



FINAL GLIDE

Issue 18: April 1999

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Edited by Phil Hawkins

In this issue

OGC WIN INTER-CLUB LEAGUE

The Oxford Gliding Club were the winners of the National Inter Club League in 1998, thanks to a brilliant team effort.

The weather wasn't great for the Bank Holiday weekend last August, but at least the teams flew each day. But what a struggle!

On Saturday Maz Makari and Steve Veness each came 1st in their classes, and with Steve Evans also scoring points this put us immediately in the lead.

Sunday's weather looked slightly better at first, but the cloud had gone 3/8 by the time launching began. CFI Cris Emson and Howard Stone were pair flying, but lift was difficult to find. Kingsclere was the first TP for both, then Howard went to Membury and glid out as far as Kidlington. Cris went to Marlborough, where conditions were far worse than further north at Membury, so much so that he landed!

Both Howard and Cris came 3rd in their classes on this day, but George Crawford did better in the novice task, finishing 2nd. Enough to retain the lead overall, but Hus Bos were very close behind us, and all other teams equal third. Everybody landed out!

Monday started blue, but cloud built up as a warm front came in from the west to spoil things. Howard and Cris

reckoned they started just right, an easy first leg down to Thame quite quickly, even though into wind. The thermal tops were only reaching about 2500ft, however.

Downwind to Edge Hill proved more of a struggle as the front gave 8/8 medium cover. Our heroes had a number of low scrapes but both reached Edge Hill. Turning back into the 19kt head wind proved too much for everyone, and it was another mass land-out with no finishers. The really good news was that the Hus Bos Pundit and Intermediate pilots both landed early on at Thame.

George Crawford again did well, coming 2nd in his class, and with Howard's 3rd for the day and Cris's 4th - WE WON !!!!!

The trophy will be on display at the Club for the remainder of the summer.

What about this year?

Naturally we are going to be trying our hardest to retain the trophy, but the one big difficulty (apart from the weather) is lack of ground support when flying at other clubs. Please lend a hand to crew for your favourite pilot. You don't need any experience, just come along for the fun and support the Club. Especially if you've never supported the ICL before, we want to hear from you!

Fate of our Lottery Grant application

MacFarlane clansman at Battle of Glen Feshie

A completely inverted check flight

"Old Gold"

AGM and Committee News

Laura needs your vital statistics!

They said it couldn't be done

Club Ladder results 1997-98

"From Yonks Ago"

Flying Dawn till Dusk

They Said it couldn't be done

For those of you who have never actually seen me in a glider, I can assure you that pre-motherhood I was a very keen, albeit not very good, glider pilot. Growing up as I did, first at Long Marston then Bidford, of course I was destined to fly.

I remember my first flight, it was one of those long hot summer days, you know the ones, with sunshine, blue sky and those nice puffy clouds my father used to get so worked up about. I remember sitting in front of a K13 strapped to my fathers knee, our instructor in the back. It was the most exciting thing that can happen to a three year old.

This was just the first of many aviation exploits. I soon progressed onto Kermit, the T21 with another intrepid aviator the same age. One of us would sit in the right hand seat, the other sat on the bit in the middle and our instructor on the left. We managed to fly like this regularly until age got the better of us, and we got too big. There's only so much room in a T21.

"The day" finally dawned on July 29th 1990. I should have realised something was up when the airfield suddenly became very busy, my mother looked as white as a ghost, and my father as proud as punch. They all knew I was going to go solo, why hadn't anyone told me? There I was in front of a Blanik, tug on its way, doing my checks as normal merrily chatting away to Gerald Kelly my instructor in the back, when I requested the cable.

You could not have believed my amazement when Gerald walked in front of me, cable in one hand and informed me: "The back seat is secure, you're on your own this time!!" I looked behind me and sure enough the back seat was empty.

"Oh God, today's the day" I kept telling myself - if Del Boy can do this, sure as hell so can I. Gerald had faith in me and sure enough 15 minutes later I did the best landing I've ever done (only matched by my 2nd field landing where, upon landing, with a big grin on my face, I was greeted by the local game keeper who was very concerned as he'd seen me "crash." Huh!)

Anyway my first solo was the start to a whole new experience. I soon graduated on to the K8, Pilatus, Astir and finally Cirrus, but being at Bidford, I found I could only get to fly a glider when no club member wanted it. This became very frustrating until one day my father handed me a key. This key was to give me the greatest challenge of all. I walked down the trailer park and found the oldest wooden trailer

by Claire

you have ever seen, put the key in the lock and turned it.

It was similar to opening the Munster's front door, the way, as it creaked open in a cloud of dust, and after fighting my way through the cob webs I wheeled out a very dusty but graceful Grunau 2B.

Now in case you don't know, the Grunau is a wooden, open cockpit, pre-war single seat trainer, and one of the most fun gliders you can ever fly. This one dated back to the end of the second world war, and apart from the odd cobweb here and there, was in excellent condition.

I soon had her cleaned up, through her C of A, and flying. She was a very easy glider to fly, not as responsive as your modern Nimbus 2 or LS4, and with a glide angle of 1 in 14 she was a slow methodical bird. But boy was she FUN!

When the time came for me to attempt my silver, I found that, due to one thing or another, the only time the club fleet was available to me was either when it was raining or at the end of the day. You can imagine how frustrating this was, sitting on the ground map in one hand, butty in the other, brain programmed to go to Hus Bos and no glider to fly. It was then I decided I was going to do my silver in the Grunau.

When I dragged it up to the launch point, people fell around in laughter; "It can't be done - don't waste your time" *I'd show them!* After all, what did they do before glass?

So armed with twenty jumpers, a pair of gloves and a woolly hat, I may have looked a little out of place in 85 degrees of July sunshine, but as any T21 pilot will tell you, it gets d**n cold at 3500ft with no canopy! At last I was off, en route to Hus Bos, but 3 hours later I found myself rather low over the Rugby Cement works, and here was to end my first attempt.

But I wasn't going to let them have the last laugh. Two weeks later I took to the skies once more, this time in the direction of Nympsfield. Again 40km into the task I landed short, and having got over the uneducated game keeper, felt quite happy I'd made it this far.

The week of the Junior Nationals soon fell upon us at Bidford and all hopes of doing my silver had started to fade out of the window, what with having to run control, and organise the start/finish line, there wasn't much

time left for flying. Drowning my sorrows at the bar one night I found myself explaining to the then national coach Chris Rollings of my intentions (towards my silver that is).

Once he'd had time to pick himself up off the floor and stop laughing he bought me a drink and went on his way, chuckling to himself. He then turned to me and announced that if I did the 50km and silver height gain in the Grunau (he let me off the 5 hours as not even he would make me sit in that glider for that long) he'd give me the SZD Junior for the following Junior Nationals at RAF Halton.

This was it, my great incentive. The following day I conned a poor unsuspecting victim into doing the start and finish line, packed my butties once again and launched off into the blue yonder.

Now, in a Grunau you don't get many chances. If you miss one thermal, you pray for the next, miss two and you're in trouble, miss three and you're on the ground. Don't forget a glide angle of 1:14 means for every 1000ft gained you fly 2.6 miles, compared to about 7 miles in a Cirrus.

