik, with the mountains in the background

All photographs by Brano Jesensky

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RACING PILOTS love flying fast. When you're in a contest there's nothing better than cruising past a competitor as if they're standing still. Sadly, the secret to beating that glider home is very rarely as simple as flying faster. There is a science underlying your optimal speed to fly.

Imagine this scenario. You've just climbed an LS8 in a 5kt thermal to 5,000ft, and level your wings at cloudbase ready to start cruising. At what speed do you leave? 60kts? 100kts? The answer has nothing to do with the climb you've just had – that's history now – and everything to do with deciding how strong your next climb will be.

MacCready made simple

Based on this central tenet – that your cruise speed depends on your next climb – Paul MacCready evolved an entirely mathematical model that tells you what speed you should fly at any given moment. It takes into account the following three factors:

- *the predicted climb rate of your next thermal.* If you reckon it's going up like a rocket, then you want to get there as fast as you can – even if you lose a few thousand feet getting there. On the other hand, if it's 8pm and you're venturing out into dying evening thermals, you'll want to glide cautiously to minimise the height required in your next weak thermal.

- *the performance of the glider you are flying.* In general, the better your glider's performance, the faster your optimal glide speed becomes.

- *how much sink or lift you are currently flying through.* The theory of dolphin flying says that we should slow up to our minimum sink rate of, say, 55kts in good lift, but that the stronger the sink we encounter, the faster we should fly so we spend the least time possible suffering from it.

Right, we can see why these factors are all important. How does MacCready handle them?

The beauty of his theory is the simplicity of applying it. Just jump into your glider, wind the MacCready ring on your vario up to the average climb rate you expect to achieve (or type it into your electronic Cambridge, or whatever) and you're away.

What MacCready has done is to work out that for a given rate of climb there is an optimal speed to fly your particular glider. This is the most efficient speed, taking into account the balance between getting there fast to exploit good climbing potential, but not so quickly that you lose valuable height that takes too long to regain.

Furthermore, he has calculated how that speed must be varied to compensate for associated lift and sink *en route*.

For example, assume it's a nice British day, with a 3,000ft cloudbase and good 3kt climbs. So you set your MacCready

to 3, blast off down track and simply follow the speed-to-fly, depending on how much lift or sink you're in, stopping every time you can average a thermal of 3kts or stronger. Could this get any easier?

That sinking feeling...

Until that is, you hit the spuds! With a MacCready set at 3, your speed-to-fly director will advise you to fly regularly between 80 and 90kts in sink, and you will find yourself hurtling towards the ground at an alarming rate.

If you are fortunate enough to avoid a field, and continue finding 3kt thermals, you might complete the task, at the expense of winding up a sweaty, adrenaline-filled, palpitating nervous wreck. "But Paul told me it was efficient," you mutter as you sidle back to the bar...

So, where's the catch?

Very simply, MacCready doesn't allow for the fact that often we don't actually know how strong the next thermal is going to be.

In order to fly the fastest cross-country speed, the trick is to climb in thermals that are unusually strong for the day, and avoid climbing in any particularly weak ones. This is where MacCready theory leads us into two problems.

Firstly, what happens if you are forced to take a thermal weaker than your MacCready setting? Your average speed plummets. What your MacCready ring doesn't tell you is that your average speed dips only slightly if you fly 10kts too slowly to a good climb, but takes a battering if you fly 10kts too fast to a weak climb.

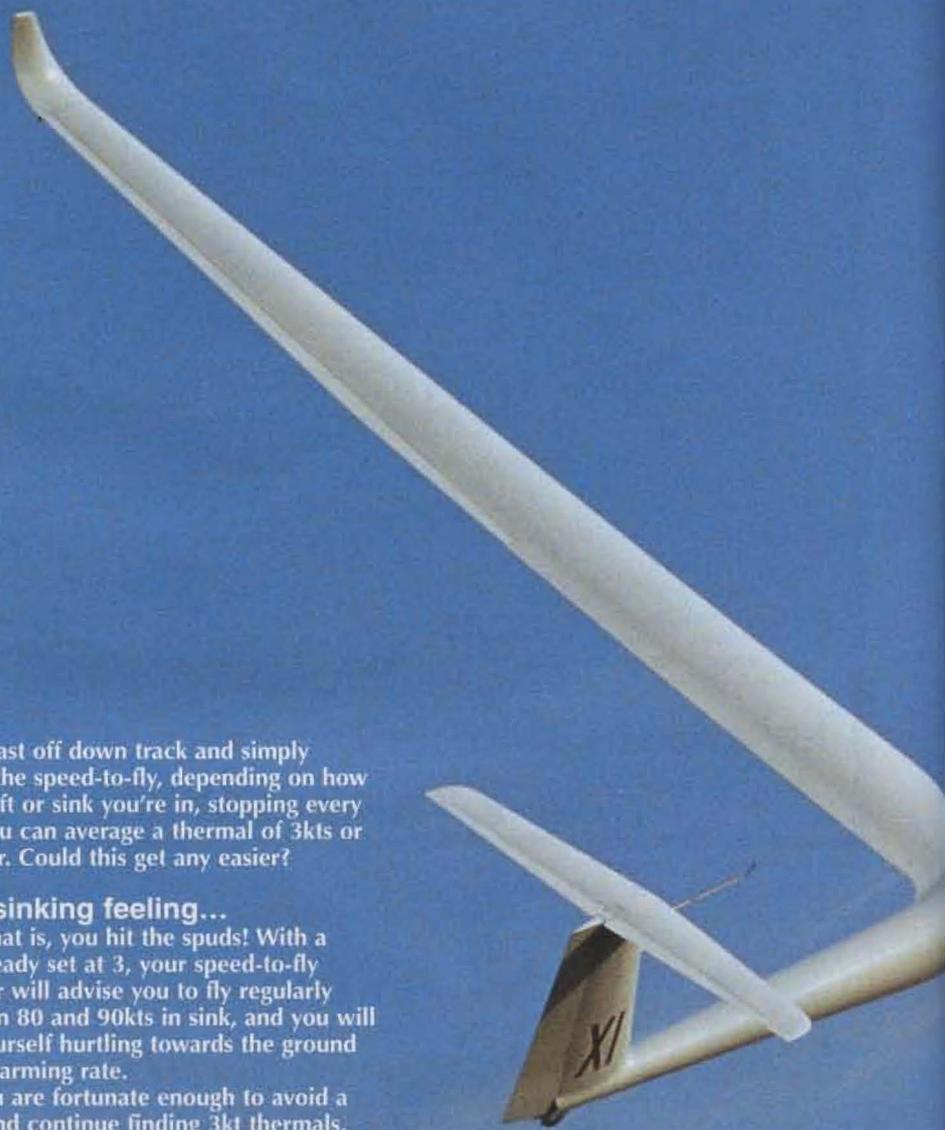
Secondly, although you may feel very content having flown at a 3kt MacCready

setting into a 3kt climb, what if that next climb is 6kts? You have to climb in your 3kt thermal anyway to gain back all that height you've burnt off.

If you fly at more cautious MacCready settings, you can sample more thermals before you're forced to take one, so your chances of finding the unusually strong climb are also higher.

How fast should I fly?

Where does this leave us? Well, although MacCready theory isn't perfect, we can adapt it easily to create a solid basis for choosing our speed to fly. A good working rule that I often use is simply this: I look at the sky ahead, think what thermal strength I would be prepared to stop and climb in, halve it and that's my MacCready setting. Easy! I am gearing my speed to my expected climb rate while flying slowly enough to sample more thermals. This means I can



Getting your soaring up to speed

In the last article of his series, British Junior Champion Jay Rebbeck explains why slower can be faster in speed-to-fly and final glides



use only the best ones. That's the theory, but how do I apply this in practice?

As I'm climbing in a thermal I'll have a target cruise speed in mind for when I leave. On our typical British 3kt day in an LS8, let's say 80kts. However, it's horribly inefficient to accelerate in sink, so get the stick forward as you roll out of the thermal and dive to your target cruise speed.

While cruising with my MacCready set on, say, 1.5kts, I adjust my speed only by around 10kts either side of my target of 80kts. Only if there is very good lift will I slow right down to 55kts and then maybe even weave in the lift. Personally, I don't choose to frantically dolphin in every

scrap of lift, because you are increasing the distance you fly.

Speed-to-fly myths

Flying at the right speed is all well and good, but let's get our priorities sorted. To achieve fast average speeds, it is far more important to climb in strong thermals than to stick to the perfect speed.

I remember overhearing, in the bar one evening, a pilot chatting with a fellow competitor: "Initially, I couldn't work out how you overtook me, but then I realised I had my MacCready set up wrong," he said. In response, his competitor

commented that having left their 4kt climb he flew straight to the next cloud, climbed at 10kts and didn't see him again.

He might as well have replied: "Try reading the sky instead of your instruments, you muppet."

Final glides

Having landed less than a kilometre short of the airfield two days in a row during last year's Overseas Nationals, I feel well qualified to discuss final glides.

A final glide should be thought of as merely an extension of the rest of the flight. The only real difference between this and any other glide is the height at which you do it. In a competition the aim is to finish the task at the minimum height for either a safe circuit or a direct landing. That minimum height will depend on the rules of the competition, and on your own experience level.

It is easy to forget that the only way to optimise your final glide is to continue making good soaring decisions! The classic mistake is to treat the final glide as something quite separate from the rest of the flight.

Two types of problems ensue, depending on the pilot's confidence. Mr Confident keeps leaving thermals under glide hoping to gain height by dolphining up on to glide from low down. Mr Cautious consciously tries to climb up to final glide at the first opportunity – even when high and in weak lift.

Support this year's junior worlds team

JAY IS one of six pilots representing Great Britain in August's Junior World Gliding Championships at Issoudun, France. They hope to better the two silver medals earned at the last worlds in Holland. Rivals such as the Germans and French are better funded and able to practise unhindered by foot-and-mouth bans. In order to beat the best, the Brits are seeking sponsorship to train

abroad before the comp. To raise the profile of the team and of gliding, they have put together a website www.glidingteam.co.uk (also accessible via racingsailplanes.com) and a brochure. If you're interested in sponsoring the Junior Worlds team, contact their Sponsorship and Media Co-ordinator, Marilyn Hood, on 01400 281648, or email her on hoodsgliding@hotmail.com

Should I stay or should I go?

So, how do you decide when to stay and climb, and when to press on? Firstly, think how your flight has been going recently. If you've been able to run under cloud streets for long periods without turning, then you will probably gain on glide, but if it's been a classic blue day with hot-spot climbs and glides in heavy sink, then expect something similar on final glide.

Secondly, take a good look ahead. If you are flying into deteriorating weather, then try to climb on to glide early. If you can see improving conditions, then push harder to get a strong climb on to glide.

So how do I final glide in practice? In preparing the flight I'll have thought approximately where I expect to approach final glide height. This is especially important if the last turning point is close to the airfield, when you could easily be

above glide before rounding it. As I am approaching final glide height, I continue soaring using the same height band that I have been finding the best thermals in. If climbs are broken low down, then stay high. If climbs are dropping off below cloudbase, then press on.

If you know your distance to home, and your head/tail wind component, you can calculate the height required (using a John Willy calculator or a final glide computer).

However, this height depends on the MacCready setting you choose. For a fast glide home on a high MacCready setting, you will need to climb higher than for a slow glide on a low MacCready setting.

OK, so I pull into a good climb as I am nearing my final glide – how high do I climb? MacCready has the answer! Normally, you cannot select your exact MacCready setting because you don't know what strength your next climb will be. However, in your last thermal, you do know exactly what your average climb rate is. So use that as your actual MacCready setting for your final glide calculation. This will tell you the optimal height to climb for the thermal you're in.

If the sky ahead looks dead, then climb to the height your computer tells you, plus whatever safety margin you require. If the look of the sky on the way home makes you think you'll lose (or gain) significantly on glide, then you should leave above (or below) glide accordingly.

When you leave the last thermal, initially turn the MacCready down and cruise slowly. As your glide angle improves, you can gradually crank up your MacCready. So, your glide should get faster and faster all the way.

Final thoughts

In this four-part series, I began by examining how to read the sky ahead. Then I talked about how to climb quickly once you've found a thermal. In the April-May issue, I explained how I try to choose the most efficient route between thermals. This time, I've told you how I decide what speed to fly. We've finished by looking at how to get home quickly with an accurate final glide.

Where do we go from here? Gliding is not a theoretical sport: success depends more on experience and intuition. So now that you've read this, go flying... 



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Just add a second tug

Martin Yates reports on some remarkable wartime trials revealed by papers belonging to his late father, Alan

FAMILIAR difficulties in launching heavily-ballasted gliders were anticipated, investigated and solved 60 years ago. The solution was deceptively simple – add another tug.

This investigation has been revealed by the discovery of several reports among the papers of my father, Alan Yates, who died recently. Some of them carry the code: *Sierra Echo Charlie Romeo Echo Tango*.

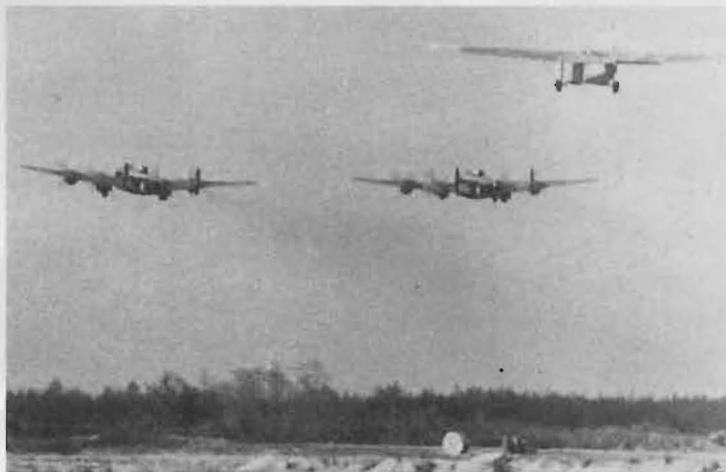
The official reason for the work was the difficulty of launching an operational glider with a loaded, operational bomber. The suggestion was that a second, lightly-loaded, tug could be used to launch the glider, allowing the main tug to get itself airborne. The assisting tug would then cast off and return for another launch. In the case of the smaller gliders it was hoped that fighters would have the power to tow the glider once airborne, if assistance was provided for the take-off. It was thought that a Spitfire could tow a Hotspur carrying its ground crew and spares – allowing the base to advance with the front line.

The investigation used a Hamilcar with 33-metre span – slightly greater than Eta's – and a ballast weight of 22,000lb (9,988kg). It envisaged gliders with take-off weights of up to 100,000lb (45,400kg). The ballast was self-loading: a ten-ton tank. The tugs were Halifax bombers. Other combinations that flew included Whitleys towing a Horsa and Masters towing a Hotspur. The Hotspur, a "small" glider for eight soldiers, carried a jeep or a field gun – but not both.

Early trial flights were made from grass airfields although – for some reason – it was found to be safer to use a wide, hard runway. Take-off runs of around 700 yards or 640m (for the gliders) and around 1,200 yards/1,110m (for the tugs) may be a clue, while a 36,000lb Hamilcar lifting off at 90kts must have been an interesting experience. Other launch methods were apparently tried. Rocket-assisted take-offs were abandoned, however, when the glider, with rockets attached, overtook the tug – on the runway!

The towropes presented many problems (nylon rope had not crossed the Atlantic at the time). Initially, hemp ropes were used, with a breaking strain of five or ten tons. Hemp was well known for its complete lack of "give," making the ride rather uncomfortable. Some "give" was shown to exist, though, when a Halifax pilot once confused his signals and read *take up slack as all out!* The Hamilcar pilots were so

This picture of the tow formation is among Alan Yates' papers. If any organisation would be interested in keeping these historic documents for posterity, contact Martin via S&G. The papers, a bulky foolscap file, cover subjects from wind tunnel testing the Hamilcar to landing parachutes for aircraft. S&G has a list of titles



mesmerised by the sight of the aircraft disappearing, tail up, with the rope still slack, that they forgot to release. It stretched an unbelievable amount before finally breaking at the tug end. As anyone who has been near a winch during a cable break knows, the non-elastic rope comes back very quickly. This towrope found the Hamilcar's nose doors no hindrance, and wrecked the fuselage beneath the cockpit. Fortunately, the glider pilots sat above the wing and on this occasion the glider was ballasted with sandbags.

'It was a demanding operation for tug pilots: formation take-off of bombers tied together with a ten-ton drag anchor...'

Eventually, steel cables were used, with integral telephone wires and a pulley block between the glider and the tugs. Dropping this collection of ironmongery at friendly airfields shortened the life of the cable (and anybody or anything in its way). This was resolved by fitting parachutes at both ends of the cable. (It was felt that for operational flights over enemy territory the parachutes would not be required!) The glider end parachute opened on release to restrict the free end flailing.

With the Hamilcar, the difficulty of releasing the assisting tug without losing the glider was compounded by the fact that this glider had a bridle towrope, the cables being attached to hooks in each wing. The solution was to fit a pulley block at the joint between the glider bridle and the rope from the tugs. The tug cable was therefore a bridle between the rear of the tugs. This had the major advantage of requiring no modifications to the tugs or gliders. Stops were provided on the rope so the assisting tug took the major load of the glider at take-off. Once established in the climb, the assisting tug would throttle back allowing

the rope to run around the pulley until the second stop arrived and automatically disconnected the cable. The resulting towrope length was around 600 feet!

Apparently, this system's first trial flight had to be abandoned before take-off, but with two aircraft, the glider and all the necessary ground crews around. A last-minute suggestion of testing the pulley revealed that the very efficient splice joining the two normal towropes involved would not pass through the pulley. This prevented the release trip from operating.

