



# FINAL GLIDE

Issue 33: December 2014

Edited by Claudia B. Hill

Contact: 01865 521042

<http://www.oxfordgliding.com>



or click on the icons:  



Photo: Contour

## Contents

<i>Editorial</i>	2
<i>Club Ladder</i>	3
<i>The Chairman's Corner</i>	6
<i>A Gliding Family</i>	7
<i>Daisy Did Denmark</i>	8
<i>Second And Last – Juniors 2014</i>	9
<i>A Day In The Life Of Corp Pilot On PC12 NG</i>	13
<i>The End Of An Era – For Me!</i>	16
<i>Money Matters</i>	17
<i>Newsletter</i>	18
<i>Thoughts About Flying</i>	19
<i>A Remarkable Day</i>	20
<i>A Summary of the Year 2014</i>	22
<i>Joint OGC – EDG Christmas Party, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014</i>	25



Photo: Peter Boulton

## Editorial

This year's is a very last-minute Final Glide – work seems to get in the way of all the important stuff, so I can't promise a typo-free read, I'm afraid, and the layout is also a tad rushed.

I hope you still enjoy it. A bit smaller than last year, but still with lots of interesting contributions and great photos.

Thanks to all who help create Final Glide!



## Club Ladder

Nick Hill



Photo: Claudia Hill

Over the years OGC pilots have always compared their flights during the season by entering them on the club ladder. The ladders for OGC and other UK clubs can be found on the UK gliding ladder website (<http://www.bgaladder.co.uk>).

Once a flight is entered the flights are assigned a score based on nationally agreed rules and the results displayed in a variety of local and nation ladder tables. As glider pilots from all the BGA clubs enter details of their flights on the ladders the web site provides a simple way to compare flights on the same day with both those in OGC and amongst the wider UK gliding community. Useful information can be obtained about tasks set, speeds and distances achieved and if people experienced similar problems in the same areas as others.

The primary national ladders for which the BGA awards annual trophies are:

- Open ladder: For any cross-country flight
- Weekend ladder: For cross-country flights made on weekends or Bank Holidays
- Junior ladder: For cross-country flights by pilots under the age of 26 at the start of the season (1<sup>st</sup> January)
- Wooden ladder: For gliders constructed primarily of wood and/or metal

Starting in 2012 OGC decided to introduce a ladder that only contains flights made from Weston-on-the-Green to better reflect normal club flying. The club ladder trophy is awarded to the pilot that tops this ladder.

The results of various ladders for OGC members are presented in the tables. In both cases only the six highest scoring flights are used to calculate the ladder score for each pilot.

### OGC Open Ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Claudia Hill	2660	2653	2424	2331	2265	1973	14306
Richard Hall	2190	2181	2117	2099	2072	1968	12627
Paul Smith	2596	2151	2011	1928	1767	1481	11934
Krzysztof Kreis	2102	2053	1820	1772	1568	1554	10869
Martin Hastings	2694	2020	1989	1371	1315	1131	10520
Paul Wilford	2262						2262
Gordon Craig	1933						1933
Mark Brooks	673	534	70	59			1336
Andrew Butterfield	692	461					1153
Carole Shepherd	974						974

### OGC Weekend Ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Claudia Hill	2660	2331	2265	1923	1648	1412	12239
Richard Hall	2190	2072	1968	1765	1436	1290	10721
Paul Smith	2151	2011	1928	1767	1097	939	9893
Krzysztof Kreis	2102	1820	1772	1568	1509	1024	9795
Martin Hastings	2020	742					2762
Paul Wilford	2262						2262
Mark Brooks	673	534	70	59			1336
Andrew Butterfield	692	461					1153
Carole Shepherd	974						974

## OGC Junior ladder

No entries

## OGC Wooden ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Krzysztof Kreis	2102	2053	1820	1772	1568	1554	10869

## OGC WOG only ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Paul Smith	2151	2011	1928	1097	1097	939	9893
Richard Hall	2190	1968	1765	1436	1290	1110	9759
Martin Hastings	2020	742					2762
Paul Wilford	2262						2262
Mark Brooks	673	534	70	59			1336
Claudia Hill	1162						1162
Andrew Butterfield	692	461					1153
Carole Shepherd	974						974

## OCG distance ladders

### 2014

Pilot	Km	Flights	Avg km
Claudia Hill	4947.5	22	224.9
Richard Hall	3491.2	14	249.4
Paul Smith	2555.2	11	232.3
Krzysztof Kreis	1847.0	8	230.9
Martin Hastings	1807.8	8	226.0
Paul Wilford	314.0	1	314.0
Gordon Craig	305.2	1	305.2
Mark Brooks	258.6	4	64.6
Andrew Butterfield	165.9	2	82.9
Carole Shepherd	148.6	1	148.6
<b>Totals</b>	15841	72	220.0

### 2013

Pilot	Km	Flights	Avg km
Paul Smith	3602.9	17	211.9
Claudia Hill	3497.5	14	249.8
Richard Hall	2797.4	10	279.7
Krzysztof Kreis	2077.9	10	207.8
Martin Hastings	2031.8	8	254.0
Andrew Butterfield	1177.9	4	294.5
Paul Morrison	607.6	3	202.5
Dave Bray	600.5	2	300.3
Jon Christensen	577.8	4	144.5
Neil Swinton	108.0	1	108.0
Patrick Wallace	77.9	1	77.9
<b>Totals</b>	17157.2	74	231.9

## Comparisons with previous years

For all ladders a comparison between 2014 and 2013 shows that in 2014 fewer pilots entered flights on the ladder and overall scores for most pilots were lower than in 2013. In fact the top score for both the open and weekend ladders in 2014 would only have been good enough for fourth place in 2013.