I remember scrabbling around a little village just outside Broadway over the Fleece Inn public house, but not even this was enough to tempt me into landing. If anything, the previous night's hangover was inspiring me to get the task completed. The rest of the flight went very uneventfully except every now and then I had to leave the thermal and fly into sunshine just to thaw out.

It was a mere 1 hour 15 minutes after taking off from Bidford I landed at Nympsfield, having flown just over 56kms and gained my silver height. Cold but happy I radioed Chris in the Janus informing him the Junior had better be polished - I was going to need it!!

So all of you out there who think you need an ASH 25 to do your silver, think again. The K8 is far superior to the Grunau and if I can do it so can you.

In case you haven't heard, the Junior Nationals competition in 2000 will be held at Weston-on-the-Green, at the end of August. This event could raise the profile of our airfield within the gliding movement, as well as potentially making the Club a lot of money. It's not too early to volunteer. See Claire if you would like to help.

LOTTERY APPLICATION

As you may know, the committee spent a year or so preparing a submission to the English Sports Council for Lottery funding. We asked for 54% of the costs of modernising our fleet to provide facilities, not at present available, to our more advanced pilots. We proposed two Ka21 two seat training aircraft, one Ka23 first solo aircraft and one Discus, equipped with advanced instrumentation, principally for competition work. These aircraft, together with our existing Astir and Acro, would give us a wholly glassfibre fleet.

The remainder of the project cost would have been supplied from sale of our existing Ka13 and Ka8 aircraft, funds in hand in the Site Trust Fund, and anticipated income over the two year provisioning period.

The case was reviewed by the BGA before submission and they judged it to be a strong application, but unfortunately it was rejected by the Lottery Board. Their reasons were as follows:-

- 1) The single seat aircraft did not have sufficient benefit to the community.
- 2) The provision of two seat training aircraft

was seen as replacement of existing aircraft for which a replacement plan or fund should have been in place.

3) Insufficient financial need had been demonstrated and other sources of funding for the project had not been explored.

4) The constitution of the Oxford Gliding Club, which allocates shares between directors, does not provide sufficient assurance that lottery funded equipment could not be used for commercial gain.

It was a comprehensive rejection of our application - so where do we go from here?

Firstly we do not feel that the work put into preparing the application has been wasted. It has caused us to think deeply about our operations and objectives and has led to the production of a business plan for the Club which will enable us to make better informed decisions about our future. It has prompted us, through the construction of a sports development programme, to focus on members achievements and requirements and in doing so we found that, whilst achievements each season are recorded, the club has no overall record for the membership. Laura

Rogers is now collecting these details for us so if she hasn't spoken to you please seek her out!

Secondly there are other sources of funding available and we will shortly be speaking to Hinton, who were successful in gaining assistance from the Foundation for Sports and the Arts, to see if we too can make a case for their support.

There is some evidence that this is a difficult time generally for applications from gliding and the BGA Development Officer has suggested that we re-apply to the Lottery Sports Fund in the future. Should we decide to do this we will need to address the points made in the rejection letter and remodel our application appropriately. The work we have put in should ensure that a more speedy submission is possible next time.

Finally a re-examination of our business plan suggests that, by modifying our specification to include some second-hand aircraft and extending the timescale for provision, it is still feasible to move gradually to an all glass fleet without incurring excessive costs.

Norman Hedge

IMPORTANT NOTICE THIS AFFECTS YOU !

INCORRECT ASSEMBLY OF WEAK LINKS

Despite clear notices displayed in the club-room / workshop area, in the winch and at the launch point, wrongly assembled weak links are still being found in use. **Do not assume that you know what you are doing until you have checked with one of these notices.** Someone out there is making a dangerous error and all members MUST double check their understanding of weak link assembly before making up another link. **NO EXCEPTIONS - THIS MEANS YOU!** Each carrier plate should have 2 links but these MUST consist of one with round holes (plain colour) and one with slotted holes (colour band). If two links of the same type are assembled together, the breaking strain is doubled. It could be YOU in the glider when the wings are over-stressed during a launch. You have been warned!

Brian Payne

NEWS FROM THE BAR

January saw the excise duty on beer and certain other alcoholic drinks increase. After careful consideration, I have decided to absorb this increase rather than put up the prices from their present levels. Beck's drinkers will have noticed a 10p increase a couple of months ago, due to a very large jump in prices at the cash and carry, this has now dropped back to more or less its original price, so Beck's went back to £1 per bottle.

IN A BOX

What is? Well, all of the things that you haven't missed yet. What haven't you missed? The things that you thought you had, but haven't had for ages. In other words, the stuff that is left in the clubhouse, and after a short time is consigned to a big cardboard box called lost property. Such as: one RD Aviation soaring hat, three baseball caps, two baby's hats, a hooded sweatshirt faded navy blue from GAP, a green and blue zip fleece by Karrimor-size M belongs to a female, an AVIA-TEC digital watch with black plastic strap, two pairs of sunglasses (not cloudmasters), a Cannon 35mm lens cap, three cases for reading glasses, one green footpump (single cylinder, found by the diesel tanks) and one blue OGC sweatshirt, another Casio watch, some black ski golves, and doubtless other items have accumulated since this list was written. Please ask Paul if you think anything there is yours.

Paul Rogers

So here I was feeling rather miserable in an ice laden glider descending at an uncomfortable rate in limited visibility and with the prospect of shortly having to land in a field. How had I got myself into this situation? Well, this is how it happened.

It was mid August 1963 and I was next on the list to fly in the club Skylark 2, our recently purchased "hot ship". There had been the odd shower visible under the well devel-

the Ever-Ready dry battery under the seat would continue to do its job - the last thing I wanted to see now was an "off" flag on the turn and slip.

We were now approaching 12000 feet, the required gain of height (3000 metres) had been achieved and the glider was still climbing rapidly. *This cloud must be growing to cumulus size* I thought, and I would soon be needing oxygen.

As I was thinking about it we gained another 1000 feet. My attempts to do simple mental arithmetic had failed, although my finger nails hadn't yet

heading and eventually through the clear vision panel there was a fleeting glimpse of houses and a gas holder. We were now below cloud base. I was able to identify Oxford and could see that there was no chance of reaching Weston. It was raining heavily with forward visibility virtually nil, a field landing in these conditions was not very appealing and I felt my best plan was to try to reach the open space of Port Meadow.

As we reached the southern end of Port Meadow I saw a long spear of ice leave the leading edge of the starboard wing and then, with a series of odd frightening noises, ice on the fuselage slid rearwards before detaching itself and banging into the tail surfaces.

After this scary interlude things had improved all round; we were though the torrential rain and could actually see where we were going, the glider although very wet had lost its ice and there was Kidlington airfield - but we could reach it.

Well we did - just, as we rolled to a stop near the petrol pumps a fellow glider pilot, Tony Marchant, came out to greet me. I had been sitting in a pool of water from the melted ice and was glad to be out of the glider and examine the barograph trace with Tony.

The flight had taken just over an hour and with perhaps more than my fair share of luck I had gained Gold height with a good margin and returned safely to earth.

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Old Gold

By "an old but now not so bold aviator"

Dedicated to my friend "Haste" who likes flying in clouds.

oped cumulus but these had as yet missed the airfield. Looking at the sky it seemed to me that there was some cloud flying to be had with the possibility of Gold height.