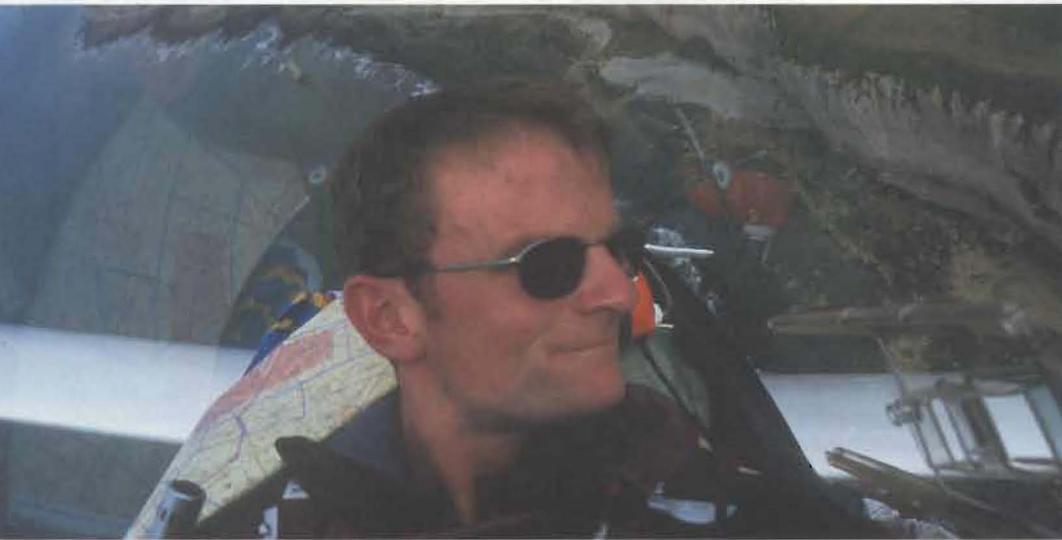
It was a demanding operation for the tug pilots: formation take-off of bombers tied together, with a ten-ton drag anchor, had not been on the agenda for pre-war flying displays at Hendon. Strangely, considerable problems were anticipated for operational take-offs at night, with no radio or lights allowed!

Wingtip turbulence, which is a problem for modern airliners, was a serious hazard for these tugs. If the assisting tug dropped back behind the lead tug and closed to less than a wingspan gap, the turbulence was powerful enough to override the ailerons and roll it towards the combination. Trials, without a glider, revealed that the only way to regain control was to fall into line with the lead aircraft and climb away.

This proved exciting when it happened during a real tow and resulted in an emergency release – presumably by three pilots simultaneously.

It is interesting to realise the effect that troop-carrying gliders still have on gliding operations today. How many people realise that Air Law 4.12 (*The glider shall be attached to the tug by means of the tow rope before the tug takes off*) originates from the days when some of these gliders were launched without the tug landing?

This article includes stories I remember being told by Dad, not necessarily included in his papers



Guy Westgate going vertical above the French cliffs he's long dreamed of soaring – an endless playground of lift

I HAVE attempted European tours twice before in my DG-400 motorglider and have learned the success of the adventure is linked to the journey, not the arrival.

In July last year, therefore, I made no plans for a destination and had only two resolutions for my journey: to use the engine as little as possible and to make the best use of the weather I found to fly as far as I could.

My glider can hold a remarkable amount of equipment but in reality there are very few things necessary for a long trip that should not be considered for a local soaring flight. My two biggest purchases were 1:500,000 maps to cover me from Spain to Russia (£140) and slide film (£150). I also decided to take a hand-held Emergency Locator Transmitter, a good sleeping bag and a waterproof cover for the front of the glider.

After reading accounts of previous tours, several pilots had expressed interest in a similar trip. I was looking forward to sharing the flying experiences and also hoping for help when my own knowledge reached its limits.

A month or so before my four-week leave block, nobody else had the time off, so I was

Across the sea

destined to adventure alone – with a DG and a toothbrush.

The early part of July was hardly steaming; the weather was more typical of April as fronts lashed the South Coast for weeks. I missed my first window of high pressure by a few hours on Tuesday 14, but followed its progress with some relief as it was hijacked over Belgium between converging fronts and marched into Germany to meet a watery end.

Three days later I was a week into my leave and had gone nowhere. The weather was on the up, but I belatedly realised that only half of my essentials items would fit in the glider and I was beginning to think I had not done enough preparation.

My break came on Friday, a day with strong north-westerly winds; I left Parham after a morning of packing, under the slightly mistrustful eye of my new syndicate partners.

I climbed just high enough to reach the

**Guy Westgate is an enthusiast for p
in his DG-400 started with a longer-**

South Downs ridge and spent a while trying to get comfortable with far too much stuff wedged behind my seat. The ridge lift was strong and I took the opportunity to reflect on my options. The cockpit was full of maps, so I had most directions covered. The wind was around 15kts north-west, perfect for a Dover-Calais Channel crossing, but cloudbase was rather low. The weather to the east of Parham was uninspiring, too, with a wet depression cruising down the East Coast – bringing a forecast of showers and more rain overnight.

I wandered down the ridge towards Eastbourne; confident the first 35km would be easy. At Lewis the ridge breaks and I took a thermal to cloudbase to assess the drift and contemplate my next move. The wind at 3,000ft was reassuringly brisk although it was more westerly than I had anticipated. Soaring was easy with irregular streets of giant dark clouds, but the air was damp and there was too much cloud hanging limp in the air long after useful lift had gone. Ominously, it was raining on the edge of one street – big, fat drops. I had already caught glimpses of some rather enthusiastic towering cu to the east so reluctantly I discounted a crossing via Dover and considered what else I could do.

I let a thermal drift me out to sea, a few miles east of Brighton and gingerly explored the grey lumps of cloud even further out, reaching the end of the street in the highest wisps at 4,000ft, nearly 10 miles into the channel. The wind was almost 20kts and the

The arches at Etretat, a fishing village towards the western end of the 125km long run of cliffs





Left: the lighthouse at Fecamp. Above: Etretat. "I resisted the temptation to try to squeeze through an arch," says Guy

a to adventure

pan-European exploits. The latest tour
-than-expected Channel crossing...

cliffs at Beachy Head looked a long way off! I was still 2,000ft below glide to cross the channel but on the limit of my glide to get back home so knew I would have to commit to an engine start soon.

I hesitated at the prospect of such a long sea crossing, thinking the accident report would make interesting reading, but after umming and aahing for all of five seconds I decided to go for it. I called London Information to file an airborne flight plan and was a little disappointed at how matter-of-fact they were, but it didn't slow my pulse.

By the time I had climbed to 5,500ft with the engine I was above most of the cloud and had a 76km glide to France! This was totally uneventful: I dodged any cloud that got in my way and even had a good patch of air for over 15km, which made my arrival height look very healthy.

My first glimpse of the mainland came at just over 3,000ft with 23km to run. The tailwind was reassuring and in less than 30 minutes I was over the cliffs alongside the Puluel Nuclear Power station, with 1,500ft in hand. I had made a crossing of 110km, over three times that of Dover-Calais.

Elated, I was soon brought down to earth by Air Traffic Control, who gave me a high workload, insisting I change radio frequencies three times. The French controllers' English wasn't good and it took a while to get my message across that I wanted to fly along the coast for a bit.

I have dreamed of flying these cliffs for as long as I can remember – perhaps 125km of unbroken chalk. I drifted down to 1,000ft above the churning waves and tracked west towards Le Havre. There were a few spurs and headlands jutting out to sea, which gave plenty of turbulence in the westerly lees, but as the cliffs turned, the wind was hitting more squarely, and I continued a steady climb to almost 2,000ft on reaching Le Havre. Both Deauville and Le Havre ATC were friendly enough and offered to call customs for me so I could land at St Romain, the gliding field, rather than the international airport.

I had to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming! The gamble with the weather and the wide sea crossing had paid off – I was cruising on the most spectacular coastline I had ever seen! Full of a sense of inevitable achievement, I set off east to attempt the entire 125km run of cliffs. The 60km beat

back to Puluel was easy with a tailwind but as the cliffs dropped beyond the power station, lift was in short supply. By the time I chickened out I was down to 700ft. I turned back and could suddenly see why the lift had disappeared: the wind direction, marked by lanes of white horses, was clearly 50° off the cliff edge. The picture went from bad to worse as now I had a considerable headwind, and I passed the power station at only 250ft. I almost contemplated landing in the car park but somehow reached the cliffs on the far side of the gap. The headland I found was my saviour and I climbed. I finally called Le Havre when feeling more comfortable and they reported the wind as 310/18-24kts.

Having found the limits for the day's conditions (and myself), I settled on being a hooligan for the remainder of the afternoon. By maintaining minimum height and maximum speed I could fly a 40km stretch just outside of Le Havre's airspace in around 12 minutes. That's 200km/h!

Towards the western end of the run was Etretat, a fishing village with three chalk arches stretching out into the breakers. I resisted the temptation to try and squeeze

Le Havre airport, the start of the cliffs. French ATC offered to call customs so Guy could land at the local gliding club



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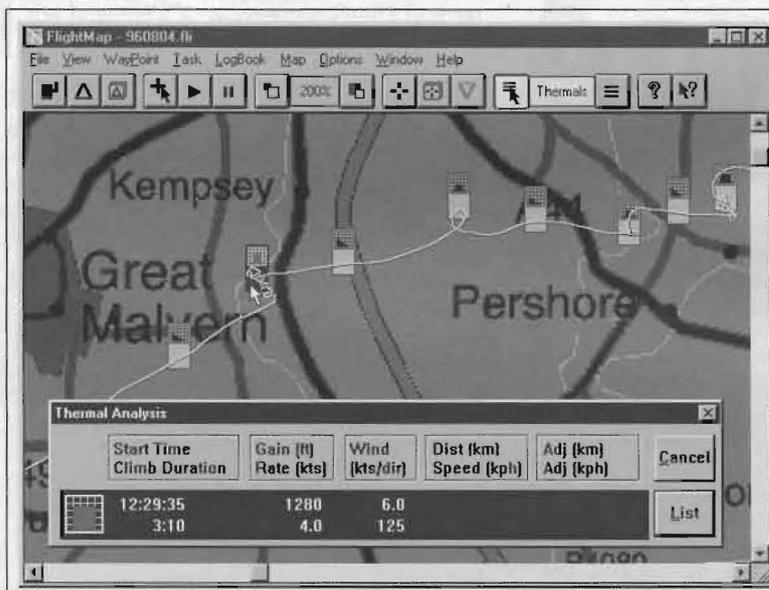
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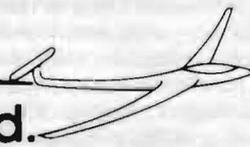
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The nuclear power station at Puluel, where Guy first reached the French coastline



Down on the cliff "motorway": maximum speed and minimum altitude

➤ through an arch but the summer tourists standing on top of the biggest, the Falaise d'Aval, got some good views of the top of my glider.

Throughout the flight, thickening top cover had drifted across from England and by late afternoon it was feeling quite gloomy. I got a clearance to enter the Le Havre zone to climb on the highest cliffs but I could not get above 2,000ft – 200ft short of a glide to St Romain. I resorted to the engine in the end and was very glad I had not stretched a marginal glide, as the sink was horrendous.

I taxied up to the apron on landing, where Aldo, a bear of a man, emerged from the clubhouse and helped me put the glider in the hangar. He told me the whole club was on camp at another location in France, but I was invited into the clubhouse for the party he was throwing for a young friend's birthday. I was fed and watered (wined) but I feared the young students were going to party forever. I tried to sleep at 3am, but had no chance until almost 6am when the continual beat of Johnny Halliday finally stopped shaking the posters in the upstairs dormitory.

After a late breakfast with the airfield mechanic, I left at 11:30, still feeling the worse for wear. I climbed to over 3,000ft, well above a low patchy cloud layer and set off back to the cliffs for another day of adventuring. The wind had swung more northerly overnight but was still strong. I passed the arches at Etretat and the Fecamp lighthouse for the last time in ridge lift and cruised east. The cliff line beyond Puluel was lower and quite variable with occasional gaps and changes in direction, but the lift was reliable so that 1000ft was enough to make crossing the gaps feel comfortable.

The air was fantastically clear, which heightened my senses. Exploring the coastline in this magic way I saw peregrines stooping for pigeons, World War Two pillboxes buried deep into the chalk, families walking hand in hand along the windswept paths, abandoned cars, rugged lighthouses, meadows of long grass caressed by the rotor and a thousand other things that made we want to stay and absorb this new world.

At the 115km mark around Le Treport the

cliffs became punctuated by larger gaps and by Ault, only 10km further on, the seemingly endless line of mighty chalk had declined to large sandy flats and the delta of the River Somme. My motorway had finished! It was time to change gear and plan the next move.

Despite large patches of high cloud there was plenty of sunlight and the air felt buoyant. I spent a frustrating hour trying to pick a thermal off the cliffs to take me inland but I did not feel comfortable committing to a weak climb with only 400ft ground clearance. I could stay all day in ridge lift – it was safe – but I wanted to move on.

Reluctantly, I resorted to the engine and climbed a few hundred feet. The extra height and distance inland made all the difference and almost instantly the cumulus

'My lake of buoyant air formed a small core and with audible relief I was away again...'

looked better formed and solid. As the day heated up and the air warmed on its southerly track, the thermals ramped up, reaching 2,000ft, 2,500ft, then 3,000ft in successive climbs. By 100km inland I was up to 4,000ft and the climbs had improved from 1.0 to 2.5kts.

I had not put much thought into the direction of my journey around Europe but I was approaching a turning point.

Based only on the drift of the day, I decided to run with the wind and take an anticlockwise route around the Alps.

I slipped through the narrow VFR corridor between Paris and Rouen and caught sight of building storm clouds to the east. Visibility took a nosedive as I crossed the River Seine at Mantes and the weather started to look a bit quirky. A fat street lay crosswind with a very big towering cu on its eastern end. There was a little lift at first and then suddenly rain. I ran and ran but by the time I was clear I was down to 1,000ft with wet wings!

I have written before that I hate rain, and it's true that the DG's wings like it even less! – I was going down! Something stopped me going for the engine when it would have been sensible and I limped downwards towards the only patch of sunshine I could see. It took an age to find

even reduced sink. For almost 20 minutes I drifted across the French farmland under a dark sky, but my lake of buoyant air formed a small core and with audible relief I was away again.

The overcast cloud broke once I was clear of Paris and as I passed over the huge fields of France's grain belt, the climbs continued to improve. 200km inland the cloudbase was up to 5,000ft with climbs of 3kts. I listened to Paris VOLMET to get an idea of the weather ahead and every report described thunderstorm activity:

Paris had heavy rain to the east, and to my surprise there were showers in the south-west. Today there was only one way to go – south!

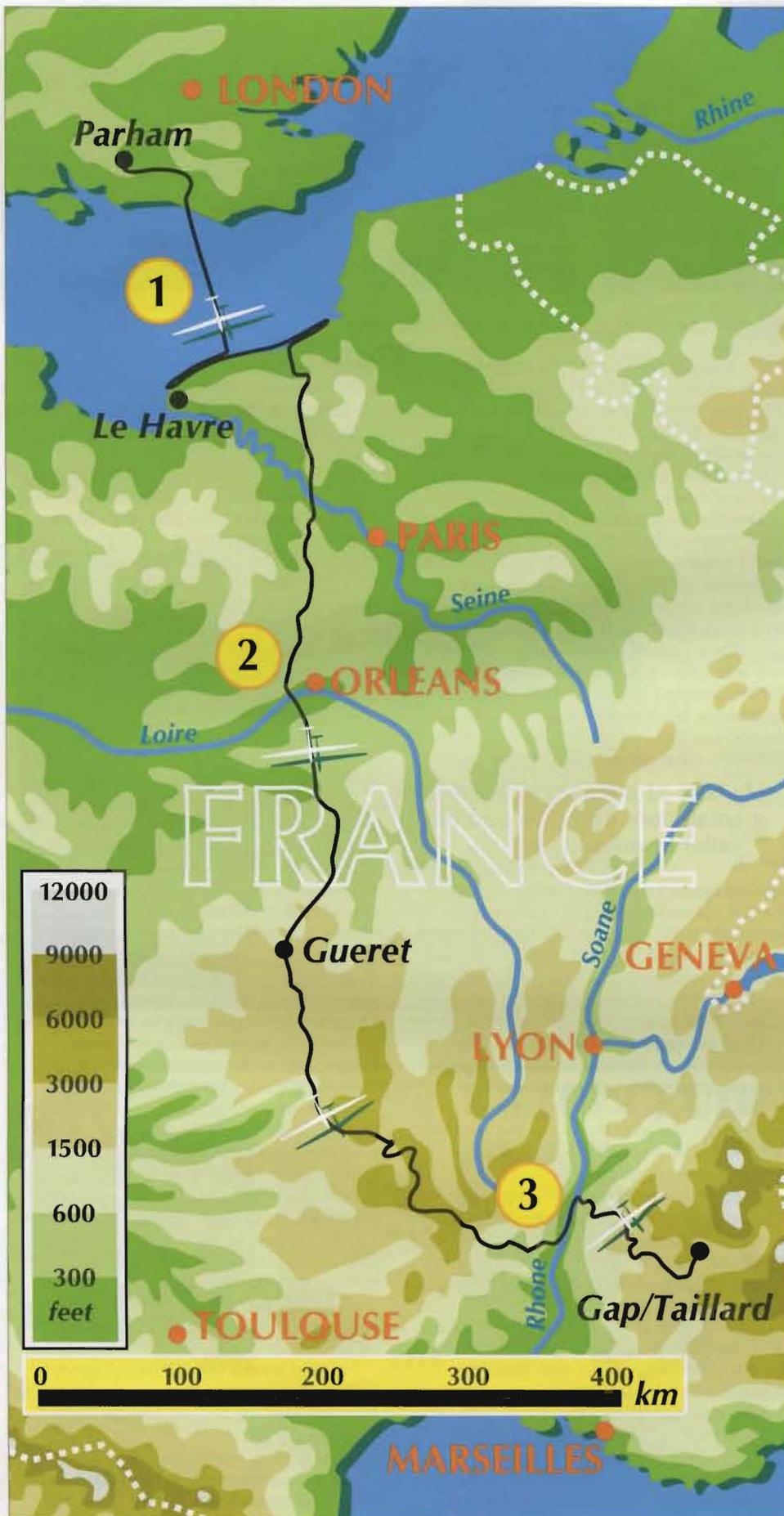
Idly, I started to contemplate which airfield I might stop at, but as conditions improved, the thought of having to land and stop the fun vanished. I reached Blois, where I had stopped two years before, and cruised down a long street over the massive Loire river. I could see the seventeenth-century turrets of Chateaux Chambord, my favourite French castle, clearly visible over ten miles away.