Checking that a barograph was installed and ticking in the glider, I took a winch launch and headed off to the west to a promising looking cloud and was soon climbing in good lift. The thermal continued to cloud base and switching on the turn and slip we entered cloud. It was soon evident from the strength of the lift that this was a big cloud and as I was contemplating this it started to hail.

Those of you who have experienced hail will know how terrifying it can be, especially in a wooden glider. The noise convinced me that the hailstones must be the size of golf balls, but on opening the ventilator a few pea sized stones ricocheted around the cockpit.

I quickly closed the vent and tried to concentrate on my instrument scan, needle - ball - ASI, with an occasional glance at the altimeter which was winding up at an incredible rate with the variometer stuck on maximum. The hail had now stopped and although I was not conscious of the cold, the instrument glasses were starting to mist over which didn't help.

However, I was having quite a smooth ride and had time to wonder if

turned blue. However, with the thought of lightning strike at the back of my mind and with no oxygen on board it was time to think about terminating the climb.

I attempted to straighten out of the turn; there then followed an exciting roller-coaster ride as the glider flew in and out of lift, culminating in some frightening negative "g" before we reached comparatively smooth air at about 14000 feet with the glider more or less under control.

It now occurred to me that I had unconsciously expected to descend in clear air but opening the clear vision panel only revealed an ice coated wing with a peculiar looking leading edge. This was presumably responsible for the Skylark's headlong plunge earthwards which was now taking place.

With nothing more to do than steer a course in what I hoped was the direction of home it was difficult to avoid the irrational feeling that this cloud went all the way to the ground and to ponder on what the glider would be like to land at this rate of descent if the ice didn't melt.

Eventually the descent slowed and instinctively I circled as lift developed, at least this gave me a bit of thinking time and the extra height might just get me back to base. Having gained a thousand feet or so I resumed my

CFI'S TURN

Cris Emson

As we are all well aware, 1998 was not a particularly good year for cross country flying. As the Club Ladder report shows, flying is down on previous years, although in fact the number of launches is greater than the previous year. But we glider pilots are ever optimistic, and of course this year will be better! And what a start already! I would first however like to take this opportunity of saying a few words about last season, and the implications for this year.

Instructors

With the loss of a few instructors recently, it was felt by the instructors remaining that the work load was proving too high, and an alternative system was tried out. This involved one instructor only on duty per day, from 10:30am to 6pm. In many ways this has proved reasonably successful, mainly in that the instructors have found this an acceptable compromise. I realise that on the other hand, the club membership is feeling the effect of having less instructors available, and as a result the K13 queue gets slow. This was further aggravated by one K13 needing major repair.

To improve the situation this year, it is planned to have a second instructor, from 9am to 12:30pm. The purpose is to set up the airfield early, and to do any check flights and mini-courses. This should help relieve the K13 queue, ready for the main instructor starting at 10:30. As a consequence, the morning instructor will generally give precedence to check flights, as this will have the greatest benefit in removing the pressure on the K13. At 12:30 the morning instructor finishes his duty. However, he may be a good candidate for sitting in the back of the ACRO for a XC task?

Also on a happy note, I would like to welcome Neil Swinton to our ranks as a Half Cat instructor. He finished his course recently, and although not on the rota, he is available for normal instructing activities.

Winch Rota

A new scheme is being tried, where winch drivers are being put on a day rota. This means that as you arrive, you put your name on the winch list for a specified time slot. Clearly, the earlier your turn up, the better time slot you can reserve (e.g. the first slot, leaving the rest of the day clear for flying). This should make life much easier for everyone - the next winch driver is already allocated, and the existing winch driver

knows that relief is coming at a specified time.

Junior Nationals

For those that came to the AGM, you will know that a proposal was put to the membership to host the year 2000 Junior National Championships at Weston on the Green. We had almost complete support from the AGM, with only slight reservations about the possible impact on club flying and whether it would in fact make money for the club.

Following an article in a recent S&G, I hope the second point is answered - clubs do not lose money running this competition, and stand to make a great deal of money from the bar and catering. The impact on club flying will not be severe, partly as it will be arranged as an additional week to the normal flying 2 weeks, and secondly as club flying can continue during the competition anyway. Many club members will gain by experiencing a competition environment, and being able to fly alongside national champions. And overall, it is a fun event!

The situation as it now stands is that the RAF have agreed to the proposal, and indeed the Air Chief Marshal and Air Vice Marshal are both very enthusiastic. So much so, they have even moved the military and RAFSPA shutdown to coincide with the dates (26 August to 3 September 2000). The RAF at Weston-on-the-Green are proving very helpful, and we should even be able to make use of some of the facilities, which is much appreciated. We have approached Pete Stratton from Bicester, who has agreed to Direct the competition.

Alliance 34

Many will have had a chance to fly the Alliance 34 that was on loan to OGC last year. Many also completed a questionnaire about the glider, and the following points arose:

- The glider is not particularly comfortable, especially for larger pilots (sorry Norman), and for longer duration flights
- In general the controls, including the rudder, were less effective than preferred
- It is comfortable to fly at 50 knots or more, but does not like to fly much slower, with the consequence that it is not easy to thermal, and it was important not to lose speed during the landing otherwise it "fell out of the sky"
- It spins beautifully (just ask Carol and Nicky!)

The general consensus was that it was not really appropriate as a replacement to the K13's for club training aircraft. Thanks to Paul Rogers for setting up the loan and co-ordinating it all.

BGA Conference

For those that missed it, the 1998 BGA Conference and Dinner was a huge success (thanks to Claire Thorne who organised the event). The conference was very interesting, and the dinner superb (with much drinking, music, and lecherous behaviour - especially from Haste and George!). Orders are being taken for next years event, to be held on Saturday 26 February 2000 - just see Claire.

Bronze Tutorial Day

As in the past few years, I am proposing to spend a day giving a tutorial session for anyone who wishes to attend, but in particular those wishing to try their Bronze paper. The day will be spent answering questions relating to the Bronze syllabus, and later in the day, you may then sit the paper itself. You will require a reasonably up to date half million scale air map and marker pen and ruler. The proposed date is **Sunday 6th June**, hopefully giving you enough time to get some serious reading done. Check the Operating Procedures for the syllabus.

Above all, have a safe and enjoyable year!

FUNGI PASTA

2oz pasta per person boiled and ready to go

1 tin CAMPBELLS condensed low fat soup (mushroom or chicken)

Reconstituted dried wild mushrooms fried with garlic and herbs from the garden

Mix, warm and serve with crusty bread.

Fiona

TECHNICAL STUFF

Brian Payne

All BGA clubs have a Technical Officer and he, unless sacked by the incoming committee, is yours truly, Brian Payne. This job is defined thus in the BGA Technical Procedure Manual:

Club Technical Officers are persons nominated by their club to whom all technical circulars are sent. They are responsible to their club committees for seeing that any action required is taken and to advise the club on technical matters. Most clubs also expect that their technical officer will maintain (glider) log books correctly and ensure that they're properly signed off by approved persons following repairs or other work.

What this means in practise is that I get a copy of the bi-monthly Technical News Sheets (TNS's) which list mandatory inspections and modifications, problems with aircraft observed by clubs and owners etc.

TNS contents pages are posted on the club Safety Notice Board. You know where that is of course! The complete TNS document is filed in the clubroom and may be consulted by anyone at any time but please do NOT take any away.

This file includes an annual compendium of TNS's which lists all entries over the years, very useful to peruse if you're thinking of becoming a private owner. Some types have only two or three entries, others have dozens. Draw your own conclusions from that!

If there's action required on a privately owned glider I inform that syndicate. If it's about a Club aircraft then Graham and Haste will also know anyway as inspectors get TNS's and the appropriate action will be taken as required.

So, what sort of stuff is typical? Here's just a short selection.

Energy absorbing cushions. These are highly recommended and you'll find them in all club aircraft. Private owners who haven't yet got them find themselves pestered by me.

Mandatory modifications. The club Astir CS had its main spar spigots replaced as a result of someone's

bad experience somewhere. Later it's elevator drive was changed, probably another bad experience. Mini-Nimbus 147 had its tailplane pushrod replaced. Somewhere, a similar Nimbus pushrod had rusted from the inside out.

L'Hotellier control connectors MUST have locking pins. Private owners know all about these, they're common in numerous types. There have been several "bad experiences" with un-pinned connectors dis-connecting in flight. You really don't want this to happen to you.

Control surface seals. Some sorts can fail quite innocuously with catastrophic results, best you know which.

Often there are "grey areas" and for clarification I can approach the BGA Technical Committee, either the Chief Technical Officer (Dick Stratton) or better still the Chairman (Mike Woollard).

Recent examples have been about Tost safety releases (hooks), over-hauls etc. and parachutes. Mike Woollard PhD happens to be Technical Director of Irvin so is well qualified to advise on this subject.

In the "grey areas" category one may see the Club adopting different standards to private owners. This is simply because your Club officials have a "duty of care" under safety legislation so must act accordingly with you, the club member, in mind. Private owners receive the same advice but only have a duty of care to themselves so may chose to ignore it. C'est la vie.

That, briefly, is a precis of what your Technical Officer chappie does. If you would like any more details please feel free to ask, it won't cost more than a beer.

Perhaps Phil, via the pages of this publication, can persuade other Officers of the club to describe their job? Watch this space.

[Hands up those who know the difference between the duties of the Technical Officer and the Safety Officer - Editor].

First aid boxes

Recently I was asked to check the contents of the First aid boxes, as part of the CFI's safety review. Easy, I thought, just take the three boxes down to a local Chemist and get them topped up. Wrong.

That's where the problems started, I suppose. "Can't have these any more, can't have those, need more of these..."

So, we had three kits which now complied to "the regulations", and I had a Tesco's bag of left overs, which comprised of all the things we seem to use on a regular basis.

The only solution I could think of, was to buy three more Green boxes and top these up with sticky plasters, and all the things that weren't allowed in the "regulation" kits. That is why there are now two green boxes in each location, one clearly marked "First Aid" box, the other containing useful items.

On a more serious note, there is now an Accident Book on the top shelf in the bar, any accident requiring the use of "First Aid" items should be entered into the book. Apparently one of the Health and Safety inspectors' favourite tricks is to tally the contents of the "First aid" box with the entries in the accident book. So, please don't use plaster for covering up altimeters!

For larger scale emergencies the mobile phone in the caboose can be used, just dial 999.

From Yonks Ago

I came across the following in a book about Oxford Airport where, as you may know, OGC was re-formed after the war. It seems that the club members have always been resourceful and quick to seize any opportunity for a soaring flight whilst others excel in other ways - I guess someone here qualified for the predecessor to the "Flying Brick" award.

I know that John Gibbons was a member in those days and I did wonder if perchance he could have been the intrepid pilot. He does say that he remembers the incident though not quite as reported!

"A story of the Club's early gliding days at Kidlington tells of a thunderstorm over the airfield, which caused the winchman to abandon ship in fear of a lightening strike, just as a glider was being launched. The glider pilot cast off the cable, which settled across power lines between Oxford and Woodstock, cutting off the power in the district. Part of the severed cable fell smouldering on the ground, where it set the grass alight. The glider pilot, seizing his opportunity, headed for the thermal thus created, and soared contentedly above it all."

Researched by Norman Hedge

Sky Fever

(with acknowledgements to John Masefield)

I must return to the airfield again
to the green fields, the sun and the sky
And all I ask is a ship with long wings
and a bright star to hold her on high
And the rising airs kick, full firm on the stick
as the circling clouds slip me by
And the golden rays dappling the countryside's faces
catching spires as they point to the sky

I must return to the airfield again
feel again the cool breeze on my face
As a twist of warm air close by me ascends
with buzzards and rooks in full chase
And all I ask is the stale smell of resin
sweet ethers and fabric and wood
And the odour of diesel and beer in the bar
where so many like sprits have stood

I must return to the airfield again
far away from the madding crowd
Where hares box in the grass and skylarks soar high
and the old Rover chases lost shrouds
And all I ask is to share in adventures
flown in circles and dolphinining lines
To far away places returning safe home
and I'll sleep and dream sweetly till dawn

ATTENTION

To all O.G.C Members

Cris Emson, CFI at Oxford Gliding Club, has asked Laura Rogers to gather statistical information ("see committee notes dated 5/11/98") so he can comply with B.G.A operational regulations.

Please fill in the questionnaire overleaf and send it to:

*Laura Rogers,
12 Weyland Rd,
Headington,
Oxford,
OX3 8PD.*

Alternatively bring details to the Gliding club A.S.A.P.

If you have already seen Laura about the questionnaire, then there is no need to fill it in again, unless you have information to change, in which case please do so on the sheet overleaf!

Thank you

Laura Rogers

OGC MEMBER STATISTICS QUESTIONNAIRE

(See overleaf)

Please give dates where possible:

Name:

First solo:

Bronze:

X-country clearance:

No of field landings:

50K:

5 hours:

Silver C. No:

100K:

Gold height:

Gold 300K:

Diamond 300K:

Diamond 500K:

Diamond height

No of comps done:

Desire for comps:

Desire to instruct:

Comments:

GOING SOLO EARLIER

At the AGM I was discussing, with Phil the gliding books donated to the club for your benefit. Two of these by Derek Piggott are aimed at beginners to our sport, Beginning Gliding and Going Solo. This led to some reminiscences of long ago when we were ab-initios.

Reading these books again some years on is an effective reminder of "how it was for me"! The instructors' patter (chatup) has changed to make them all Chris Rollings clones, some of the procedures are a little different but the principles involved in flying gliders remain just the same and will do so until the laws of physics, aerodynamics and meteorology change.

As an aeromodeller for over 20 years before taking up gliding I thought I knew all about how gliders flew. Wrong! Well maybe I did from the outside but I found it all very different from the inside.

Thank heavens for instructors who, to quote the one of more rotund proportions, "are sitting in the back to prevent those in the front killing themselves". Quite so! But what has all this got to do with books and the title? Well.....

Being an inquisitive soul I wanted to know exactly what was in store for me so when I started gliding I read everything available on the subject. Everything then was Piggott in the form of Beginning Gliding and Gliding, in that order. I

found that by being at least one step ahead of my instructors in theory, by doing a bit of homework first, worked wonders. I knew the jargon. I knew what was going to be demonstrated and why, I just had to experience it and emulate it. Easy?