As I entered the Massif Central, the countryside made a step change and the gaps between thermals started increasing. The grain fields gave way to much greener countryside, dotted with small fields, hedges and wider forestation. It was a change as marked as a transition from Texas to Wales. The terrain ahead was also rising and as the afternoon was moving relentlessly towards evening, I decided to pick a destination and glide out.

I chose Guéret and glid the last 30km from cloudbase. There were a few powered aircraft doing circuits on the single hard strip and a parascending operation in one corner of the field. The location was wonderfully picturesque: a wide lush river valley, with hills rising a thousand feet on either side.

I landed on the Tarmac and gingerly taxied off the end of the runway across the grass towards the biggest hangar and a group of people.

I was glad to have arrived safely but as I opened the canopy, the group turned and advanced towards me like an army. I suddenly felt quite threatened. They were, however, armed only with buckets and ➤



The first three days of Guy's adventure took him from the South Downs to the Alps (Steve Longland)



Overnight stop at Guéret, nestled in its lush river valley

> cloths and I swear the glider was clean before I even had a chance to get out. One of the pilots jokingly told me it was a local tradition – now my glider belonged to the club! I laughed with him nervously. I quickly learned that they had had no soaring for two days because of heavy rain so I felt quite lucky to have made the distance. I was given a camp bed in the clubhouse for the night, with absolutely no Johnny Halliday – what a perfect adventure!

I spent the next morning looking up at some very low clouds and finally launched into a strong northerly after midday. I started south, down the Creuse valley, but soon had second thoughts; the countryside below did not give me much confidence with almost no landable fields. Predictably, the conditions were difficult and in the first hour I spent more time below 1,000ft than above. It was becoming very clear why most of the cross-countries flown from Guéret are to the north. My target for the day's sightseeing was the national park in the heart of the Massif Central, the Auvergne. The visibility below cloud at 2,000ft was excellent and I could see the mountains and extinct volcanoes rising into the orographic cloud way into the distance.

As I continued south the cloudbase kept pace with the rising terrain so by the time I crossed the deep valleys of the Dordogne, the idea of flying closer to the volcanoes looked a little more realistic. I had seen an aerial picture of the biggest, Plomb du Cantal, the night before, which seemed more like a giant walnut, split into segments by deep fissures and valleys.

I traversed a high plateau on the flank of the high ground and, with my head buried in the map, almost fell into one of the deepest valleys across my path. If it was the Mars valley, as I expected, I was sure it would lead into the heart of the volcano.

The lower slopes were covered in a comforting soft green velvet. I slowly worked my way up the valley but the turbulence and rough thermals made life



The Rhône valley funnelling the Mistral wind south, helping to prolong the flight



On day three of his tour, Guy's gateway into the Alps – no turning back...

very difficult. Even though this volcano looked soft, it was playing a hard game. After an hour or so of playing cat-and-mouse with lift I reached the head of the valley and a narrow pass with the main peak of Puy de Peyre-Arse visible for a few seconds in the swirling cloud. I had to ridge soar the last few hundred feet of the pass in order to cross over and then waited for a gap in the clouds to pop through into

'I couldn't believe my luck as thermals kept popping up and I inched closer and closer'

the rotor and the valley beyond.

I had had enough of mountains in cloud, and ran downwind into the valley and St Flour. East of the mountains the cloud cover was more or less complete, thermals almost non-existent. Like a balloon, my progress was only because of the wind. I was ready to throw the towel in for the day but the nearest airfields were all crosswind in the Allier Valley, the wrong side of a wide ridge which I could see rising into cloud. I drifted south looking for opportunities but after four hours of flying I was weary. I was about to start the engine and divert when thermals picked up a little. The overcast sky started to break and show signs of streeting and some better-defined cumulus started creating a way to the south. A few kilometres from Mende I was up to 6,500ft and with a new lease of life I could start to plan ahead once more.

The edge of Montpellier's control zones marked my southern limit so it was time to traverse east, across the strengthening wind. The air was rough for most of the route towards the Rhône, which I reached at 7pm; I planned to final glide to one of the gliding fields north of Avignon but I kept getting annoyingly good climbs that tempted me to climb higher and fly further.

The Mistral wind was funnelling south

down the Rhône valley and any progress north, away from airspace, would be torturous. The foothills of the Alps to the east drew me like a magnet. I couldn't believe my luck as thermals kept popping up and I inched closer and closer.

By the time I approached the Drôme tributary I was getting quite cavalier. I left my last thermal for a dead-looking sky and pinned my hopes on a limestone ridge to the south of the river, half expecting not to make it. It was a long glide and I arrived just below the top in smooth, constant lift. As the ridgeline rose, I contoured up with it, pushing up and east. I couldn't believe my luck – I had reached the Alps! My elated feelings were mixed with guilt. I felt like a privileged thief, stealing my progress from under the nose of a sleeping giant!

My mind started to race. Was this little ridge to be just a sneak preview of the Alps? Or could I actually make progress this late in the day? Every time I jumped a gap and reached a new ridge, my unease that I had no plan would dissolve as the next stepping-stone appeared. Every time

the next ridge was a different angle to the Mistral, the wind changed for me. I felt I had to be the luckiest man alive.

I cleared a high pass away from the Drôme with a few feet to spare and tracked south of Aspres and put Gap-Tallard into the GPS for a final glide. The final few miles up the Durance valley were fraught as the wind was very strong, and for a few moments the sink was frightening. The computer started to predict an arrival height underground but I soon caught sight of the field in the evening gloom and arrived with just enough height for a circuit. The airfield was deserted and, as I tied the glider down, the final evening shadow descended on the Pic de Bure to the north-east and it was dark. When I visited Gap before, I had been unable to find accommodation, and it felt like history repeating itself. I settled for the floor of the shower block and spent most of the lonely night listening for mosquitoes.

The Alps by day three: I would be back home within the week!

Next issue: Guy's travels continue...



Right: ridge-running on the Mistral to Gap-Tallard

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Another way to worry CFIs

Ray Hart from Tibenham offers a CFI's warts-and-all view of hosting a vintage rally. Don't worry, he was told, the crashes are at very low speed...

THE 28th International Vintage Glider Rally (or Vintage Glide 2000) was hosted by Norfolk GC last summer, and I must admit that – as CFI – I looked forward to the event with mixed emotions. Yes, the potential for a fantastic nine days was there, but the logistics of launching and landing so many different types of glider (and pilot) were daunting. “Don't worry,” quipped one of my instructors, “the crashes are at a very low speed!” I did dwell on the probability that some vintage glider pilots must spend inordinate amounts of time restoring their precious, rare ships. Did their hours in the workshop allow them enough time in the sky to be current?

Then there was the language problem. Pilots with little, or no, English could give cause for concern over communicating vital information. This impression was given some weight when Mr Honda turned up from Japan with a photographer, a pilot, an interpreter who would be a few days late and two gliders in need of insurance.

Another concern centred on the logistics of efficiently launching (and landing) up to 70 gliders, but two loaned Skylaunch winches (one with light cables) and a selection of tugs able to fly slowly enough made getting airborne possible. As did all the hard work of the launch crews. These people (many had taken a week's holiday to be involved) were in serious need of a proper holiday by the end of the nine days!

Well, despite my reservations the rally was going ahead and an armada of trailers, caravans, camper vans and tents quickly gave the airfield a carnival atmosphere. The first briefing started a steep learning curve, with everything translated first into German and then in to French, whilst multi-lingual members of the audience whispered translations to speakers of more obscure



Gliders of all shapes and sizes – and many different ages – converge on gliding clubs each year for Vintage rallies. But how does the club's CFI regard the proceedings? (both photographs by kind permission of Paul Jackson)

languages. Much hilarity was caused by German translations often containing magnificently long words and taking several complex paragraphs, while the French version contained two or three words and a Gallic shrug. Translating operational procedures and NOTAMS presented some challenges; briefings, it transpired, would be lengthy affairs.

When we – finally – got out of the first

‘I will always remember taking an aerotow in (or should I say on?) the Primary’

briefing there was no rush to fly. The proud owners had lined up their gliders, and there was much wandering from machine to machine, admiring and chatting. The aircraft were in dramatic contrast to most gatherings of gliders these days, with vibrant colour schemes and a staggering diversity of design, no doubt a legacy of many creative approaches to low-speed aerodynamics. I found that if I took the slightest interest in any machine the owner would offer to let me fly it. I didn't need asking twice and I'll always remember my flights in the beautiful Slingsby Petrel, the wildly aerobatic Lunak, the stately Condor and the rather-too-small Japanese Momonga.

For different reasons I will also remember taking an aerotow in (or should I say on?) and subsequently soaring the Primary; I was still shaking half an hour after landing!

As I had feared beforehand, there was some prangery, so the less positive side of being a CFI was brought into focus. There were a couple of accidents early in the week, one of them causing serious damage to a T-31 and minor injury to the P2. The rest of the week was accident free and in

retrospect I think that low currency on type was the initial problem. I felt hunted when, having slipped out to do some shopping in Norwich, the BGA flight safety supremo Pete Stratten rang me while I was in John Lewis, wanting to know what was going wrong in Norfolk.

In fact, everything else went very right indeed. We averaged 200 launches a day for eight out of the nine days, had the colourful spectacle of a sky filled with a history of soaring flight, and spent time with the nicest, friendliest bunch of glider pilots imaginable. Once the early hiccoughs were overcome the rally was a delight and the airmanship impeccable. On the few occasions that soaring conditions failed, the spectacle of dozens of brightly-coloured gliders accurately squeezing into the landing area was a sight to behold.

A vintage glider rally of this size naturally carries a huge amount of experience and enthusiasm to its venues and attracts significant interest from press, public and aviation enthusiasts. On the flying side, it requires a very efficient launch engine, a large airfield and an enthusiastic retrieve crew to get the gliders promptly and safely from landing to re-launch.

It requires, too, lots of work from an army of volunteers, clear, unambiguous briefings and an awareness of ‘cultural’ differences. The ‘too fast’ signal on a winch launch, for example, is not fully international and requests for aerotow speeds in knots, miles per hour and kilometres per hour produced some rapid calculations at the launchpoint. But probably the nicest cultural difference for the CFI was that the pilots were so civilised and polite that bollockings were never required.

Ray owns a Discus and is the current holder of the BGA's Frank Foster Trophy (lastest UK 500km)



The spectacle of dozens of brightly-coloured gliders squeezing into the landing area was a sight to behold

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Mid-air mystery

David Innes feels the time has come to reveal what happened in the dark, turbulent depths of a memorable cloud – as far as he can. Do you hold the key to completing the picture?

THE FORECAST for the final day of the 1972 World Championships at Vrsac, in Yugoslavia, was 5/8 to 6/8 cu and towering cu-nims with heavy rain and lightning. The Guernsey team, to which I belonged, lay fifth out of 52 and had high hopes of doing even better. But getting a good score would entail cloud flying – with its inherent risk of collision.

The problem was exacerbated by the Communist Commissar in charge. He stopped the task-setter allocating different routes for the two competition classes on the last day. Yugoslavia then abounded with areas of military sensitivity, so both the Open Class and the Standard Class were sent on the same small triangle: some 200km to the west and south.

Given 100 foreign pilots (or spies) flying over the country, who can blame the Commissar for protecting his back?

The weather was deteriorating and we were all anxious to start. The rules at the time required a pilot to enter cloud from below, having waited a prudent period for the pilot ahead to have climbed safely above. There were no standard altimeter-setting procedures nor mandatory radio calls before entering cloud. We were most certainly *not*, however, allowed to fly through the side of a cloud.

Several of us in turn climbed into the first cloud by the base. After what seemed an age of wondering if the pilot below was so much better and was catching up or, indeed, if the pilot above was not much

good and the safe gap between us was being reduced, we reached the turbulent part of the cloud. It was time to leave.

As I rolled out on a westerly heading towards the first turning point, sunshine flooded the cockpit. So far, so good: 7,000ft would give me a considerable glide down the first leg.

But a sense of horror gripped me as it became apparent that the sky was not mine alone. At least 12 other gliders were above, to either side, in front, and below me in uncomfortably close proximity – all hell-bent on penetrating the side of the next towering cloud.

What to do next urgently needed a decision, as the lift was only about two miles away (say, two minutes of



> thinking time) and we were all about to infringe the rules. Watching the others was the obvious thing to do. Was there a way around the cloud?

To the left and right were banks of towering cumulus, and we were not high enough to go over, so it had to be under. This would mean opening the airbrakes and diving for the base, sacrificing hard-earned height, and giving other competitors the advantage. And there was rain coming out of the base...

Musing on the ethics of the rule we were all about to breach and calculating the odds of a mid-air collision, the unpopularity to be earned for reporting my fellow competitors and the valuable points to be lost by going for the bottom I found the time passed quickly. It was, for a brief moment, a relief to find we were now in the second cloud and had to concentrate on our instruments to survive.

We were, however, all in the same cloud, and here the yellow streak in me took over. What was needed was a virgin cloud with no other glider in her. Press on through this cloud, out of the other side and – who knows? – we might be lucky. We were; but had to fly through two more before descending to cloudbase with a clear view 20 miles or so along track.

At first, no other glider in sight. A quick look at the map shows only six miles to the first turning point, but there are two gliders circling under cloud south of it. They disappear into the base, so they have rounded the turning point and started down the second leg. The way is clear for a turn 10° right, then around the point, and head south back to the cloud now in use by only two others. This takes eight minutes but light rain costs height and we arrive 1,000ft below base. The vario indicates a rate of climb of only 2kts and it will take a further five minutes to climb to cloudbase.

Good – the other two will be well away before my cloud flying starts again. The lift increases to 3kts, then becomes 4kts... We are climbing at 5kts, the base of the cloud is just above. A quick look round: no other gliders in sight, apart from one so far below I can't see if he is Standard or Open Class. He is too low to be a threat.

My glider is plucked by an invisible hand into the dark and turbulent cloud. Quick, back on to instruments – control must be maintained. The turn & slip says we're turning at rate one to the left and the ASI says 60kts. Rate one means an angle of bank of only about 20°, too wide a circle to keep in the core: better increase the bank and tighten the turn. Now the speed is rising above 70kts – ease back on the stick. Christ! Rate 2.5! Get a grip, David! That must have been too big a correction. Have a couple of years out of the RAF made my instrument flying this rusty?

It is regrettable that there has been no time to practise cloud flying in the LS1, which seems much more responsive than the heavy four-engined aircraft I'm used to.

After a while some semblance of control returns and there is sufficient brainpower to worry about other matters. What was it they said at briefing this morning about the icing level – was it 10,000 or 12,000ft? Flying on a limited panel in very turbulent cloud is hard enough, but if the pitot tube ices up flying without an ASI is harder. The finely-tuned ear of the glider pilot can judge speed to within about 10kts. Then the final nail in the coffin of my thoughts (if they can be described as such and not as plain terror) was the realisation that if my cloud now fulfilled its purpose and started to precipitate, the noise of rain or, worse, hail on the canopy would be deafening. The finely-tuned ear would be useless and an iced-up ASI could lead to a potentially catastrophic loss of control.

The Ralfe Chesters Air Data computer (the first of its kind) said we were in gliding distance of the second turning point. The greed for height was diminishing rapidly and it was again the yellow streak that predominated: it was quite clearly high time to bale out of this cloud and fly down the second leg to lower levels with less risk of icing up and less turbulence.

So it came to pass – but not quite as intended.

BANG! Followed by a deathly silence, perhaps in stark contrast to the noise of the

'There was a dull thud, the sound muffled by the cloud – my glider, striking the ground, perhaps?

collision. Next, a loss of elevator control and a whoosh as the Perspex canopy crazed into a thousand small pieces and was sucked out.

Yes it was time to bale out. The nose was dropping, the sound of rushing air increasing, the remaining controls were stiffening with the increasing speed. No need to waste valuable time jettisoning the canopy: only the frame remained. Remember to get the legs out from under the panel, push down hard on the cockpit sides, and jump.

No movement. The glider was bunting and trying to eject me, I was trying to eject me – but still no movement. The harness was hugging me tight to the seat. A quick twist of the release and it freed me into the cool damp air of the cloud. I never saw that lovely glider again.

In the cloud, there was no sense of falling or tumbling through space, just an increase in the sound of air rushing past. Right hand to left breast, grasp D ring and extend the arm fully to the right. "Hang on to the D ring, Sir," my old instructor had said, "it will save money when they repack the parachute." The well-taught drills were returning. An agonisingly long pause before the crack of the canopy opening. Looking up, I was reassured to see it fully deployed. The rigging lines were not twisted; there were no holes. All this is accompanied by a dim recollection of a cloud of dead moths



the white planes picture co.

David, who has 4,000hrs, flies Nimbus 4T 176 from Lasham airfield and is a director of insurance brokers Joint Aviation Services Ltd

and dust billowing out, but that could just be a trick of the memory.

Things were looking better – but then I recalled an article about a World Gliding Championships in Germany, when gliders had collided in an active cu-nim. Several pilots descended by parachute. Having been sucked up in powerful lift, they landed as blocks of ice. Killed by, presumably, anoxia or exposure.

To avoid this fate, I had to increase the rate of descent, spilling air from the canopy by pulling down on the rigging lines on one side. This also has the more important effect of propelling one sideways – in this case, I hoped, toward the side of the cloud and out of the up-currents. But it was like doing a one armed pull-up on the parallel bars: it can't be done for long. Putting the webbing strop under my chin helped for a while but the turbulence got worse; fearing for my neck and beginning to feel sick, I had to abandon the experiment. Raising my leg up over the strop it became possible to maintain the necessary downward pressure to tilt the canopy and continue, in an ungainly fashion, sideways. Mine was an Irving 24-foot emergency chute, which meant a relatively high rate of descent with limited manoeuvrability.

There was a dull thud, the sound muffled by the cloud: my glider striking the ground, perhaps? Or was it too soon for that?

Suddenly – sunshine and warmth and good visibility as I emerged from the side of the cloud. Disengaging my right leg from the strop I regained dignity; the canopy filled and stability returned. Relaxing a little as the adjacent cloudbase moved up past me, I wondered about taking parachuting up as a sport. This was a bit premature: I had yet to make my first successful landing.

The theory had been well taught by the RAF but I had no practical experience. What was it – pull down hard on the harness at the moment of impact? Keep the

elbows in and forward, feet firmly together, knees slightly bent but out to one side to facilitate a roll and distribute the loads evenly. As I looked down to check the position of my feet, an involuntary burst of hysterical laughter, boosted by adrenalin, shook my body. My shirt was open and flapping and a fat belly obscured the view. "Must lose weight," I resolved.

My laughter was interrupted by the fear of being impaled on a church spire, which was rushing up between my legs: more frantic pulling down on one side of the canopy to steer away from it. Slowly moving towards a brown ploughed field in an oxbow lake, I began to anticipate an easy, safe, soft landing, made safer by virtue of the sideways drift of the chute due to a slight breeze. Striking the ground with a sideways and slightly backward drift is probably the ideal way to land as it makes the roll easier to achieve.

The theoretical training had been good, with but one omission. The lifelong habit of kicking off drift just before landing is, for a glider pilot, almost impossible to resist. I extended my left leg to do so, there was a pistol-like crack, and I realised that my left ankle had shattered.

Lying on my back in a soft plough furrow and checking my body for other damage, I was pleased to note there was none. I was alive and well – if no longer kicking.

Yugoslavian peasants were clambering out of the hedgerows and running to my assistance. The first on the scene was a giant of a man with huge hairy hands bent on straightening the misshapen ankle with its protruding bone. My scream of "NO!" was taking too long to come out and he had to be dispatched with an ungrateful shove to his chin from the good leg. Next we tried a piggy-back on another peasant. This was going well, until it started to rain. The plough became too slippery and we fell in a soggy heap. A passing souvenir hunter offered an aileron, his part of my glider, as a stretcher, which would have left my ankle dangling painfully over the side. Shaking my head and "No" were getting through now. There was too much pain to think of asking for the return of my aileron.

Two gentle giants had the best idea by linking their hands to form a fireman's lift for me to sit on. We staggered across the field to the oxbow lake and a waiting punt and somehow managed to clamber in.

Sitting on top of my helpers in the flat-bottomed punt our centre of gravity felt precariously high. We got very nervous when a man (looking like Humphrey Bogart towing the African Queen through the reeds) came wading waist high toward us. Trailing his parachute behind him, he wanted to board us. The Coroner's report would read: "death by drowning". Three voices in two languages cried out: "No! No!" and the danger passed.

Bogart (Ake Petterson) had baled out of his borrowed glider (unnecessarily, as it later transpired) when its wing was hit by

the falling wreckage of mine. Floating down on his chute, he was terrified by the closeness of his now inverted glider circling round him. He landed before me. His glider, a Nimbus 2, flew around for some time before crashing upside down in a tree breaking its back. (The owner, Ralph Jones, MD of Southern Sailplanes and UK agent for Schempp-Hirth, was subsequently able to repair and fly it the following year to become British National Champion.)

We arrived safely on the other side of the water and they carried me to a nearby doctor's surgery. The lady doctor would not admit such a muddy, bloody, foreigner so they deposited me in her car where she administered a glass of cold water. Later, the first capitalist ambulance driver in all Yugoslavia arrived to take me to hospital. The well-known international sign of the empty pocket helped persuade him to move off, grumbling, toward Belgrade.

The most expensive hospital there is next to President Tito's old palace at the top of a hill, overlooking the beautiful city. The British Air Attaché, said later that only the most important people were treated here, football stars, politicians, foreign dignitaries and the young. My place was with 15 young boys suffering from rickets. But admittance was nearly refused, as my passport and wallet were in the wreckage

'It was a disappointment when my chute was returned marked: this parachute is 15 years past its never-use-again date...'

and there was no way of identifying me. Eventually, I was operated on. My surgeon in Guernsey said later: "They did a fine job – just hope the two screws don't rust".

The Air Attaché sought to cheer me up by saying on his daily visits: "They've added another three noughts to the bill," and, on the last day: "What you owe stretches right across the page".

"But I've no money," I moaned.

"Don't worry – the UK has a reciprocal medical agreement with Yugoslavia: we treat their tourists' brain tumours and cancer, they treat our sunburn and broken legs," he said, tapping the side of his nose.

"But I'm representing Guernsey, not the UK!" I pointed out.

His knowing wink silenced me. "They all think Guernsey is part of Britain," he said. We never did settle the bill.

The Board of Enquiry was convened at my bedside and with diagrams, sign language and an inadequate interpreter began to piece together the circumstances of the accident. I was suffering from temporary amnesia but helped as best I could. Six months later I read its report. It bore no resemblance to any incident involving me.

The mid-air collision had occurred on the last day of the Championships. All the gliders landed out and were placed in their trailers. Some went straight home. There is,

therefore, no way of knowing with absolute certainty the identity of the pilot whose glider struck me from behind. However, my research and sifting of the anecdotal evidence suggests one person.

As I see it, you found yourself high at the first turning point and took a short cut through my cloud. The underside of your fuselage collided with my tailplane, breaking it off; the shock wave ran along my fuselage and shattered my canopy. I was awarded distance points to the place of impact and came 13th overall out of 50 remaining pilots (two died in the contest). You flew on to a safe landing area.

You did the right thing by not owning up. Who knows how long you would have been detained by the Communist regime of that time? You did no more than we had all been doing that day: you flew through the side of a cloud, and we were unlucky. I bear you absolutely no grudge and would dearly like to hear your version of the incident. You gave the game away by the evident relief expressed in the hug you gave my wife when she was able to tell you that I was alive.

Please contact me – anonymously if you prefer – on joint.aviation@virgin.net

The Irving chute, which saved my life, had twigs and mud painstakingly removed before being returned to the works (with its D ring) for re-packing. It was a disappointment to have it returned marked: "This parachute is 15 years past its never-use-again date"! In consolation they sent a small lapel badge, a gold caterpillar (silk worm) with a ruby red eye: I had joined the famous Caterpillar Club. My membership number was thirty three thousand and something. I wear it proudly on my silk cummerbund, a fitting home for an insect that saved the lives of so many.

Lessons learned

Treat your chute with more respect than you treat yourself or your glider and check it is not time-expired. It's there to save your life

Resist the irresistible: don't try to kick off the drift as you land with your chute. Keep your feet together and let the drift help you roll

Never fly in cloud with other gliders unless you have good radio contact with them

Take out good medical and travel insurance before you go to an international competition

Insure your craft to its full replacement value

Finally, remember the chute is not insured for use, only for fire and theft...

GLIDING GALLERY

Right: walking the glider back up the runway in Jamaica. The club is on a strip of land about two miles wide, sandwiched between the coast and a mountain range: "nearly every square inch of which is covered with tropical forest," says Peter Russell



Left: Sylvia Bateman, here photographed by Matt Crane at Four Counties GC, Syerston, was last heard of avoiding the British climate as a Chief Flying Instructor in Jamaica

Above: Sylvia with ground crew at Blenheim



Above: Local soaring from the Blenheim Gliding Club of Jamaica offers views of spectacular scenery, as Peter Russell's photograph illustrates. Peter, from Oxford GC, took this picture of the coastline near the club, while flying with Sylvia last year

Travelling hopefully (if we can)

Even in more normal times, glider pilots love to journey in the UK or across the world. And the rest of us can dream...



Above right: John Tanner, seen dropping the tow rope, managed to fly a tug in last year's overseas Nationals, as well as to compete in it. Several UK competition pilots were this spring pinning their hopes on decent weather for the contest in Spain (photo: Carl Peters)

Right: Luke Roberts photographed Mt Cook from a Hornet on a trip to New Zealand. He has captioned the picture: "the smoking mountain". We know what you're saying, Luke



Below right: Platypus took this picture from the back seat of Janus C "Zulu-Niner" when flying with Tim Hirst. To the west we can see the totally unlandable terrain of the Sierras north of Yosemite National Park



There was no pot of gold, says Rod Salmon of Burn GC



With a little prayer

In the concluding article from Chris Curtis about his tricky cross-country, a landout is imminent...



I HAD SPOTTED what I thought was the only landing area available to me. My panic began to subside as I "locked on" to the field and began to convince myself that it was suitable. It was grassed, short, narrow, oriented across the wind, and there were trees on the approach boundary. However, it sloped uphill quite sharply for the first half and I felt my chances were good. I would approach fairly high with full landing flap selected and deploy the tail parachute once established on the approach. I began my "downwind" run, lowered the undercarriage, checked that I had zero cruise flap and that all in the cockpit was secure, including my straps.

A nagging doubt about the suitability of the field persisted, one that had me looking continuously at the field and very little else, one I had not known before. I was somehow uncomfortable. I had picked this field from necessity and not choice. I said a little prayer, "Oh God. Please let me off this time and I'll never leave it this late again."

Landing flap was lowered on the crosswind leg. I rolled out of the final turn and was lined up beautifully. I allowed myself to glide to the highest approach angle I dared to accept, waggled the rudder pedals whilst pulling on the parachute deploy toggle, and felt the familiar deceleration as the drogue bit into the air. The nose was lowered to maintain 55kts and I selected half airbrake. My reference point remained rock steady. Perfect! All my doubts began to dissolve. I was convinced that all would be well. The difficult part was over.

It is a constant source of amazement to me how life manages to produce the most unexpected surprises at the most inopportune moments. Just as I was clearing the trees I felt a nudge in my back and the glider accelerated rapidly towards the field. I knew instantly what had happened – the drogue chute had gone – and knew at the same moment that, even with full airbrake (the handle of which I was attempting to bend), I could not raise the nose to kill the speed for fear of demolishing the hedge at the far end of the field. There was only one thing I could do.

The ground came rushing up at me, and there followed a short series of over-corrected roundouts. I distinctly remember the alarming sensation of speed over the ground and thinking to myself in those last few seconds: "I am now having an accident." I finally took courage and forcibly planted the wheel, at high speed, into the ground, still heaving mightily on the wheel brake, and keeping the tail high

with forward stick. I was rolling – or should I say careering – up the hill, without much sense of control over my progress. I became aware of a fence converging ever so slightly from the left. Almost automatically I fed on a bit of right rudder, I suppose in an attempt to gently taxi away. The nose began to swing in a leisurely fashion to the right. A full boot of left rudder did absolutely nothing. Now I was travelling sideways. Once again I was just a curious passenger. "Doesn't it look strange?" I thought. "Will I hit the other end?" My left leg was still poking forward but I might just as well have sat back and relaxed for all the good it was doing.

Paradoxically, I felt no fear for myself but a rather detached, inquisitive feeling about something of utter importance. I desperately wanted my glider to remain intact.

The port wing, in contact with the ground, was flexing and reverberating in a cacophony of indignation at its mismanagement. I did not dare to think what the tail was doing! We came to rest in silence, facing backwards. I had just performed the classic ground-loop.

I sat still for a moment, in almost bemused disbelief at my transgression. It was unusual to see the approach over the trees from my cockpit. Then I craned my neck around to see if the tail was still visible. It was, and in the right place too. I opened the canopy, placing it to one side, and extricated myself from what had been my world for two hours.

A very strong country smell assaulted my nostrils as I kneeled to first relieve myself and then check the undercarriage. There was not a lot I could see. Structurally, at least at first sight, the wheel and associated ironmongery did not appear to be distorted, but closer examination was impossible. My sideways progress along the field had been well lubricated by a multitude of freshly laid cow-pats. The stuff was everywhere!

After telephoning base and carrying out a minutely detailed inspection of the glider, the following few hours were spent waiting for my retrieve crew to arrive. I was able to recover the "self-jettisoning" drogue chute from the base of the trees at the downwind boundary and had plenty of time for reflection. The moral is to avoid situations which require the use of the drag chute. It should only be used in emergencies.

Derek Piggot's excellent *Understanding Gliding* has a section on landing-run directional stability. It lists the prerequisites for ground-looping your glider: main wheel well forward of centre of gravity; light crosswind; keeping the tail off the ground during the landing run; heavy braking; attempting to taxi during landing run. I had satisfied them all! But why?

Answer: LATE FIELD SELECTION!

Two anonymous stories from previous years show why you should always bear in mind the possibility of landing out

ONE THING'S for sure, when the grid's completely empty it's a good day – in fact, it's booming. Empty, that is, apart from me, back down for the third time. The instructor had encouraging words: "What the **** are you doing down here? Even the cable retrieve vehicle is thermalling away: get up and get going!"

I had about 14 solo flights, a couple of them over an hour, and was flying the K-13. If everybody else can get away, so can I. Let's settle down and remember what you have been taught: study the sky before take off; look for circling gliders; watch the local clouds... There's a nice cloud – come what may, this time I'm away.

I'm sure every experienced pilot reading this is thinking: "Here we go..." (perhaps you've been there) and, if you're less experienced, this is just how to get yourself into the thick brown stuff.

Checks done – launch – my heart beating nineteen-to-the-dozen, and one eye fixed on my personal elevator just over there – well, actually, just a bit further over there than I thought. That wouldn't be because it's downwind, would it? Rubbish, there's hardly any wind. Besides, my brain is in go-get-em mode.

What I want now is a nice smooth circle under the cloud, watch the speed, check the angle of bank, and... nothing. *Nothing?*

Bar steward, best I start looking for something closer to home PDQ, which reminds me: where *is* home, anyway? I'll tell you where home is – a long, long way away. If you haven't felt the icy fist clutch your heart, you're lucky. A field landing. *****! All I could see was a great big wood.

Fear is a strange thing. I can remember thinking: those are oak trees, *Quercus Robor* – which was, in the circumstances, very helpful.

If I *am* going to crash into trees, make it as close to home as possible. Shaking, I set off to the strip, repeating to myself: "don't pull back". You notice that the lower you get the faster you seem to be going and the stronger the urge to pull back on the stick. The best distance I can make is to hold 45kts and pray for a little lift.

And lo and behold! that beautiful little vario has crept up almost to zero. Well, here goes, straight through the top five feet of the last row of Silver Birch (*Betula Pendula*) – didn't feel a thing – road, fence, down, breathe.

If that's the last time I do that I'm not going to miss it a bit.

As the brain recovered from massive overload I quickly span the glider 180° to face the wood. The driver of the towback vehicle, an experienced pilot, said: "You really must be more careful, you know: give yourself more room."

Can't find my way home

THE WEATHER had been good for several weeks but for various reasons I had been unable to go gliding. Today was another lovely day but it also happened to be my wife's 50th birthday and we were due to have a family gathering. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when she told me to get myself off to the club, with strict instructions not to be late back.

I launched and, after struggling over the winch at about 800ft for several minutes, got away. It was a beautiful day, but with some haze and a poorly-defined horizon. I wanted my Silver duration but because of the need to return early, that was out of the question, so I intended just to enjoy the view and have some spinning practice before landing if I had enough height.

As I drifted in the thermal I saw that the airfield was now some distance away, and that I ought to head back soon. I also noticed that it was directly in line with the sun – a fact upon which I would later rely.

In one particularly good thermal, I revelled in the joy of flight after such a long absence, my mind wandering to the celebration to come that evening.

Suddenly, I was jerked back to reality – where was the airfield? I could not believe that I had made such an elementary mistake.

Pointing the glider towards the sun, I set off at minimum sink speed, scanning the countryside – a task made more difficult because of the sun and the haze.

Soon I could see the river Humber, a major landmark. However, I was now getting low. The altimeter said 1,800ft but it looked more like 1,400ft because of the rising ground.

I selected a field, slightly worried about my impending first-ever field landing, but even more worried about being lost with the resulting delayed retrieve and late arrival at the party, a fact which would make me very *persona non grata* indeed.