Maybe not so easy but in my experience you can help yourself enormously by being at least one step ahead in the theory. You have a check-list of exercises to accomplish before going solo, so anticipate explanations of these, understand the logic and theory and know what to expect, and why, before the demonstrations and practise begin.

You'll be doing yourself and your instructor a big favour and that first solo will in all probability come earlier and you will be a better pilot for your effort and knowledge.

Don't buy the Beginning Gliding. Borrow it from the club (and return it) or from the local library.

Do buy Gliding, it's a valuable reference for the rest of your gliding career. Further reading can include New Soaring Pilot by Welch & Irvine (out of print but also from the club) which covers many other topics and theory. Good books for Christmas include those by Helmut Reichmann, not cheap from RD Aviation but most enthusiasts have them on their bookshelves.

Brian Payne

TOTALLY UNBELIEVABLE

So this job, which normally takes me away from gliding finally took me to where there was some - Perth, western Australia on February 28th - the last day of their summer.

I contacted the Beverly Soaring Society and explained that I was a passing Pom wanting a flight. "No problem, come up on Sunday." Beverly is over the Darling range, about 130km inland from Perth - any closer and the sea breeze fronts mess up the thermals. The club claims about 100 members, has its own airstrip with caravans, lots of T hangars - space is definitely not at a premium and nor is planning permission.

When I arrived the duty dog - an ex Scot - commented that there was an inversion at about 3000 feet. It was expected to improve in the afternoon and he would give me a flight either in the Twin Astir or the Puchacz.

Time passed. It was 39 point something degrees and those not engaged in launching gliders huddled in the shade watching cu's beginning to form in the distance. They aerotow with a Porno, £7 to 2000ft, £10 to 3000! Fuel is cheap in Oz. The other surprise was that they use the low tow position, which would be a first for me.

Around 2pm there was a mass single seater launch and they began calling in starts for 300 & 500km flights - carefully saying where they were going. It would be a big area to search for a missing glider. Cloudbase rose past the 8500ft airspace limit over the site. Restrictions here? Seemed so. The Twin Astir and instructor eventually became available.

The altimeter was set to the field altitude of 700ft. The low tow is apparently used as there is less risk of tug upsets in very strong thermal conditions. So after a gentle reminder to John in the back seat that I've done far more winch launches than aerotows, "All out" was given.

The tug immediately vanished in a huge cloud of dust kicked up by the propeller. Following the tow-rope seemed a good plan. Fortunately the dust cleared before an instrument take-off was required and following directions I kept low while the tug climbed away. Low towing wasn't a problem. Simply adjust position to the amount of underside of the tug visible. We pulled off at 2000ft. Providing that the rope is tight at release the rings should clear the glider without any problems - well they do with a nose hook anyway!

We hit the first thermal and it seemed pretty good - but narrow, rough as old boots, not much in the way of ground references and I was making a total bog-up of it. Well, it had been about six months since I had a sniff of a thermal! However, it was clear that John's intention was to show me what Western Australian gliding was really like, and not have the impression ruined by my feeble efforts. Whacking the Twin hard onto one wingtip he got the vario hitting the stop at +10 knots in what was obviously a narrow but very powerful core. That got us up to about 5000ft very rapidly and then we set off looking for something better.

Under the next cloud at about 8300 he told me to get the nose down and head for the open airspace. So with about 80 knots on the ASI I happily set sail.

A few seconds later there was an "I have control" from the back seat and the nose went down, ~~very quickly~~ - a quick glance at the vario and altimeter showed why - at 80 knots we'd been doing 5 up and 8500' was approaching ~~fast for~~. John was obviously concerned about airspace regs. 100 knots on the ASI just about got the vario to zero and we remained legal.

All the way to the horizon in any direction Australia was brown, mostly huge stubble fields (paddocks in the local parlance) waiting for the next rains. The only features were the odd roof or grain silo shining in the sun. Nothing else but brown fields & dry river beds.

We were still pounding through turbulence at 80, pulling up to about 60 knots whenever it was worthwhile and the altimeter had dropped about 500 feet. Safely past the airspace limit we started looking for some serious lift. The cloudbase didn't look any closer than it had on the ground. At about 10,000ft a circling wedge-tailed hawk demonstrated that yet again I wasn't properly centred. "He must be up here to cool off," John commented. "He can hardly be hunting at this height".

The thermal was still very rough, needing very tight turns, loads of control inputs and frequent re-adjustments to try to centre on what seemed to be a vertical jet stream that didn't really want a glider in its way. It wasn't at all like a gentle thermal in the Skylark with the drinks & sandwiches out!

"OK, we'd better stop there without oxygen," he said. The altimeter said 12,000ft, the vario still at 10 up and there was lots more brown Australia stretching even further - and cloudbase was still a good 3000ft above us! It had cooled down wonderfully - to 20 degrees. The

last time I'd been at 12,000ft (at Aboyne) it had been -20!

"OK, can you see Cunderdin airfield about 20k over there?" Well, no. Just MMBA. Miles and miles of brown Australia. God knows how they navigated here pre-GPS. "OK, can you see the Great Eastern Highway there?" No - and I thought I had good eyesight. Apparently it was that minuscule brown line running across the landscape from one horizon to the other.

We turned Cunderdin airfield - another gliding site but with two posh looking tarmac runways and not a glider in sight. "The main runway is 7000ft long." The wheatfield next to it was about the same dimension square. Not much problem picking a field, but an awful long walk to a telephone.

"OK, Cunderdin is 67 km from Beverley, we should be on a final glide unless we hit 10 knot sink." Hmm, 20 : 1 glide angle from 12 grand. So off we went again, 80 knots, no circling, pull up only in really serious thermals. Most of the time we were through the lift and into the next sink before I could react. There was some 10 knot sink and we had to duck under the 8500 airspace but maintained final glide comfortably with a couple of 500 foot pull-ups.

"They might call the Twin a concrete swan, but it's great for this," said John. It was easy to visualise lighter gliders being bounced all over the sky. In the distance a huge swirl of dust - a "willy-willy" to the locals - was being raised from a field by a massive thermal.

I'd noticed that the local habit was a high, wide circuit. I had to shed about 1000ft before starting the approach. "If you hit 10 down, turn straight onto the airfield". At which instant we hit 10 down. "Oh and mind that tree on finals. We blew it up 10 years ago but the b*** has grown again".

I avoided the tree, remembered to round out and taxied the Astir up to the launch point. "Nice landing," commented John. Probably surprised him after my thermalling efforts, but then I'd done a lot more landing than thermalling in the previous few months.

From "All out" to coming to a standstill it had been 1hr 42min. We'd been to 12,000ft and done 150km cross country. That's what they call an introductory flight? Totally unbelievable.