Due to the stress, my flying deteriorated, which of course made matters worse, until I told myself to forget everything and just



If unsure of your position, look for large, distinctive landmarks, such as rivers. This anonymous writer relied on the Humber/Trent junction; Mike Fox (who isn't the author) took this shot of the nearby Ouse from Drax power station

concentrate on flying as well as I knew how. The advice worked and I got back to 4,000ft, ironically remembering my planned spinning exercise, which would not now take place.

The junction of the River Trent with the

'When I reviewed the flight, I realised that at altitude there had been more of a westerly wind than was evident on the ground'

Humber appeared out of the haze. I knew the bearing from there to the airfield and tried calculating my position using map and compass, but unfortunately the maths was beyond me.

But then – Eureka! I saw the scar of the pipeline which BP had just laid from Teeside to Hull and which crosses our airfield. But should I turn left to follow it, or right?

When I launched the wind was southerly with just a hint of west in it, so I had to be east of the airfield. I turned right and at last found a positive landmark – the village of Market Weighton. It was then a straightforward flight to the airfield, with a feeling of considerable relief.

When I reviewed the flight that evening I realised that at altitude there had been more of a westerly wind than was evident on the ground, and that I had drifted quite a long way east, and not mainly north, as I had believed.

As it happens, I was never a very long way from the airfield, but that was no comfort to me when I was lost.

And the moral? Don't get lost in the first place. But if you do, use every scrap of lift, and look for the big features first – in my case, the sun, then the rivers. With luck the smaller features will then drop into place.

By the way, the party was excellent. I never told my wife about being lost. She already thinks gliding is dangerous!

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www.gliding.co.uk

and your club's notice-board.

The BGA website has a list of links to club websites as well as club status reports indicating which are open

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Club news

Anglia (Wattisham)

ALTHOUGH absent from these pages recently, Anglia has been far from dormant. We are now settled into our new hangar, it's C of A season again, and we have had the loan of an LS-6 from Chilterns GC while some of our aircraft have been off line. A privately-owned K-8 has joined us. A new club record on the winch has just been set at 2,850ft – not bad for £3! Many club members gained R/T licences after a weekend course on site. Astir R18 has just returned from a tailwheel conversion programme. Over Easter the club held an SLMG course organised by Mike Lawton; after only two days, one student converted on type and another had flown solo. Thanks go to Frank Mckeegan for his excellent work on the clubhouse roof and to Bod Blanchard for keeping our ageing MT fleet serviceable and being a motivating force during C of As. Belated congratulations to: Mark Roberts (solo); Julian Schneidawind (Silver) and to Bob Luff, Rob Eley, Gino Sabatino and Philip Woods (re-soloing after long breaks from the sport).

Richard Misselbrook

Aquila (Hinton in the Hedges)

DESPITE the impact of foot-and-mouth on gliding nationally, Aquila has continued to operate normally for training, trial lessons and local soaring. Our four scheduled gliding courses will run on July 2-6, 16-20, August 6-10 and 20-24. We welcome all visitors, whether newcomers or experienced pilots, and will run group flying evenings throughout the summer. Additionally, an innovative six-month membership scheme designed for those new to gliding is available! Contact Andy Preston on 01296 720415 or our website at www.aquilagliding.co.uk for details. With a K-21 for dual cross-country training and an ASW 19 for solo tasks, we eagerly anticipate the resumption of cross-country flying soon.

Hugh Gascoyne

Bath, Wilts & North Dorset (The Park)

AT THE time of writing, after a very poor winter, we have now been denied the use of our field because of the foot-and-mouth epidemic. Access is allowed only to the maintenance team to work on our gliders in the hangar and to maintain the grass. The effect on our finances is likely to be severe. We can only hope that by the time this is published we will be back home again. For the first few weekends of our exile Heron GC at Yeovilton allowed our *ab initio*s and instructors to fly their Puchacz, together with members from Halesland and North Hill, for which we are most grateful. More recently, Bannerdown GC has very kindly accommodated us at Keevil; so the Bath GC has returned to its original home. We now look forward to our AGM – this year, unusually, it will be held in Kingston Deverill village hall. See also Club Focus, p54.

Joy Lynch

Shenington Gliding Club

www.gliding-club.co.uk

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Bidford Gliding Centre (Bidford)

ALTHOUGH the winter has brought much rain, we have just managed to keep flying in the drier moments, either by using our very muddy field or Long Marston's concrete strip (thanks, Long Marston). We look forward to this year's hot and dry summer those weather people keep promising us. The new year inaugurated a new club structure, and we are all hoping this will bring us a prosperous season with plenty of achievements – notwithstanding foot-and-mouth. One other point, some of our members got so fed up with the rain last winter that they are in the process of building a new toy for next winter – a hovercraft. We hope to keep the adrenalin going and dry off the field at the same time.
Lynne Taylor

Black Mountains (Talgarth)

AT LAST, after almost two months of being grounded due to foot-and-mouth, Talgarth is back in business with a newly C of A'd tug and full-time tug pilot for the summer. Easter was the best for years with ridge and thermal and we even saw the sturdy old T-21 winding up to a 5,000ft cloudbase in real eight-knotters! Work has just started on the new hangar. Although cross-country flights are banned at the moment, we have miles of fantastic ridges where you are still local soaring so we are open for frustrated pilots – please check our website for access to the site. The local farmers are very supportive to us and we *must* respect the difficult times they are having. If you do not have internet access, *please* phone the club before setting out and we will give you details of how to get here while avoiding local farms. Don't despair – we are doing well and operating at full power (and all the local pubs and restaurants would love to see you).

Robbie Robertson

Booker (Wycombe Air Park)

AS AT THE time of writing we are obviously still unable to fly cross-country and very unlikely to be able to stage the 15-Metre Nationals in June, we are investigating other possibilities. The first we are considering is to hold this competition at the end of the season, subject to the situation becoming more relaxed. As well as planning to take some gliders abroad, we are concentrating our efforts on trial lessons and other training, in order to make the best of a bad situation. As we are located just off a main road close to a John Lewis superstore we don't suffer from some of the problems of those situated deep in the country. We are also recruiting a new selection of cadets. The cadet scheme is one of our best initiatives in recent years (previous cadets are already training as airline pilots).

Roger Neal

Borders (Milfield)

WE HAD a good turnout for March's AGM, with awards for Bill Stephen (best gain of height of 22,500ft and Diamond height), Andy Henderson (Boomerang trophy for a 211km cross-country in wave), and Alex Latty (President's cup for services to the club: our website). Leon Adamson did his SLMG with help from Colin Sword, and Ernie Mills completed Bronze. We are looking forward to trying the Scottish ASH 25. Roger Partington is taking a sabbatical in Spain, tugging/instructing. We wish him luck. Our website continues to expand. We now offer an actual weather service, as well as the webcam. We are still flying despite foot-and-mouth, but soaring is limited to a three-mile radius of the site to stop landouts.

Bob Cassidy



From left: Harry Candow, Frank Thompson and Sam Rufus of Burn GC have 240 years between them. For what the club is doing to attract members at the other end of the age scale, see p12 (Rod Salmon)

Bowland Forest (Chipping)

UNFORTUNATELY, it was decided to close our club because of foot-and-mouth disease in Lancashire. We have been very fortunate to be welcomed at other clubs in the nearby area. In particular we would very much like to thank Lakes, Denbigh and Clevelands for offering us their facilities. It is to be hoped that we have better news to report in the next issue.

Eileen Littler

Bristol & Gloucestershire (Nympsfield)

THE start of the foot-and-mouth crisis was used for clubhouse renovations – Trevor Stuart and Dominic Conway organising working parties. A new patio is planned outside the clubhouse. Cups were presented at the dinner-dance to Doug Jones, for services to the club (50 years of tugging); Jon Meyer, for a 473km flight; Steve Parker, for a 515km flight; Mike Strathern, Club Ladder Trophy; Tim Macfadyen, Weekend Ladder Trophy; Rob Thompson, for Gold height in the Club ASW 19; Tim Macfadyen and Phil Dunster, Guinness Trophy for 358km O/R to St Catherine's lighthouse on the Isle of Wight in our DG-505; Dave Barker, Jim Webster Instructors' Plate, on his retirement from instructing; and John French, for 100km Silver distance in a K-8. We were sorry to hear Ron Sandford had given up gliding. For some 30 years he was a stalwart at Nympsfield, as instructor, CFI and tuggie, and he did all three Diamonds here. The club remains open for local soaring.

Bernard Smyth

Buckminster (Saltby)

DUE TO foot-and-mouth, the club closed for a month. As I write this we are open and flying – see www.buckminstergc.co.uk/ or phone us on 01476 860385 for the latest details if you intend visiting. May 31 to June 3 sees us host the Glider Aerobatic Nationals, which are earlier this year in the build-up to the Worlds in Spain during June. The Nationals' usual September weekend (8 and 9) will see the Salby Open.

Paul Rodwell

Burn (Burn)

WHAT have the Saturday flyers done to deserve the recent row of bad days we have had in Yorkshire? Sunday flyers have all the luck! We are open for flying but, with sheep in a field on our boundary, we have our fingers crossed. Our programme for the coming season is being well booked and the number of new members is very encouraging. Congratulations to John Parr and Alan Hopkinson on their five-hour flights on Good Friday. We are organising a PR day in April to demonstrate the value that a gliding club can

give to its locality and to encourage more of the local community to use our facilities.

John Stirk

Cairngorm (Feshiebridge)

WE HAVE kept flying through the winter and spring and enjoyed some fabulous mountain soaring. The cross-country ban has served only to improve our local soaring abilities and with some imagination we have composed interesting local triangles (Feshie, Aviemore, Newtonmore, Feshie being the favourite) all flown at 5000-plus feet. Dates for your diary include club flying week, May 19-25, task week, May 26-June 2, and this year's autumn wave festival, Sept 29-Oct 20, which promises to be the best ever, especially now with our powerful Robin tug giving even better launches. Check out www.gliding.org or phone Ruth on 01667 493459 or the club on 01540 651317. We look forward to seeing you all this season at Feshie.

Chris Fiorentini

Cambridge (Gransden Lodge)

OUR CHAIRMAN, Max Bacon, and CFI, Johnnie Morris, stepped down at our March AGM. Our thanks to them both for their hard work over the last three years in what must be the largest club run still almost entirely run on voluntary effort. John Rogers, who has been responsible for many of our recent initiatives in fleet utilisation, has taken over as chairman and Peter Whitmore is the new CFI. We are hoping to place our second club-owned Discus in Spain while restrictions on cross-country flying remain in place, but at least the club is still able to operate. Our new social occasion was a winter party held at the Town House in Barley, Hertfordshire. A great evening of eating, drinking, music and dancing almost entirely organised by Clare Colton. A success that we shall definitely repeat.

John Birch

Clevelands (Dishforth)

ON APRIL 1, Mark Desmond stood down as our CFI after two years of what must have been the most difficult period in the club's history. Mark is leaving the RAF and this summer will be the course instructor at Sherington, but assures us that he will fly with us at weekends. We thank Mark for all his hard work, and wish him every success. Kevin Kiely will take over the helm (for the second time). Of the five flying days since Kevin took over, we have had three wave days, and one thermal day, but he feels this would be impolite to mention.

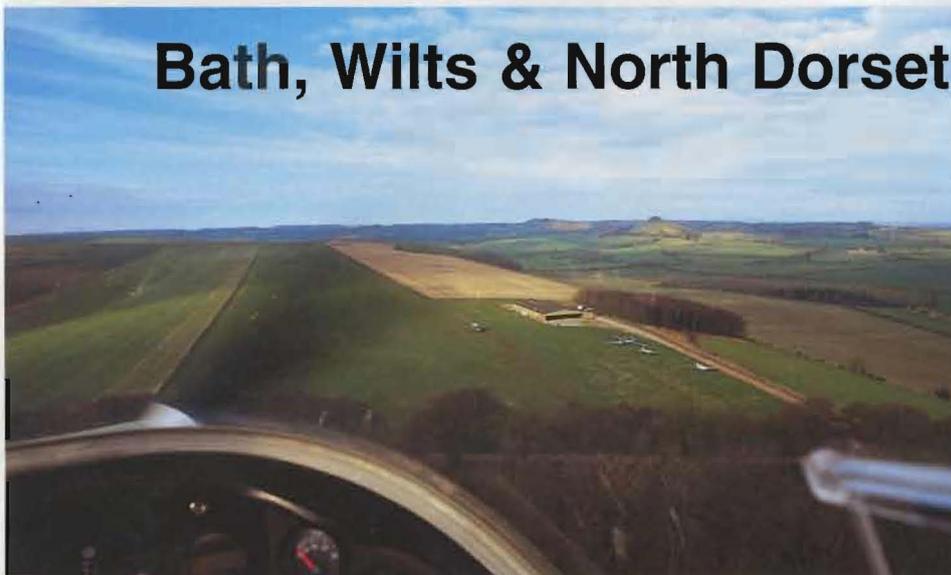
Polly Whitehead

Cotswold (Aston Down)

WE ARE still able to fly locally, despite the foot-and-mouth affecting parts of Gloucestershire, so trial lessons and summer courses continue. Visitors are welcome, but please telephone the office before bringing a glider to the site. Work to extend the bar is progressing well; we still hope to test this to the full during the Junior Nationals in August (plague permitting). Thanks to Nympsfield for allowing several members to attend winter Bronze lectures. The spring lecture programme was popular, with a full house hearing about Aston Down and the ATA during the war years. The connection between the site and the MOD will soon be finally broken

Please send your entries to helen@sandg.dircon.co.uk or Helen Evans, 6 Salop Close, Shrivvenham, Swindon SN6 8EN, to arrive by **June 12** for the August-Sept issue (August 14 for October-November). Photographs – slides or prints from film – are welcome

Bath, Wilts & North Dorset



The white planes picture co.

WE ARE a lively club of about 125 members, ranging in age from 14 to 80 years. The youngest is one of our bursary members and among the oldest is an ex-airline pilot who flew in the Berlin airlift. When we first moved to The Park we were joined by enthusiasts from the Dorset club, which was moving, and a few years later came people from Thruxton.

Bath GC started flying in 1963 at Keevil, an MoD airfield near Trowbridge. We started with a T-31 bought from Nympsfield and an elderly Grunau Baby. Together they cost £650. Which left us exactly £650 in debt. Although the club flourished at Keevil, we were always looking for a place of our own and in 1990 we found what we were looking for: a 125-yard wide strip of land, about 1,400 yards long, running east-west, five miles south of Warminster. After two years of negotiations, and a successful planning application which needed much PR work, we finally acquired our field, and on August 8, 1992, our elderly Auster and a Tiger Moth towed all the club fleet to their new home, with the rest of the club's belongings following by road.

At a glance

Launch type and cost:

Winch, £5.25

Aerotow, £17.50 to 2,000ft

Club fleet:

Bocian x3; K-6 x2; Astir, Motor Falke

Private gliders: 30

Instructors: 22

Types of lift: ridge, thermal, sometimes wave

Operating days:

Weekends, Wednesdays
occasional weeks in summer

Contact:

Clubhouse: 01985 844095

Secretary: 01963 251451

bathwilts@aol.com

www.bwnd.co.uk

Our friendly farmer not wishing to sell the land, we settled for a 25-year lease, which enabled us to spend all our savings on a magnificent hangar. This easily houses the club fleet and has space for MT workshops and glider maintenance. Built into the hangar at one end is the clubhouse, with kitchen, showers and briefing room on the ground floor, and a bar, with superb views of the Wiltshire Downs, on the upper floor.

Within a year or two we sold the Auster and acquired a rebuilt Pawnee. A few years later, with the aid of a grant from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, we exchanged our ancient wild winch for a new Skylaunch, which gives us excellent launches.

We are on a chalk hill about 700ft above sea level. The downs are an excellent thermal source, and since being there several 500s and a multitude of 300s have been flown. The most accessible ridge is a short south-west one a mile north of the field, although the best ridge is still the one at Westbury which can produce a run of up to 20 miles. We have also found wave, the record standing at 14,000ft above the field.

We have a wonderful team doing the essential jobs of a gliding club. The field is maintained to nearly bowling green standard; the club fleet, overseen by a small band of enthusiasts, is probably the most immaculate collection of wooden gliders in the country; and our catering arrangements make us worth visiting just for the bacon sandwiches.

All gliding clubs depend on a co-operative effort; we think that in the eight years that we have been at The Park we have evolved into an efficient and happy club, and we take great pride in being known to our visitors as a friendly, welcoming group of people.

Joy Lynch

See also page 52.

Below: Bocian on finals



The white planes picture co.

> with the imminent closure of the adjacent storage facilities. Recent arrivals on site include two Stemme S10s, a Ventus 2c and an LS6, and other gliders have been refurbished. All we need is good weather and an end to the pestilence!

Frank Birlison

Cranwell (RAF Cranwell)

OUR March AGM highlighted the significant operating effects caused by many weekends of bad weather since late autumn and the current precautionary closure of our airfield due to the foot-and-mouth crisis. On the other hand, all C of A and maintenance tasks had been tackled. Since then, the determined efforts of Al Hawes (chairman), Pete Kingwell (OIC), Mark Evans (CFI) and Al Docherty (DCFI) to gain the use of the airfield at Barkston Heath and arrange the movement of a large proportion of kit, have allowed us local flying. As a result, prospects for the remainder of the year are bright. Annual awards went to Ian Mountain, Richard Browne, Sue Wood, Angus Watson, Dave Gilder/Angus Farrelly (joint), Charles Skiera, Mick Lee (two), Al Docherty, Mike Derwent (two) and Richard Walker. Thanks and bouquets went to tireless soup dragons Sue Wood, Theresa Browne, Kiera Evans, Fid Cox and Team Gregory (Richard and Vanessa).