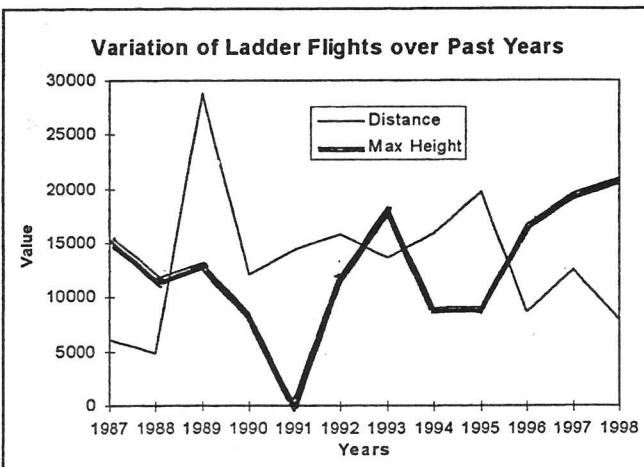
Dave Weekes

Club Ladder Results for 1997-8

The past season has been very disappointing, as I am sure everyone will admit (except perhaps Howie Stone - and looking at the final results will indicate why!). Before that, it might be interesting to look back over the past 11 years, to see how things have changed - or not. The figure below shows the total kilometres flown in each year, and it is certainly seen that the last season is one of the worst "since records began". 1989 seemed to be the best year, with 1995 a more recent "good year". Are we to believe 11 year cycles linked to sun-spot activity? Is 1999 going to be another mega-year?

Interestingly the maximum height gain for each year does not bear any resemblance to the cross country performance of that year. Indeed, the past few years have been the best yet - maybe just an indication that Howie is going to Scotland a lot recently.

So bringing us on to the last years results, it can be seen in the table below that Howie was the undisputed ladder winner, and won the Malcolm Laurie Memorial Trophy at the recent AGM. But well done also to the other who made valiant efforts to try and catch him up.



Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	TOTAL
H Stone	2185	1700	1600	1539	7024
P Hawkins	1500	938	642	551	3631
A Butterfield	1292	846	484	389	3011
C Emson	1893	644	250	145	2932
B Payne	870	797	634	604	2905
J Miller	1246	575	400	370	2591
S Veness	1309	894			2203
M Makari	1065	846	169	122	2202
G Barrett	1108				1108
D Weekes	219				219

And so finally to the National Ladder results, and well done again to Howie, who is placed 4th in the Open National Ladder this year. The top names are included in the table below, along with the positions of the other OGC pilots. A pretty good show for the club!

1 Peter Baker	9970	CAM
2 John Bridge	8888	CAM
3 Tim Macfadyen	8499	B&G
4 H. Stone	7024	OXF
5 Bill Craig	6824	LON
6 Richard Allcoat	6659	SGU
7 Gary Fryer	6592	COT
8 Fred Sheppard	6475	BKR
9 Steve Crabb	6268	COV
10 Dave Owen	6207	SHA

30 P. Hawkins	4775	OXF
68 A. Butterfield	3011	OXF
74 C. Emson	2932	OXF
77 B. Payne	2905	OXF
86 J. Miller	2591	OXF
96 S. Veness	2203	OXF
97 M. Makari	2202	OXF
176 G. Barrett	1108	OXF
260 D. Weekes	219	OXF

On to next year, and the rules have changed a little. The handicapping for gliders is simpler, with only a single handicap figure for each glider. These are based on closed task values, so for example a Standard Cirrus has a handicap 95. Other examples: Pilatus B4(85), Astir CS (94), Acro Twin 3(94), and LS 6 - 15m (105) - sorry Howie. A full list will be posted in the clubroom for next season.

In addition there is scaling for Task Achievement (A), and Task Shape Factor (S), and along with Handicapped distance (d) and handicapped speed (v), the flight score is derived using the expression:

$$\text{Score} = A * S * d * (4000 + v * v) / 2000$$

where: A = 1.1 for declared and completed tasks, OR (distance flown)/(distance declared) for declared and uncompleted tasks, OR 0.5 for undeclared tasks;

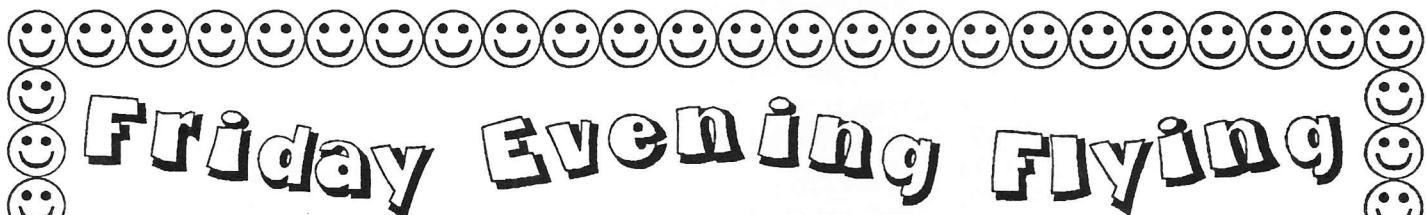
S = 0.8 for tasks with 3 turn points (quadrilaterals or zigzag tasks), OR 1.0 for all other tasks

Fortunately this is all programmed into my database, so I only have to input the BGA turn points, and the score is computed automatically.

Just a final point - I assume that all XC starts are made from the M40 Junction 9 roundabout. For those with GPS units, the exact co-ordinates and Trigram are as follows. If you can use them, it will correspond to what I am assuming.

Name of Point	Trig	Cat	Exact Point	Detailed Description & Remarks	
WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN REMOTE	WG1	D#	M40 J9 Roundabout	M40 J9 roundabout 1 mile SE of Oxford GC site at notified Parachuting Site, in permanent Danger Area D129. Parachuting very active - avoid. P-L	
Dist (NMI)	Direction	Feature	Map 50k	Grid Ref Km E/N	Lat/Long WGS84
7	N	Oxford	164	455.25 219.20	51 52.119N 001 11.938W

Cris Emson
Club Ladder Steward



Friday Evening Flying

Thanks once again to all who helped with Friday evenings in 1998 - another magnificent effort where we managed to fly 470 visitors, cook 850 barbecue suppers and generally keep the Treasurer happy and relaxed about maintaining the current membership and flying rates. Although the weather this year has been [please insert your own favourite words here] the only evening we lost was due to military activity. This group was picked up on a reserve night.

Like last year, we have a three-week rota with skeleton crews allocated for each week, but we can always do with more help, both on the airfield and in the kitchen. This years bookings start on the 30th April and as always are fully subscribed! Come along, support the Club and enjoy yourselves until the early hours of Saturday morning!

**THIS IS THE MAJOR SOURCE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR THE CLUB
WITHOUT WHICH OUR MEMBERSHIP WOULD COST EACH OF US AN EXTRA
£70 A YEAR - PLEASE SUPPORT IT.**

PS - don't forget to bring the family!!

Norman Hedge



LET BATTLE COMMENCE

Feshie 98 Expedition

The OGC Squadron descended upon the Cairngorms on Saturday 26th September, only to find the curse of easterly winds unfortunately prevailed once again, which spelled death to any serious flying the first week.

For example on Monday 27th: "High" was achieved by a visit to Inverness, shopping for an appropriate birthday present for Steve McCurdy. He was due to arrive with Mark and Club Astir that evening and we had arranged a surprise party to celebrate.

Tuesday 28th - some flying was achieved under some weak wave or thermic activity which may have been caused by my log fire directly below. The amazing Maz, if my memory is correct, was the pundit of the day achieving two hours or was it a pipe dream?

The remainder of the week, apart from Thursday when a number of frustrated pilots, including myself, attempted to thermal in a pleasant sunny cumulus clad day, consisted of hill walking, mushrooming, bird watching, biking down Glen Feshie, horse riding, karting, alternative gliding site reconnaissance etc.

Week Two

Monday - 8/8ths cover and a north easterly. The arrival of more of the Young family plus one eager Yorkshire terrier (aka hairy McMaggot) for their first visit to Scotland. A morning walk around Loch an Eilein.

Tango Victor decided to take in the air around 1.30 flying over the lake with a glider on tow. Should I be heading back to the airfield to put my wings on? I decided to tune in and find out why anyone would bother to fly in a north easterly "dreich" sort of day. To my amazement three or four gel birds were soaring the Loch Einich side of the hill, eventually gaining enough height and bottle to venture across at the head of Loch Einich and ridge hop as far as Cairngorm.

Anyway, some blue gaps were appearing which I was convinced must be wave. Back at the airfield, a light easterly was trying to establish itself at ground level. Was this going to be the day I was looking for?

I released at 2000ft over Loch Insh with all instruments alert. I had 3-4 knots on board climbing very easily to 8000ft. Looking to the east it was evident that the Aboyne boys would only be able to polish their winglets, how very upsetting!!

Remembering Basil's comments (the BGA FAI officer) you must make a definite low point and with diamond height potentially achievable I decided to make a rapid descent, levelling at 2000ft to check I was still in lift. I decided to push my luck and go down to 1500ft. Big mistake. Severe rotor was encountered which I can only describe as being in hell, definitely a white knuckle job.

I gradually regained a smooth ascent, passing through 8000ft for the second time but unfortunately I was experiencing an increasing feeling of nausea caused possibly by the severe turbulence or maybe by the thought of getting my wallet out to buy a round of drinks should I reach the big D.

I did not feel well enough to stay with it. Brakes open I summoned my ground crew to be ready. Three gliders attained Diamonds that day.

Wednesday-a nil wind blue day - was spent searching for Nessie. Thursday looked promising. A south westerly was forecast, but there was only just enough hill lift to maintain height in the bowl. Luckily I managed to contact a thermal and wound up to 3500ft. I explored other areas on the ridge but it was all down. Rock climbing my way back, crampons at the ready, I made it back to the hot spot I had left and topped up again to 3500ft.

Suddenly a "covey" of F16s decided to join us. I saw two of the jets having to make corrective manoeuvres to avoid gliders on the hill. Mo immediately got on the case to complain to the appropriate squadron leader.

Friday - going home day. I left a wet cloudy scene, but before I reached Perth it was blue sky, spectacular lenticulars and Portmoak were reporting Diamonds all the way!!

Ian Young, Clan MacFarlane

AGM Report

The 48th AGM was held in the briefing room above the Clubroom on 21st November 1998. Chairman Steve Evans lamented the poor season's weather. The number of launches were up slightly, but the hours flown were down 15% and cross country km were down nearly 40% on the previous year. However there were 7 first solos, two completed Bronze (Tim Charlesworth and Nick Brooks) and two Silver (Kevin Duthie and Steve McCurdy).

We heard in August that our Lottery Grant application had failed. Steve also mentioned the alarming day when the winch caught fire on the airfield (but it was up and running again 4 days later) and the K13 suffering wing damage in flight on a stormy day. The big news of the year was the Club's win in the Inter Club League (front page). The best soaring day was probably 15th August with five completed 300km flights including Jack Miller's first 300.

Treasurer Nick Hill reported a similar year to the previous year, on the expenditure front. The winch fire cost £500 to repair, the K13 damage abc £400. The Site Trust Fund stood at £15,000 with another £11,000 owed to it by the Club. The Cadet Scheme will continue in 1999 but will not start until August. Friday evening flying in 1998 generated £9000 additional income for the Club - around 43 members participated.

There was no motion to increase subscription fees this year. In fact, no motions at all had been received for consideration by the AGM, so it was a relatively quick meeting for a change.

A new Chairman Peter Brooks was elected to take over from Steve Evans, our leader for the past 4 years. After a close vote, the 1999 Committee was elected: Norman Hedge, Paul Rogers and Steve McCurdy.

It was proposed to hold the "Junior Nationals" (so-called) competition at the airfield in August 2000. This is a 9-day event aimed at 16-25 year olds, heavily sponsored by the BGA and Mobil. Up to 65 competitors would be accepted, of widely varying experience. After a long debate on the pros and cons (more details in a later issue of FG) a vote was taken with 32 members in favour, 6 against, the remainder presumably indifferent.

Trophy awards: Howard Stone won the Malcolm Laurie Trophy for the Club Ladder. The Simpson Cup for the best flight from Weston-on-the-Green went deservedly to Jack Miller for his 300km. The Malcolm Laurie Memorial Trophy for the best flight in a Club glider went jointly to Howard Stone and Carol Shepherd for a failed 300km in the Acro, landing at Little Horwood. The Dennis Farmer Trophy for the first 5hr flight of the season went to Steve McCurdy.

Maz Makari won the "Deep Breath" cup for the best height of the year (8,500ft), Peter Brooks won the Flying Brick for landing out on a League task before the start crossing, and Martin Hastings was awarded the CFI's "Two-Up" trophy for services to instructing. There followed a series of unique one-off awards including a pair of bloomers presented to Martin Hastings, made from the tattered fabric which dangled from the K13 wing upon landing after "that memorable flight."



FLY FROM DAWN TO DUSK

Saturday 3rd July (provisionally)

from 4:20am to 9:50pm

£2 for all flights before 11am.



Breakfast, lunch and evening BBQ all at nominal cost.

Instructors, winch drivers, pilots, ground crew and cooks, help us set a record for the number of gliders launched in a day, by volunteering your services to Nicky.

What are you doing for MILLENNIUM NIGHT?

Would you be interested in a "do" being organised at the Club?

If so, I'd like to hear your ideas.

Nicky Beresford (Social Secretary)

WINCH PULLEY REPAIR

For some time now, those that venture down to the far end of the field and observe the winch carefully might have noticed the extreme wear on the pulley wheels, and I have also noticed that most cable breaks seem to occur as a ferrule tries to go through the entrance of the two plates of metal that are either side of the pulley wheels.

At the last committee meeting the Chairman asked me to investigate and repair the pulley wheels as he felt they were now becoming oval, and causing vibration during the launch.

The time seemed right. Roger Pitman had, just two weeks previously, brought some solid, hardened guide rollers to replace the two rows of expendable bearings, which guide the cable onto the pulleys. Also this job would be better done now than in the middle of the season, so off came No.1 and it was duly taken apart. Some new pulley wheels were located in the ground equipment cupboard, along with the invoice for them, two years old and also rather expensive, things were going well, or so I thought.

I was expecting to change the pulley wheels and alter the fixing brackets for the new guide rollers, but after inspecting all of

the parts it was found that the spindles that the pulley wheels ran had suffered cut marks from the cable going down the side of them a few times, and the inside faces of the outer plates showed all the signs of their estimated 12 years service, and even worse, the new pulley wheels found in the cupboard were solid, much heavier than the old ones and would mean that the cable travelling over them fast would take a while to spin them up to speed, causing a sawing action which would quickly wear them out.