Paul Skiera

Deeside (Aboyne)

APRIL 1 provided excellent wave with heights to 21,500ft for visitor Frank Townsend and 19,000ft for two club members. Mid-April also produced wave to 15,000ft. Congratulations to Elaine Glennie, Andrew Eddie and Norman Cowper on soloing. Elaine was a member/hard-working committee member of Aberdeen University GC. Andrew was given his final check flight and sent solo by his father, Al Eddie (a former CFI). Al also flew the tow plane for his son. Norman attributed his solo to intensive flying on a week's course with resident instructor, Roy Dalling.

Sue Heard

Denbigh (Denbigh)

AT THE time of writing we are unaffected by the current crisis apart from remaining within gliding distance of our site. Many refugee pilots from less fortunate clubs have joined our regular spring visitors; some have left gliders at Denbigh. Barry and Mo Meeks' task week, May 5-12, will be restricted to local tasks. We hope some sort of normality will have been restored for Barry's autumn wave camp (September 22-October 20). It was wonderful to see our K-7 HAG take to the skies again and we are in great debt to Robin Filer and others for the time and effort spent repairing it and maintaining the rest of our fleet. Safety Officer Peter Manchett is to take centre stage again with lectures specific to our site.

Martin Jones

Derby & Lincs (Camphill)

CAMPHILL is open seven days a week, looking forward to a busy summer with Peter Lowe as instructor and Lance Swanack as winch driver. Visitors always welcome. There's also food every day and a warm welcome from new steward and stewardess David Manson and Louise Walmsley. Louise had her first flight in a glider soon after her arrival and loved it! Congratulations to Chris Worrall and Alex Green for their first solos. The lapwings are back nesting on the field with eggs already laid, which is a challenge for landing, retrieving and the new launch vehicle.

Diane Reid

Club news

Devon & Somerset (North Hill)

FOR THE last couple of Club News reports I have been feeling a little like Eeyore... and then there was foot-and-mouth. With sheep grazing the airfield and in the interest of maintaining good relationships with the farming community the committee decided to close the club for the time being. We have had much local goodwill; the members have managed to arrange for a limited amount of flying to continue thanks to the help of Dunkeswell airfield, Heron GC at Yeovilton, Perranporth and other West Country clubs. By the time you read this we hope to have a clear idea of the way back to normality. In the meantime, as Dunkeswell is only one mile from our club, I am taking bets on who will be the first person to land (out) at North Hill. A little like boarding the Marie Celeste, I suspect.

Phil Morrison

Dukeries (Gamston)

OUR USUAL early start to the thermal season kicked off at the end of February. We have had some cold days with very good soaring and huge cross-country potential during March. With the foot-and-mouth cross-country ban we expect loads more excellent days – such is gliding. Ron Vickers gained two Bronze legs and John Talbot his first one. A small expedition of three pilots flew 40hrs during a week at Portmoak in April. We have been recruiting young pilots and now boast six at 16 years and under – a welcome number in our small club.

Mike Terry

Essex (North Weald/Ridgewell)

Well done to Peter Burling on obtaining his Basic Instructor rating – a much-needed addition. There is no doubt he will be busy this season. Dave Hertzberg has taken over from Ian Barnes as DCFI whilst retaining his Safety Officer hat. Ian is now the club Technical Officer. The annual dinner at The Squadron, North Weald, was a great success due to Sue Martin's hard work. Our thanks to the Squadron in letting us use their mess. Thanks are also due to internet weather forecaster WeatherJack Harrison who gave us a very interesting and informative talk. We have been lucky, despite current problems, to be able to keep flying at North Weald when the weather gods allow. Brian Murphy, Chairman, and Ian Barnes are building a new mobile launchpoint log-keeper's shelter for Ridgewell and we plan to convert our old ex-ATC winch into a mobile workshop for the site.

Peter Perry

Essex & Suffolk (Wormingford)

FLYING weather still doesn't seem to have arrived in our part of East Anglia: in fact Easter was positively arctic (Easter Monday saw 20kt northerlies with a day max temp of 11°C). Very chilly. Still, it does mean that we are all getting our annual check flights in without the pressure of decent weather. At our recent AGM some changes were made to our committee, the most notable of which was that Paul Rice, our CFI for the last seven years, has resigned (I won't bore you with the others). Paul intends to carry on with his C of A and repair work and hopes to get more flying in. Mike Benson takes over as CFI, which, with his duties as a new dad, should keep him occupied. Simon Hindley went solo.

Steve Jones

Herefordshire (Shobdon)

THE SEASON started slowly as our tug endured one of those extended C of As which result in

Colin Wright



Bad weather stopped Andrew Eddie, of Deeside, soloing on his 16th birthday. So he went snowboarding and broke his arm. His dad, Al, towed on the delayed flight

tea drinking and general pottering. We should have guessed that following the installation of a new donkey, the dreaded tinworm would attack our Rallye aft of the firewall. Thanks to all local clubs that helped us by loaning tugs. Sadly, circumstances mean we can now return the compliment by sharing our airfield, and any refugees from the hills will of course be most welcome. Recent occasions of note include Mike Dodd's calmly announcing a reading of 10kts on the averager whilst sitting in easterly wave during February. Having heard of homesick angels we simply put it down to those sandals again! One of the new FIS trainees in the tower, as ever eager to assist, was heard on the radio asking the recently-returned Blanik if it required refuelling. A witty reply was suppressed for fear of where the nozzle might end up!

Mike Hayes

Highland and Fulmar (Easterton)

WELL done to Roy Scouthern, who resolved in January after 17 years, and has since redone his Bronze. Stuart Naylor and Mark Brown (both Fulmar) have completed their five hours. March and April have produced excellent soaring in thermal and wave. With thermals to 6,000ft we have had some of the best days for many years – if only we could be going cross-country. We hope it continues for our flying week on April 21-29. We are very disappointed that the BGA soaring course has been cancelled that week due to foot-and-mouth and we look forward to hosting one in the future. Angie Veitch is running an

Peter Perry



New BI Peter Burling with his first trial lesson, at Essex

ab initio course in June. A new rota for tug and duty pilots is increasing efficiency. Several new Fulmar members attended an *ab initio* course at Bicester. Well done to Simon Guillou and Steven Thompson, who went solo. At our AGM and dinner prizes went to Angie Veitch, Anne Burgess, David Chalmers, Roger Christie, Andy Anderson and Phil Penrose. Plans to provide better facilities on site include a new clubhouse.

Teresa Tait

Imperial College (Lasham)

DOH! Foot-and-mouth caused our Easter tour to The Long Mynd to be moved at the last minute to Lasham. Thanks to Graham McAndrew for finding us course instructors. Congrats to Katie Sykes and Jon Satinet on going solo. We raised £140 (in the rain) for two children's charities with our second Annual Scrubbin' Day. Thanks to all its supporters. On the committee, Katie Sykes prepares to stop typing and start delegating as the new Captain; Duncan Ashley returns, as Vice-captain; three keen new members (Andy Rawlinson, Alan Bamford and Caroline Bassett) become Treasurer, Equipment officer, and Publicity officer. And Chris Smart takes on the role of typing girl. I will regain the title of Official Gliding Bum as they prepare for a busy year from October searching for sponsors due to reduced funds from IC Union. If you are able to help, please contact icgc-committee@ic.ac.uk or visit www.su.ic.ac.uk/gliding for further details.

Hemraj Nithianandarajah

Kent (Challock)

CONGRATULATIONS to Peter (Carpo) Carpenter, Malcolm Kerley and Stafford Lintott on successfully completing Assistant Instructors courses. We are open to flying subject to foot-and-mouth disinfectant precautions being taken – we hope, by the time you read this, that all will be back to normal. If the crisis is still on, latest information as to our status can be found by ringing our office (between 11am and 3pm) or by visiting us at www.kent-gliding-club.co.uk In spite of the weather and floods, we have had some good soaring, with April 8 producing thermals to 4,000ft. We are all pleased John Hoye is back from Australia to run our courses this year.

Caroline Whitbread

Lakes (Walney Island)

WE NOW have a new tug, a Bellanca Scout; it has been put into immediate service and is performing well. The foot-and-mouth epidemic has not stopped us from flying, albeit locally. We are hosting a few members of Bowland Forest who have unfortunately had to close. This has swelled the ranks slightly so on marginal days when flight times are short, the tug is hardly on the ground. We all hope the current restrictions will not last too long or impair the seasonal visits to other clubs sampling the delights they have on offer. All the best and good luck to all.

Peter Seddon

Lasham Gliding Society (Lasham)

A ROYAL Aero Club Diploma went to Steve Jones (Lasham), Dave Watt and Al Kay of the British 15-Metre Gliding Team, who won the European Championships against 12 other nations. The award was presented by HRH The Duke of York at St James' Palace. A talk was given at the club by Alec Waldron, a WW2 glider pilot. He described a glider "snatch launch" at Ibsley in 1945: 0-110mph in five seconds. He flew in the ill-fated Sicily landing, ending in the sea, but all in his glider

➤ reached the shore safely. Alec will speak at Lasham on October 20 about Arnhem. The following awards were presented at April's AGM: The Roy Wensley-Smith Trophy for non-flying contributions to Lasham, Katy Thompson. The Chilbolton-Hungerford Cup for the fastest 100km triangle, Patrick Naegli. The Jeremy Brock Trophy for the first 300km badge of the year, Derek Coppin. The Southdown Aero Services Trophy for the best progress by a pilot who has soloed in the last two years, Justin Warwick. The Taskmaster Trophy for the most outstanding flight or series of flights, Pete Paterson. The Ted Lunn Cup for the best placing in Standard or 15-Metre Nationals, Graham McAndrew. The Thakarrah Award for the earliest Silver distance of the year, Tracey Ward. The Tony Norrie Award for the most meritorious flight in a two-seater, Hugh Kindell and Andy Aveling. The Tina Render Trophy for the most meritorious female pilot, Ann Laylee.

Tony Segal

Lincolnshire (Strubby)

DESPITE foot-and-mouth and the fact that we are in a farming area we continue to fly. Well done to Ian Bates and Richard Coleman, who have gone solo. At the AGM the only committee changes were Jim McLaren taking over from Steve Sykes as secretary and Steve Crozier as air tech from Robin Collins. Trophies were awarded to: Jonathan Woodforth; Ashley Johnson, Jill Metcalfe, Henry Draper, Gerry Bloor and Dave Ruttle. Henry Draper was also awarded a life membership for his services to the club. We await spring with eager anticipation: surely it must get warm sometime?

Dick Skerry

London (Dunstable)

IT'S NOT often that we announce achievements through this column, but these past few weeks have seen some remarkable successes. A large group has been to Cerdanya with the European Soaring Club. Everyone who went benefited, with Mike Staple getting Gold height, Trevor Mills getting Diamond height and CFI Andy Roch (having flown nine Diamond heights as P1) eventually got in a glider solo and got his own Diamond Badge. We think John White, at 76, is the oldest pilot to gain Diamond height and Jacqui Roch on only her second solo flight anywhere gained her Silver height, one leg of her Bronze and at 16 became the youngest pilot ever to solo at Cerdanya. We do want to thank all at ESC for their invaluable help and advice while we've been with them. Meanwhile, back at Dunstable, we've been enjoying the company of many pilots unable to fly at their own clubs. We offer all fellow pilots our best wishes during this trying time.

AH

Mendip (Halesland)

WITH our airfield closed, we were delighted and extremely grateful when Heron GC (Yeovilton) contacted us with the offer of a Puchacz to fly at weekends as reciprocal members. Shared with other clubs, this generous gesture gives four of our members the chance to get in the air each flying day. The opportunity to fly glass, launch by autotow and land on runways means no shortage of volunteers for our rota. Another plus is aerotowing. Thanks, Heron. Congratulations to Clive Brain, who has completed his PPL in the spare time created by not gliding. The Thursday group successfully invaded the Museum of Army Flying, where wartime gliders are on display.

Several members from Mendip GC's Thursday group went to visit the Museum of Army Flying in March this year. Next stop: the museum at Yeovilton



Photo: Keith Simmons

Much reminiscing was the order of the day. Next, the Royal Naval Museum at Yeovilton.

Keith Simmons

Midland (The Long Mynd)

OUR imaginations are still soaring and so are the buzzards but they are the only ones airborne over the Mynd. We have moved operations to Shobdon as foot-and-mouth continues to advance relentlessly. At the time of writing, our farming vice-chairman can hear the culling getting closer. Long inured to 'foot-in-the-mouth' and 'fin-and-mouth' it is a double whammy for him, as it is for so many of the local industries with which we work closely and are, indeed, a part of. At Shobdon we have two K-21s, a K-23, the Falke and the Discus. Many members are taking time off to fly in Spain. Ann Parry has arranged twice-monthly get-togethers in the Crown at Wentnor with the ethos of 'hang in there until we can fly locally again and at least keep the inn and the brewery solvent'.

Roland Bailey

Needwood Forest (Cross Hayes)

AT THE annual dinner in March, the CFI's trophy for best progress went to Iain Roberts, who won the Edge Trophy for ladder points with Joe Wright. Joe also won the Whiteley Plate for best progress by a student member, with Dave Bowden picking up both the Cross-country Trophy and the Triangle Trophy. Chairman Val Roberts collected the Hogg Trophy for doing the most instructing during the year. A big "thank you" to all the workshop warriors who gave their time and enthusiasm to C of A work on the club gliders, which means the whole fleet starts the season in tip-top condition.

Grant Williams

Nene Valley (Upwood)

WORK goes on as usual with ground equipment and glider maintenance. One addition has been the complete refurbishment of a Transit van by Roger Morrisroe, Taff Turner, Brian Cracknell and a host of Indians. The new vehicle is proving to be a winner and will stand us in good stead for the season. Restrictions on flying, forced by the foot-and-mouth crisis, have been disappointing. However, we have been doing our bit with disinfectant measures to control everyone who visits and departs the site. The weather has not been too kind but we are hoping for better things, especially for our Friday evening group flying sessions. Visitors will always be welcome at Upwood.

John Pike

Newark & Notts (Winthorpe)

THE CLUB is fully operational again following the annual shutdown. The majority of members have completed their yearly checks. We have started the long overdue repairs of our concrete

runway and hope to progress this through the summer. The foot-and-mouth crisis, fortunately, has not had a direct effect on us, and we are flying normally save for cross-country. We are happy to extend our reciprocal membership to members of those clubs unable to fly at this unfortunate time. Visitors should note that gliders and trailers may not be brought onto our site without the approval of Mike Evans, our CFI.

Chris Dring

Norfolk (Tibenham)

THREE members have received BGA awards: Ray Hart (Frank Foster, fastest UK 500km), Roy Woodhouse (John Hands, Services to Competition Flying) and Matt Cook (Spitfire, Junior Ladder). Andrew Morgan has gone solo. A second gate to the airfield is in use to avoid passing our neighbouring farm, so at least we are able to fly. Soaring days have allowed members to extend their distance from the airfield though mindful to keep in gliding range. We await news from the BGA to assist decision-making on the fate of our Regionals and 18-metre comp. Recent weeks have been overshadowed by the tragic death of Kenny Goodrum while flying. See obituary, p59.

Bonnie Wade

North Wales (Llantisilio)

NORTH Wales GC is on course to becoming a viable and thriving entity once more after two years in a sort of limbo. This was brought about when our previous landlord sold the farm. At about the same time, the Vale of Clwyd GC were also looking for a site; the two clubs agreed to amalgamate. After much research, largely by members of VoCGC, some fields near the village of Llandegla were identified. Negotiations with the landowner were satisfactory and, with a minimum of alterations to hedges and bushes, we started experimental flying. It quickly became apparent that the site had great soaring potential: very thermic, with plenty of hills to ridge soar and not prone to sea breezes. Wave possibilities have not been fully explored – but look promising. Having to start again almost from scratch meant we had no facilities, but we bought two 40ft shipping containers into which we were able to get four gliders and some other equipment, though it was a bit like one of those Chinese puzzles getting them packed sometimes. We also have a secret weapon in the shape of Ken Fixter, who can turn his hand to anything and is worth ten times his weight in gold. When we first started operating from the site there was, unfortunately, some local opposition to us – some quite influential and vociferous. Thus it was that when we applied to the county council for planning permission, our application was turned down. However, after consulting the BGA and CAA we decided to appeal and the BGA gave us their unstinting support with very generous financial assistance and advice. We are

particularly indebted to the BGA development officer, Roger Coote, and to planning expert Louis Chicot, who attended the appeal as expert witnesses on our behalf, and to our barrister, David Altaras. Our CFI Dave Holt and chairman Chris Bolton both did an immense amount of work. It was largely through efforts of this group of people that our appeal was such a resounding success, and we can now get on with rebuilding the club. After the expense of the appeal, the foot-and-mouth disaster is hitting us hard financially (though hardly on the scale that it is hitting the farming communities), so what we need when the emergency is over is for more people to turn up and fly with us. To that end we cordially invite visitors to come and experience flying with us at Llantisilio – not all at once, though! Contact us first. You can get a lot of information off our website at www.nwgc.org.uk What we lack in facilities we can more than make up with the warmth of our welcome.

Ian Samples

Oxford (RAF Weston on the Green)

IN SPITE of foot-and-mouth, a very muddy field and a lazy Club News writer, the lack of reports over the last few issues doesn't mean we've gone – OGC is still in business. While I've been asleep, three new cadets, Lewis, Peter and Sam, have joined us, Karen King has soloed and Barry Taylor has got his BI rating. To help us through our enforced cold turkey, we're very grateful to RAFGSA at Bicester for the loan of their airfield, instructors and gliders – and unlimited use of their butty van. To alleviate the lack of flying, a chuck glider competition was organised which exposed a glaring lack of aerodynamic understanding from some of the senior members. The joint winners managed flights of a massive 12 seconds. Plans for the 50th anniversary celebration in August are in hand and any old members are invited to get in touch. And finally, Neil Swinton pushed Garry Cuthill out of a perfectly good thermal.

Steve McCurdy/Neil Swinton

Peterborough & Spalding (Crowland)

THANKFULLY, Easter produced some flyable days and the airfield is starting to dry out, so the treasurer will be happier. Apart from being restricted to local soaring our site has suffered no restrictions of access so anyone wishing to visit us will be made welcome. Jeff Howlett, our tug-master, has been made DCFI and we wish him well in his new post. Martin Ewer has stepped down from the committee; we thank him for all his hard work. Our dinner-dance and prizegiving was well attended (thanks to Joan for all the organising). Prizes went to: James Crowhurst, CFI's Cup, for his efforts at the Juniors; Bill Baker, best student; Christopher Beaumont, Club Ladder; and Gerry Pybus, Toyota Trophy (most interesting retrieve). The Wooden Spoon was

awarded to Brian Crowhurst who, whilst being checked out in the tug, mixed up Carb and Cabin Heat and had been happily working the Cabin Heat lever in and out – all at the right moment, of course. We have acquired an Astir CS from Tibenham to replace the Vega Sport, which has been sold.

Pete Goulding

Portsmouth Naval (Lee-on-Solent)

WITH conditions at Lee being somewhat damp underfoot several of our members have arranged 'business' trips to far-flung countries resulting in numerous new all-three-Diamond pilots. Richard Croker found himself alone in a glider in South Africa and 500km later had another badge. Rob Woodhams and John Bradbury went on different expeditions to Australia – John finishing Diamond with 500km while Rob managed numbers two and three with 300km and 500km trips. Less fortunate members found their companies sending them to the "airspace-free" skies of Belgium. Several Benalla offices have been proposed. Thanks to the efforts of the tuggies our Super Cub is up and running once more after an extended C of A. The inspectors are also progressing through the glider fleet and a K-13 is back from a major refurbishment. Clubhouse renovations are under way with a *Changing Rooms* style feature wall awaiting replastering.

Pete Smith

Rattlesden (Rattlesden)

DESPITE all the gloomy news and weather, we still have reasons to be cheerful. Congratulations to Mandy Gibbins on being our first new soloist this year. Membership levels continue to break records and the newly-resurfaced runway is still a novelty. We have also been fortunate enough to receive a substantial bequest from a former member, which has put the club in a very secure financial position. Grenville Croll has done a great job refurbishing our winches. Sadly, he managed to spread as much paint on himself as on the metalwork but I'm told brown and yellow are the colours of the season. Now all we need is good weather and fields we can land in.

Patrick Gold

Shalbourne Soaring Society (Rivar Hill)

OUR well-drained site has enabled us to operate all winter and apart from a brief hiatus we have negotiated with local farmers to keep operating through the foot-and-mouth problem. We have survived floods and pestilence, so what's next? Alan Marpole has gone solo at Yeovilton and again at Rivar. Andy Kaiser has converted to the K-8. Geoff and Annette Purcell are itching to get going in their newly-acquired ASW 19 and we have another syndicated two-seater (a Jantar) on site. We have implemented a new membership rate for people in full-time education. RUGS (Reading University) flew with us briefly before

being confined to barracks due to foot-and-mouth. We think it's just a ploy to make them do some work. It's devastating news that Jim Gavin has shaved his beard off (but, Jim, hair doesn't weigh that much).

Kay Draper

Shenington (Shenington)

WELL done to Graham Bambrook, who has just gone solo, and to Jonathan Sherman on his Cross-Country Endorsement. Soon after sending the last update we were overtaken by events and closed for three weeks in response to foot-and-mouth. Our AGM was postponed until April 7 to prevent unnecessary journeys. We have now restarted operations (with limitations) and will try to fit in visitors. We have no idea what the future holds though, being based on a dairy farm, we may have to shut again when the cows come out of their winter accommodation to their normal grazing. We are trying to keep going as normal with midweek courses and plans for the summer. We've attended a local open day for disabled pursuits, and plan more advertising. Foot-and-mouth permitting, we have a visit by the British Medical Pilots Association planned for June 9-11, and a Beagle Pup fly-in for June 30-July 1. Mary Meagher is planning the annual Big American BBQ for July 7, even if we have to hold it off site. We hope the BGA Soaring course will be able to go ahead in August. Do visit, but phone or check www.gliding-club.co.uk first to make sure you have the latest information.

Tess Whiting

Shropshire Soaring Group (Sleep)

OUR annual dinner was well attended and the Mack Flying Trophy went to Ric Prestwich – well, we felt sorry for the old guy. The Grotty Potty was awarded to Colin Ratcliffe: Peter Gill, CFI, mentioned his poor flight planning, bad choice of landing area, heavy landing and failure to use safety equipment. Not things you normally think about when you climb a ladder with a pot of paint. (Colin's arm is now out of plaster.) Despite generally abysmal weather we have flown a fair number of hours in thermal and wave. A club ladder would probably be as ill-fated as Colin's. But if we local soar at Sleep and then drift into the local soaring area of Seighford and then... how long before ATC (Anti Travelling Cross-country) spots what's going on?

Keith Field

Southdown (Parham)

WITH soaring restricted to the home ridge – due to the dreaded foot-and-mouth – we have nevertheless made the most of the northerly winds. Lawrence Harley braved unseasonable elements to achieve Silver duration in the company of an army of frustrated cross-country pilots all soaring locally. Alan Irving received a Ted Lsyakowski Trust award and the BGA recognised the labours of Dave Wright with a BGA Diploma. Sadly, we have to report the passing of Jack Shepperd, an active pilot and tug pilot in the 1970s. As an instructor, he was a joy to fly with, always calm and reassuring with a telling minimalist debriefing one-liner which was seldom forgotten: "I've seen worse landings than that, but I can't remember where," for example. We embark on the summer soaring season with a renewed sense of hope and anticipation. The flock of geese, an overspill from the Amberley Wild Brooks down the road, have finally departed. They could be forgiven for assuming that we had been annexed into the conservation area.

Peter Holloway



Workshop warriors at Needwood Forest. Foot-and-mouth has created time to do all that maintenance

Photo: Grant Williams

Club news



Jon Smith of Wolds GC, Pocklington, at the Scottish Gliding Centre, Portmoak, after his Diamond height

➤ South London Gliding Centre (Kenley)

AS I WRITE, a fortunate few members are enjoying spectacular mountain flying at Jaca, in Spain, having decided to cheat the English weather. Meanwhile, those of us left behind are making the most of things. At least we only have the rain to contend with, having so far remained unaffected by the foot-and-mouth crisis – part of our peritrack has been closed, the rest of the field doing business as usual. Thanks to Richard Fitch for organising informal Wednesday night talks on gliding-related topics during the wet spell, and an especially informative evening with parachutist Chris Shaw on the correct (though, we hope, unneeded) procedure for their use. Our social evening in March was well attended. Awards went to Peter Bolton and Richard Fitch for achieving Silver and for services to the club, respectively, and to Philip and Stephen Skinner for maintaining club vehicles. We look forward to another successful day raising funds for the Marie Curie charity on May Bank Holiday, and hope to raise even more than in previous years. All we need now is some sunshine....

Alan Seear

Staffordshire (Seighford)

DESPITE the blanket ban on cross-country flying, members have made good use of the soaring conditions. Easter week saw some good flying and plenty of launches. The club's K-21 and Sport Vega continue to be based at Sleaf (Shropshire). The club's instructor training

programme has taken advantage of the circuit bashing, with Ian Taylor and Lara Davies preparing for Basic Instructor courses, and Graham Bowes, Brian Pearson, and Paul Cooper Assistant Instructor courses. Thanks to Bob Fraser, our weekly air experience groups have again started with the usual high level of success. Following hard work by many of our members, the field is now draining well, and should be in good shape for the summer. Following the sale of our hired tug, we are looking for a replacement.

Paul (Barney) Crump

Surrey & Hants (Lasham)

OUR reshaped fleet is fully in action with the arrival of our second ASW 19, now carrying its new tail number of SH6. With seven out of 11 gliders now having best L/D figures of 38:1 or better, we are well-placed to maximise local soaring, in safe range of Lasham, and keep up activity during the ban. Our March AGM heard a good report on 2000, in which we did the most flying for several years despite indifferent weather. The Dukinfield Jones Trophy for the first 300km claim of the year was collected by Ed Foxon. David Masson is compiling a number of mini-tasks that can be flown in the local area, to be the temporary basis of a club ladder that will be run by John Simmonds. And of course the weather has been awful... but one of our newest members has logged well over 20hrs of soaring since autumn, so even in the gloomiest of months there was flying to be had.

Graham Prophet

The Soaring Centre (Husbands Bosworth)

DESPITE the foot and mouth we are still flying. Training courses are running during the week and in the evenings. At weekends the new "pylon racing" tasks are proving popular with frustrated cross-country pilots. Tony Lintott did his second Bronze leg and David Cooke his five hours. It is with sadness that we report the death of Bob Wright, who will be greatly missed.

Siobhan Hindley

Trent Valley (Kirton in Lindsey)

THE SPRING has been kind, with some good soaring flights in March. Many members enjoyed flying the BGA Duo Discus and also the chance to fly aerobatics, thanks to Ian Tunstall. Simon Grant and Gordon Bowes are Basic Instructors; thanks to John Sentence, Danny Goldsworthy and John Maddison for help with instructor training. The committee has produced a strategic plan for the future, which was accepted by the AGM. We thank Barry Rendal for his efforts over the years and welcome Andrew Turk on to the committee. The annual dinner was a great suc-



Grandfather Roy Gaunt sent grandson Kevin Richards solo at Wyvern – believed to be a first for the club

cess and a good time was had by all.

John Kitchen

Vale of White Horse (Sandhill Farm)

AS READERS will be only too aware from the picture of our site entrance in the last issue, we have been suffering from the problems of foot-and-mouth, in common with other clubs. While our site was shut we arranged a weekend away at Bicester and thanks to the BGA we were able to get some of our members flying in the Puchacz, which they enjoyed greatly, despite the rather indifferent weather on the one flyable day. We are very appreciative of the BGA's practical support and help. However, the good news is that our site is now open and operational once again, although we do have a set of rules to be followed. These are to keep vehicles off the airfield and to use a disinfectant bath for footwear before coming on to the field. Despite the restriction to local soaring we are fervently looking forward to better weather and sustained soaring. Visitors are most welcome, although for the moment we cannot accept visiting glider trailers/aircraft, only individual pilots.

Graham Turner

Welland (Lyveden)

THE GOOD news is that we are now flying from Lyveden, the foot-and-mouth restrictions having been lifted to allow this. The first flying on Good Friday saw decent soaring weather – long may it continue! We have a newly-formed Tutor syndicate, a K-8s has been beautifully restored, and the SF27 fuselage should be in brilliant condition by the time you see this. The apprentices at Perkins Diesels have done wonders with our ancient tractor, so we are all set for the season. At our March AGM, Andy Lockwood, Fred Thomas, Dave Chisholm and Bill Burgess were elected. Our open weekend will be June 16-17.

Jane Cooper

Wolds (Pocklington)

FINANCIAL recovery is a major goal this year, and with foot-and-mouth reducing expected revenue, the club has made the difficult decision to make the post of Club Manager redundant. This has shaken the club and left many members with mixed feelings, and thoughts for Simon Parker, as well as the club itself. Good luck and respect goes with Simon for his efforts and many



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achievements he has brought to the club. Flying tasks set by Tim Milner are honing a competitive edge, particularly when money is involved, and early news from Expedition Portmoak is that Anna Sheldon and Andy Thornhill gained Gold height, whilst Jon Smith and Alan McWhirter achieved Diamond height. Simon Barker, too, achieved several goals of his own in relation to beer and talent spotting.

Ged McCann

Wrekin (Cosford)

FOOT-AND-MOUTH restrictions stopped play for a month over March and April. At last we are winch launching again after a period of aerotowing due to the wet weather. Gareth Baker has soloed on aerotow – unusual, as we are primarily a winch site. Wednesday and Friday evening flying was due to start at the end of April and the club is hosting a soaring week from April 23, with invitations extended to other clubs. We hope the weather is kind.

Sheila Russon

Wyvern (Upavon)

THE SUN is occasionally shining and we have had several soaring days to start the season. There are, however, still some unlandable water-logged areas on the airfield. The two *ab initio* courses were successful. We believe grandfather Roy Gaunt sending his grandson Kevin Richards on a first solo is a first for the club too. The new cab on the turbo Tost winch is a great improvement. A new Skylaunch is expected in May. Clubhouse renovations continue. The area behind the bar has been stripped out, tidied up and redecorated and one room has been repainted. Thanks to all involved.

Gavin Deane

York Gliding Centre (Rufforth)

THE ANNUAL dinner dance, organised by Richard Stembro, was excellent, with prizes awarded as follows. The Senior Ladder went to Tom Stoker, who also took the best cross-country award. Dave Wakefield took the junior Ladder trophy and Jay Smith the best height gain, at more than 17,000ft. The Chairman's Shield went to Kevin Moon, and the Bill Tyers Trophy to Chris Brayne. The most promising young pilot was Nick Jeffery. Club finances continue to look healthy after the sale of one motorglider and a tug, though we still have two Pawnees. During this 40th year anniversary we will be organising a barbecue and Hangar Bash. The trailer park is being moved and expanded to accommodate new syndicate gliders and the increasing number of visitors who enjoy our excellent facilities.

Mike Cohler

Yorkshire (Sutton Bank)

WE HAVE been open for business as usual during the foot-and-mouth crisis and, just to prove that Yorkshire can still offer great flying even though we can't go cross-country, last weekend several of our gliders were in excess of 10,000ft in wave – with Dean Crosby getting up to 17,500 – and still in gliding range of the site! Welcome to our summer tug pilot, Les Fisher, who joined us on Friday, 13 April. We are still running our members' weeks and course. Please contact the office for further information.

Marian Stanley

Club News was finalised on April 24, 2001. See pages 23-5 and www.gliding.co.uk for more recent details of how foot-and-mouth is affecting gliding and the latest from the BGA. See p9 for news of events

Lt Col Naomi Christy TD – Army Gliding Association, British Gliding Association

MANY glider pilots who gained their badges in the late 1960s and in the 1970s will have Naomi Christy's signature on the dotted line. Naomi (1911-2001) was the BGA's Development Officer and its FAI Certificates Officer in this period, as well as a tug pilot for the RAFGSA at Bicester. But her influence extended far beyond the help and support she gave to many individuals and clubs. Joining the Territorial Army in 1938, her war service was mostly spent in training units, and by 1945, she had risen to the rank of Senior Commander (the equivalent of Major). She continued in the ATS until 1949, when she transferred to the Women's Royal Army Corps. In 1959 she was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and posted to Headquarters British Army of the Rhine. She took up gliding in Germany and became an instructor in the British Services Club, also flying in the Austrian Alps at Zell am Zee. She continued with the sport while in Northern Ireland, achieving a height record there. In her last posting, in Chester, she became very involved with the Girls' Venture Corps, which encouraged and supported young women in learning to fly and of which she eventually became president. In the late 1970s she became the British Women Pilots' Association's first ever president, a post she held until 1998. In her mid-80s, while a resident at Crispins Nursing Home, she was taken to Lasham for an afternoon out. Before being lifted into a glider "for old times' sake" she instructed the club to ring the home's Matron to say she would be a little late back. The Matron asked: "Is the Colonel having a nice time?" to which the club replied: "We don't know: she's at 5,000ft!". Naomi touched the lives of many. She had very strong views, which she didn't hesitate to voice when she thought it necessary. She had high standards and a great sense of humour. She was also a staunch friend and many people will recall her generosity and kindness. Above all, she was a trailblazer, who will always be remembered for living life to the full.

From the oration by Sue Westlake

Bill Dyer – Albatross GC

GLIDING enthusiasts in the South West will mourn the passing of Bill Dyer (1920-2000), who died last October. Bill joined the RAF in 1937 as ground crew and in WW2 saw action in France and with the Desert Air Force. After leaving in 1946 he became an RAFVR officer, training Air Cadets, and did his PPL. At 622 Air Cadet Gliding School (St Eval) he met two fellow officers – Ray Morecroft and myself – who had similar aims for gliding in the region. In 1964, we founded Albatross GC. During its 20-year life, he was a prominent, active member, on the committee and in flying operations. As an instructor with a good sense of humour and a kindly, caring attitude, Bill created many lifetime enthusiasts for gliding. He owned various gliders and powered aircraft and visited clubs in the UK and Europe. Bill was truly one of the few old, bold pilots, who will long be remembered by those fortunate enough to have met him.

Fred Sloggett



Thomas Gilroy Phillips – Cambridge University, West Wales Gliding Association

AFTER war service in the Fleet Air Arm, Thomas Gilroy Phillips (1924-2000) took up gliding at Cambridge University GC, where he was an instructor. On returning home to Tenby in 1959 he became CFI of West Wales Gliding Association. Under his leadership it thrived. Within four years the club-owned fleet included a T-21 and Skylark 3. He held the post of Mayor of Tenby three times. Respected by all, he was generous, compassionate and loyal, treating all men as equals. A succession of small strokes took their toll in his last years, but he would still relate with great clarity tales of Marshall's and of camps at The Long Mynd in the late 1940s.