At this very moment of time, in walked Andrew Brough, friend of Neil Turner, and having his own engineering company, very quickly made some new spindles and also managed to reverse some of the hardening process on the new pulley wheels and remove six wedge shapes from the centre of them making them a lot lighter in weight and more suitable to our needs.

I decided that new side plates were in order and made some templates from paper in order that an engineering company in Eynsham could cut the complicated shapes using a Plasma cutting device. Very obligingly, they gave me a sheet of 6mm steel, and said you seem to know what you want, here's a steel rule, automatic centre punch and a scriber, you mark it out and we'll cut it all out for you.

Next on the engineering processes came Norman Hedge, tasked, to match the parts in size, accurately drill all the necessary holes, make some new spacers to keep the side plates the correct distance from the pulley wheels, and tap out the holes so we could bolt on the carrier bearings for the pulley spindles. We also plan to use the same size nuts and bolts throughout which should make future maintenance easier.

At the time of writing this article things are progressing very well, 13 days have passed since starting and although the job might take another two weeks the single cable left on the winch is coping with around 35 launches per flying day.

The heads have also been redesigned slightly to accommodate the new solid guide rollers. These will be attached with nuts and bolts and can be removed as a pair on their own carrier bracket. A few people have voiced concern over the wear rate of solid rollers, so taking this into account, extra carrier brackets will be made so that we can convert back to the expendable roller bearings previously used should we need to.

All this work should cure a lot of our cable breaks and reduce vibrations sent up the cables to the gliders during the launch, all part of making winch driving a more popular job.

Paul Rogers

1998 IN A NUTSHELL

Probably the most disappointing news during the year was the fact that our lottery application had been rejected.

A huge amount of work had been put into preparing the application by a small sub-committee over a period of 12 months. It appears that gliding is currently out of favour with the Lottery Sports Fund as we heard that all other clubs which applied during the year have also had their applications rejected. However, we still have a clear mandate to upgrade the fleet, and various other forms of funding will be investigated. The Foundation for Sports being one potential source. A further lottery application in the future has not been ruled out. Following the closure of the RAFGSA centre in Germany a considerable number of second hand gliders are likely to appear on the UK market.

We have always enjoyed a good relationship with our neighbours in the village, and this was strengthened in June when we hosted the village fete. Despite incessant rain, the day was still considered to have been a success, and the organisers were most appreciative of the use of our hangar.

The efforts of those involved in publicity and recruitment were well rewarded as the number of flying members continued to rise to 108. Leaflets designed by Steve McCurdy for members to place on their works notice boards were eagerly snapped up, and the club web site designed by Cris Emson clearly helped to raise the profile of the club. The decision has been made not to spend any extra money on publicity during 1999, as the membership level is approaching the maximum that we can support with the current level of equipment and instructors.

As a result of the winch fire and four separate incidents of aircraft damage, a full safety audit of the club operation was undertaken by the Safety Officer (Graham Barrett) and CFI (Cris Emson). The operating procedures are likely to be updated as a result and the training cards will be revised to ensure that members are familiar with the operating procedures before being sent solo.

The search for a worthy successor to Mr Douglas Hurd was finally resolved only two days before the AGM as Mr John Bridgeman TD DL agreed to fill the post of club President. Four local MPs had been approached, but all declined as they were concerned about upsetting the anti-aviation

lobby. A non political candidate was sought and Mr Bridgeman was suggested to the club by local MP Tony Baldry. Mr Bridgeman is Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and Director of Fair Trading.

Volunteers are sought to take responsibility for a couple of projects. First, someone is required to take responsibility for the trailers to ensure that all comply with the relevant requirements. Secondly, someone with some building experience is needed to organise a catchment (or bund) for the fuel tanks. A few extra courses of brickwork are required to increase the capacity of the existing catchment.

Friday evening flying continued to be popular, and contributed substantially to the

club's income. Despite the poor summer, a total of 21 groups flew on 20 evenings. A total of 435 launches were scheduled and 467 were achieved, generating an income of £5949. The barbecue continued to be popular with 834 meals being served generating an income of £3160 and a profit of £1278. Total income (excluding expenditure)

was very similar to the previous year at £9109.

An Alliance 34 two seater demonstrator was obtained for evaluation. The glider was reported to be fun to fly, but was not considered a suitable replacement for the K13s. The glider spins well but is not robust enough for club use.

The large puddle which regularly forms in front of the hangar is causing us some inconvenience, and the committee have been looking into it. *[I wish I could draw a cartoon at this point - Editor]*. The plan was to dig a soakaway to disperse the water, but a survey showed that the water table on the airfield would not permit this. One option would be to obtain a small electric pump to pump the water into the ditch at the side of the main road.

Despite pleas from the committee, the RAF have continued to take a firm line on caravans. It seems that the present administration are not happy about caravans being on the unit at all. This year we were told in no uncertain terms that caravans may only remain on site from 1 March to 31 October. We were also told that mobile homes will not be permitted under any circumstances, and that no additional caravans will be allowed.

The Bicester Treasurer has asked that OGC members should pay for any launches at Bicester on the day, as invoices will no longer be sent to the club.

Operating efficiency is a subject which is discussed at every meeting, as the com-

mittee strive to find ways to ensure that the club continues to operate more efficiently. Parachute drops have always had an adverse effect on our operation, although an efficient duty pilot can minimise the effect by closely monitoring RAFSPA radio communications. We must also ensure that a shortage of winch drivers does not delay things in the morning. If you are solo (and a full flying member) and require training for the winch, please ask an experienced winch driver to show you the ropes (perhaps that should be cables). As an incentive to get out of bed earlier, members are reminded that soaring fees are waived for flights completed before 11am.

The BGA have spent a tidy sum producing publicity material as part of the Project 2000 initiative. The launch of this campaign at Booker on 13 November was well attended by representatives from OGC. This was, as well as only members from one other club were present!

Trial lesson vouchers were presented to a number of worthwhile local causes for use as raffle prizes, including the Friends of IVF at the John Radcliffe Hospital and the Friends of Kennington Cancer Fund.

We are in the process of organising a reciprocal membership agreement with Enstone Eagles Gliding Club, subject to agreement by the insurers of both clubs. Under this agreement, OGC members will be able to fly at Enstone at their normal club rates and vice-versa. Enstone are likely to become an aerotow only club in the near future so this is an opportunity for our members to gain aerotow experience and for their members to stay current on winch launches. Enstone are currently holding open aerotow days on the first Saturday each month and OGC members are welcome to attend.

The possibility of hosting the Junior National Championships in the year 2000 is being investigated. It is envisaged that the event would run for nine days during the August stand-down. This could serve to raise the profile of our club amongst the wider gliding fraternity and provide an insight into the running of national competitions for members. It could be also be quite lucrative for the club. However, a high level of support would be required from members, and we must be prepared to accept that normal club flying would be significantly restricted during the championships.

A questionnaire has been produced, so that details of members progress and achievements can be compiled. If you haven't already done so, please provide the required information to Laura Rogers who is co-ordinating the survey.

Committee Meeting Notes

compiled by Barry Taylor