Arthur Squibb

Kenneth (Kenny) Goodrum – Norfolk

THE CLUB is saddened by the tragic death of Kenny Goodrum (1926-2001) while flying in April. Kenny, an inspector and a keen member for 24 years, was a regular Sunday attender and a noted club character. His humorous comments on most subjects could be relied on and provided entertainment on dull days. Unsuitable weather for gliding would see him land yachting at great speeds along the runways instead. Despite his age, he was always active at the launchpoint, where he also encouraged and helped newer members.

Roy Woodhouse

Roy Olender – Cleveland

WE ARE saddened to report the loss of one of our early Dishforth members. Roy Olender (1919-2001) served during WW2 as a Spitfire pilot with 317 (Polish) Sqn. He took up flying again in the 1960s with Cleveland soon after it was established at Dishforth. He was one of a number of Polish ex-RAF aircrew who flew with us, and as a keen instructor, was instrumental in introducing many young people to our sport. Our sympathies go to his family, including son Steve, who is resident and gliding in Spain.

P Whitehead

BGA Badges

Pilot	Club (place of flight)	Date
DIAMOND BADGE		
597 Richard Croker	PNGC (Mafeking)	13/12/00
598 Terry Akerman	Chilterns (D'ling Downs)	05/12/00
599 Andrew Hall	Lasham (Omarama)	20/12/00
600 Reb Rebbeck	London (Mafeking)	05/01/01
Diamond distance		
1-852 Richard Croker	PNGC (Mafeking)	13/12/00
1-853 Terry Akerman	Chilterns (D'ling Downs)	05/12/00
1-854 Reb Rebbeck	London (Mafeking)	05/01/01
Diamond height		
3-1527 Andrew Hall	Lasham (Omarama)	20/12/00
3-1528 Daniel Pitman	Bicester (Omarama)	01/02/01
GOLD BADGE		
2162 Andrew Hall	Lasham (Omarama)	20/12/00
2163 Alan Irving	Scottish	21/02/01
Gold height		
Andrew Hall	Lasham (Omarama)	20/12/00
Alan Irving	Scottish	21/02/01
SILVER BADGE		
10864 Andrew D'Arcy	Midland	29/05/00
10865 Peter O'Connell	Lasham	30/07/00
10866 Kenneth Torgerson	London	29/04/00
10867 Robert Smallman	Scottish	21/02/01
10868 Edward Wright	Buckminster	31/03/01
AEROBATICS		
Malcolm Hodgson	Sports Known	08/09/00

Learn from past tragedies

Pete Stratten concludes his stint as chairman of the BGA Flight Safety Committee with a look at the lessons to be learned from tragic accidents in the past

IF YOU ARE reading this short article and are familiar with BGA accident statistics, you may recognise the specific cases described. You may also be aware of other fatal accidents that have the same causes.

The point is that there is no such thing as a "new" accident – it's the same "old" accident that periodically recurs, and usually at about the time that we've all forgotten the reason why.

Every time we experience a fatal accident in gliding, those who know the deceased grieve and ask themselves what they could have done to prevent the accident; others wonder how the accident could have occurred at all, and all of us become acutely aware of the latest 'problem'. Of course we always remember the people involved, but when it comes down to accident causes, memories are short....

Spin

An experienced instructor winch launched with a student. The launch failed and the instructor elected to turn in the recovery. The glider departed and spun in. *This accident occurred in the days before 'further stalling and spinning' exercises were developed by the BGA, so the instructor had not had the benefit of that training. He was not in current practice with spinning or practice launch failures.*

Disconnected flying control

An experienced instructor was in a thermal



The white planes picture co.

"Without dwelling too long on previous misfortunes," says Pete, "it's wise to stay aware of potential problems"

at 3,000ft when without warning, an aileron control disconnected causing roll control problems. She attempted to bale out (she had recently done a weekend parachute drop course), but was trapped. *The glider had been rigged that morning. A visual inspection was made before flight: the Hotellier control connections looked OK. No positive control checks were carried out prior to flight. The Hotelliers were not equipped with locking pins*

Pilot lost control

A very current pilot, who regularly flew high-performance gliders cross-country, was flying in cloud when she lost control. It appears as if she opened the airbrakes while flying very fast and pulling high g (probably in a spiral dive), causing the wing to fail. She attempted unsuccessfully to bale out.

The pilot had, to all intents and purposes, self taught cloud flying. The correct action

on losing control was not taken. The recovery from the spiral dive on limited instruments (turn & slip only) was not flown correctly. She had probably never read the flight manual.

Collision during comps

During a national gliding competition, two pilots were at the same level in a thermal. One glider cut inside the other and a cockpit-to-tailplane collision occurred. The most seriously damaged glider appeared to descend towards a field, but the tailplane failed and the glider crashed, killing the pilot.

The pilot of the glider which cut inside, and which crashed, was very experienced and highly competitive. Some similarly experienced pilots report feeling that, when such things happen at other contests, it isn't 'the done thing' to either criticise or complain.

Soft cushion

An experienced and slight pilot needed a cushion to reach full forward stick and the release. During a fast accelerating winch launch, the cushion compressed, the pilot slid back and lost control. *At the time of this accident, many clubs still regularly used soft cushions.*

Poor repair

A single-seat glider was rotating into a winch launch climb at about 200ft. The tail broke off and the glider crashed. *The glider structure that failed had been repaired incorrectly.*

Collision in the circuit

One glider, a two-seater, was flying on the downwind leg of the circuit at a few hundred feet during an advanced training/testing flight. Another glider, a single-seater, was attempting to climb in weak lift in the same place at the same height. A collision occurred, causing both gliders to lose control.

It is unlikely that the single-seater glider pilot was using an audio vario. It is likely that the crew of the two-seater glider were distracted by the training activity, which may even have contributed to a limited view from the front cockpit. The P2 in the two-seater had expressed concern prior to launch about the planned training and limited view, but was overruled by the more dominant and senior P1.

It's clearly not a good thing to dwell too long on previous misfortune and the mistakes of others. But it is a very wise idea to stay aware of the potential problems and be prepared to avoid them. A major part of that preparation is to remember how and why others have got it wrong.

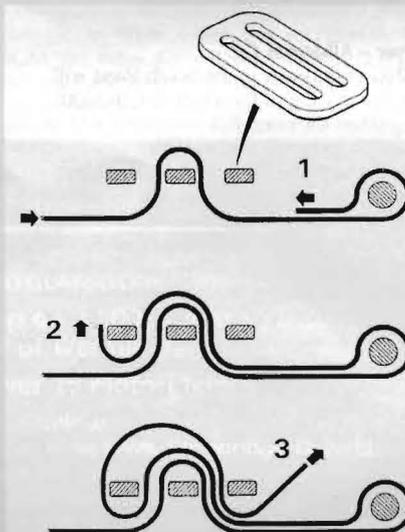
Pete Stratten

Diagram courtesy of Williams Harness Manufacturing Ltd

Attach straps in the correct way

FOR THE purposes of anchorage and coarse adjustment of the webbing harness strap, a three-bar slide with a fixed central bar should be used. The webbing should be threaded through the slide, as shown in the diagram (right). Note that there is another type of slide available which is NOT suitable for anchorage purposes. This is the two-part slide bar, which has a central knurled bar that can slide up and down. Webbing is sewn to one side of the fitting. Another piece of webbing is passed up and round the central bar. This type of slide is used for adjustment of the harness by the pilot in the cockpit.

Tony Segal



The hazards of foot-and-mouth for glider pilots

THE CURRENT foot-and-mouth problem has, of course, led to a self-imposed cross-country flying ban. In the circumstances, the following hazards could affect you:

Crowded Skies More gliders staying local to the airfield on soarable days could increase the risk of collision. Effective look-out is, of course, the best way of avoiding collision, but applying prudence also has a significant part to play. Local agreement for all gliders within x kms of the airfield to turn in the same direction, avoiding flying close to cloudbase and not launching too many gliders until the cloudbase is at a sensible level can all contribute to reducing the risk where there are an unusually large number of gliders around. Competition pilots will recognise these as precautions that are effective in helping to keep 50-plus gliders apart prior to starting a race.

Currency It's likely that some cross-country pilots will back off from flying somewhat until the ban is lifted. Although this will not be perceived by the individual to be a problem (experienced pilots don't lose their skills that quickly), it may be that once the ban is lifted pilots who would normally be well-practised and very current will suddenly be flying close to lots of other gliders – all flying in hot competition. This can lead to a situation where a pilot gets airborne for a challenging, late season flight with the real currency and recent experience of a pilot who is flying his or her first cross-country flights of the year. So the obvious answer is to stay current and try to keep the flying a bit challenging – some pilots are flying mini tasks around their airfields and others are discovering gliding aerobatics.

Field Landings If we can't fly cross-country, why raise the issue of field landings? If a planned launch, circuit and landing can result in a landout if something goes wrong, then a planned flight within theoretical gliding range of the airfield could also end the same way! Regardless of whether the intention is to fly away from the airfield or not, it is always good to be practised in field selection and field circuit planning. The best way of keeping those particular skills honed is to periodically practise them in a motorglider, with a suitably experienced instructor. Wise pilots also keep abreast of the field surface situation – try www.field-landings.co.uk for useful information to add to your own observations.

Pete Stratten

Accident/incident summaries

by Dave Wright

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	BGA No	Damage	DATE Time	Place	PILOT(S) Age	Injury	P1 Hours
2	Puchacz	3947	Minor	13-Jan-01	Camphill	57 42	None None	717 0
On the first training circuit the student had to be prompted to use airbrake and then allowed the speed to get too low but made an acceptable landing. On the second circuit he became initially rather low then used the brakes as he neared the landing area. Again the speed fell so P1 took over but not in time to prevent a heavy uphill landing.								
7	Dart 15R	1310	Minor	21-Oct-00 1600	Currock Hill	None	41	
The pilot flew a winch launch during which the wing root fairing, just behind the canopy, detached. As he did not notice anything abnormal he flew a normal circuit and landing. The front latch cover in the cockpit, which secures the cover, was disconnected. The new, relatively inexperienced syndicate members may have been distracted during checks.								
8	K-8 & PA18 Tug	1651	Write-off	08-Oct-00	Bembridge	51 69	Minor Serious	17.5 388
This mid-air collision took place on final approach to the airfield. The tug, making a standard (power) right hand circuit, was hit from above by the K-8 which was descending with full brakes in a high left hand (standard gliding) circuit. The glider spiralled into a hedge and the tug pilot lost control and spun in. Both were injured but survived.								
9	K-8	JFT	Substantial	10-Nov-00 1400	Kenley	53	None	15
As the glider became airborne the airbrakes were seen to come open. The pilot failed to notice and continued to the top of the launch. He then flew a circuit, rapidly losing height and elected to turn in early to land across the airfield. On the final turn he crashed into trees, landing upside down in bushes.								
10	K-7	-	None	-Oct-00	Incident Report	69 51	Serious Minor	17.5 388
On his second flight of the day the pilot noticed that the wind speed had increased so increased airspeed to compensate. At 70kts the airbrakes opened and he was unable to close them as the lever had latched past the normal open position. He was forced to land in an undershoot field. He did this safely without any damage.								
11	PW-5		None	-Jan-01	Incident Report	62	None	1800
At the start of a snatched winch launch the PW-5's seat back peg jumped out of its location. The seat moved back about 9cm resulting in the pilot temporarily losing rudder control. A restraint is being fitted to prevent recurrence.								
12	ASW19B	2836	Minor	09-Dec-00 1510	Sutton Bank	46	None	133
After ridge soaring in blustery winds the pilot joined the circuit. Flying at 60kts and aiming for a "short but safe landing" he caught curl-over at about 100ft and lost speed and height. He pushed forward on the stick and momentarily opened the brakes before shutting them. While rounding out, a gust lifted a wing and caused a groundloop.								
13	K-13	1457	Write off	03-Dec-01 1525	Parham	73 46	Serious None	1950 49.5
The experienced pilot returned to the airfield very low for the conditions and initially looked to be flying straight in to a crosswind landing. However, he changed his mind and flew to the far end in a complete circuit. In a low final turn a wingtip hit a tree and the glider spun in. P1 was seriously injured but P2, in the back seat, escaped OK.								
14	K-7	1694	Minor	16-Dec-00 1628	Bellarena	61 53	None Minor	625 0
The pre-solo student was flying the glider from the front seat in poor, evening light conditions. After ridge soaring to 2,200ft they returned to the airfield with P1 prompting P2 through the circuit and approach. The glider undershot into the barbed wire boundary fence, which neither had seen, and which severely lacerated the student's face.								
15	Astr CS	4185	Minor	30-Dec-00 1200	Kirton in Lindsey	47	None	220
The pilot had been flying a tug in the morning before flying the glider. With snow-covered landscape and being used to shallow power approaches he misjudged his approach and realised he was going to undershoot. Correctly, he chose to land in the undershoot field but unfortunately, due to the rough, hard, frozen ground damaged the tailskid.								
16	K-21	4369	Minor	03-Dec-00	Pocklington	53 16	Serious Minor	589 11.75
During a solo check flight the winch failed at about 30ft as P2 rotated into the climb. The speed fell off until it was "near the stall" when both pilots put the stick forward to recover. They had time to level out but the glider impacted heavily seriously injuring P1's back and causing minor injuries to P2.								
17	Puchacz	3203	Minor	17-Jan-01 1145	Currock Hill	61 53	None None	545 2.5
Following a simulated cable break at the difficult height of 200ft, P2 lowered the nose to land, but only opened half airbrake until P1 prompted. They landed half way down the aerotow strip and P1 did not realise that they would not stop until too late. He forgot that glider had a wheel brake and rolled off the end of the strip, hitting an obstacle.								
18	K-21	-	Substantial	-Nov-00	Incident Report		None	
As the glider was de-rigged, prior to its C of A inspection, an alert club member noticed damage to the fuselage where the undercarriage was attached. Detailed inspection revealed substantial damage to the u/c structure and seat supports. This was not visible when rigged. The damage was probably due to an unreported heavy landing.								
19	PA18 Cub	G-ARGV	Minor	09-Dec-00 1400	Pocklington	59	None	374
This tug incident occurred after the pilot chose to use the high wing Cub tug in the 15-20mph wind. He carefully checked that he could taxi and turn OK before flying. After nine tows he landed and slowed before turning with the stick fully back, at which point the aircraft tipped onto its nose damaging the propeller and engine.								
20	Vega	2509	Minor	27-Jan-01 1110	Currock Hill	35	None	303
Releasing from aerotow 2.5 miles from the site the pilot found himself in severe sink and could not make the airfield. He decided to land at an old airfield but when committed to land noticed cattle in the area. While concentrating on avoiding these he allowed a wing to drop and get damaged.								

Accident/incident summaries, continued from page 61

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	BGA No	Damage	DATE Time	Place	PILOT(S) Age	Injury	P1 Hours
21	Ventus 2CT	-	Write off	03-Feb-01	Benalla Australia	-	Fatal	-

Fatal accident to BGA-registered glider in Australia. The glider was seen returning to site, circling and jettisoning water ballast. At about 1,700ft the glider pitched sharply nose down and entered a spiral from which it did not recover. The pilot was killed. Subject to Australian investigation.

22	Grob 109B motorglider	G-KNEK	Minor	17-Feb-01 1130	Currock Hill	50	None	502
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The motorglider pilot had an uneventful local flight, landed and shut down the engine. Leaving the aircraft he noticed stone chip damage to the propeller. There had been no abnormal vibrations felt during the flight.

23	Swallow	2014	Minor	06-Jan-01 1420	Denbigh	32	Minor	23
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During his first flight on type the winch launch power dropped off about halfway up then, after lowering the nose and preparing to pull off, the power returned. At the top of launch the centre fairing broke open and the glider was pitched violently down until it broke off. The pilot regained control and landed straight ahead in a small paddock.

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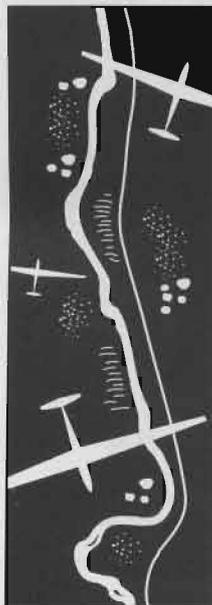
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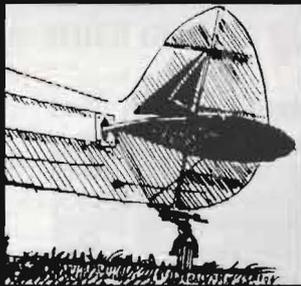
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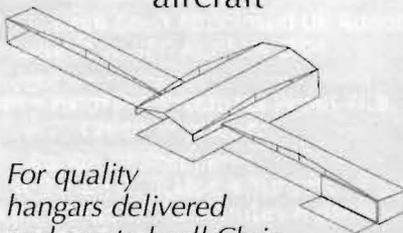
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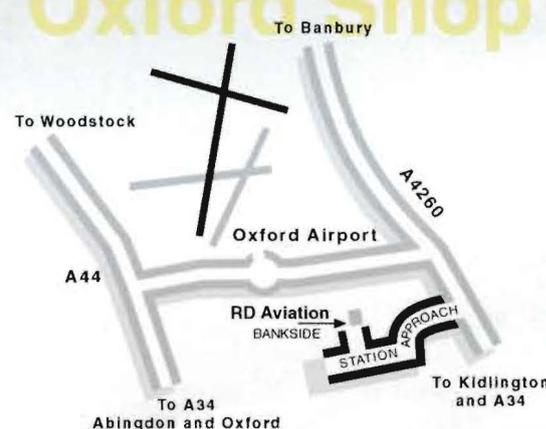


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