The overall distance covered by OGC pilots was also down in 2014.

Krzysztof Kreis was the only one on the OGC wooden ladder this year. When transferred to the national wooden ladder his score did however place him third overall for the whole of the UK.

Although the stats are not as good as last year they are better than many previous years and to put things in context 2013 was the best year for OGC cross country for many years.

Hopefully 2015 will be a better year and if anyone needs more explanation about the ladders, the rules and how to enter flights then please just ask.

### Club Tasks on the ladders

There are six club tasks predefined on the BGA ladder for OGC that will always be scored as declared if flown by an OGC pilot.

As it states in the ladder rules:

*These tasks may be flown in either direction and will always be scored as if predeclared. They may be flown in addition to or instead of a pilot's main task.*

So if you have declared a task and then it looks like the choice wasn't very good once you are airborne you can change to one of the club tasks in the air and this will count as a normal declared task. Similarly if you have completed a task and returned to Weston and the weather still looks good then without landing you could then continue on one of the Club Tasks and have that scored as a second declared task.

The current Club Tasks for OGC are in the following table.

Task	Description	Details	km
1	100k FAI triangle or open task	WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT EDG EDGEHILL STS STONY STRATFORD WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT	103.4
2	100k Open (non-FAI triangle) task	WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT DID DIDCOT SIL SILVERSTONE WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT	107.2
3	200k FAI triangle or open task	WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT SAC SACKVILLE BID BIDFORD WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT	213.8
4	200k Open (non-FAI triangle) task	WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT PIT PITSFORD CHV CHIEVELEY WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT	204.7
5	300k FAI triangle or open task	WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT CHL CHELTENHAM CAW CAMBRIDGE WEST WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT	306.9
6	300k Open (non-FAI triangle) task	WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT COR CORBY CBN CHILBOLTON WO2 WESTON FINISH POINT	318.5

### Some notes on scoring and logger files

Full cross-country points plus a bonus are awarded for declared flights where the task is successfully completed as declared before take-off **AND** a logger file is posted on the web site.

These logger files are also of great use to the BGA airspace committees and others in proving how much glider traffic there is on any given day and where gliders fly including areas with special access rights such as wave boxes to show they are being used.

It is therefore always a good idea to upload a logger trace of the flight to both maximise the points that can be scored and to help the BGA and others in on-going negotiations and activities to keep airspace available for gliding.

## The Chairman's Corner

*Paul Morrison*



Photo: Paul Smith

**November** - typically this is the month when the Supermarkets clear their shelves of the Halloween goodies in preparation for the Christmas goodies and the Coca Cola Christmas adverts start on TV with the same inevitability as the morning frosts that prompt you to try and remember where did you put that ice scraper the last time you used it? In gliding terms, the onset of November brings about a sense of retrospect in all as even the most optimistic of glider pilots must now face up to the reality that even after an autumn that just kept giving, unless they are fortunate enough to be flying with John Williams in Scotland, the cross country season is now over and thoughts turn inevitably to fettling and domesticity.

OGC is no different, but of course for us November also traditionally brings the AGM and the fireworks party and my thanks must therefore go to Di, Mark and all who helped make this the usual great success it was.

Most recently, there was also the annual BGA Club Management Conference that John Hanlon & I recently attended as CFI & Chairman respectively. So what comes from all of this?

Looking back over the year I think all will agree that after a memorably wet start, 2014 was overall a 'good' year and this was certainly the message of both our AGM and the Management Conference. Despite what some politicians would have you believe, statistics do not tell you the whole story but it is clear that whilst gliding as a sport continues to age annually (by about 0.5 years apparently with the average participant's age now 58) it is encouraging that OGC like other clubs has seen its membership numbers increase this year. However like others, OGC has also seen some of its older and long standing members either retire or move away due to a change in circumstances and this is resulting in a change in the dynamics of the membership, with often a lack of experienced members available when setting up the airfield or at the launch point putting even more burden on the experienced members and instructors that may be present.

I have no doubt that this recent hiatus has been due at least in part to the uncertainty around EASA pilot licensing and the inevitable changes this will bring. Sadly this confusion still persists, but at least it is now certain that the status quo will prevail until April 2018 and it is intended that during this time the role of EASA and its proportionality to General Aviation, of which gliding is a part, will be reviewed. I guess time will tell what the personal impact of this will be, but it was notable that at the conference the point was made that a number of non EU member states have signed up to EASA so I do think it is here to stay and our role in this is to help and support those who are lobbying to preserve the freedoms we all currently enjoy.

Many of the clubs at the conference gave presentations on how they have increased their membership, encouraged junior participation or have re-structured their trial lessons and it is clear therefore that the challenges that OGC face are shared by the sport as a whole. Those who were at the AGM will have heard Martin Brown the Club's treasurer report that financially we had a good year and therefore as a result there was no need to increase the fees this year even by the expected annual inflationary uplift. This was due wholly to the success we had this year in increasing membership as without this and faced with the inevitable increase in operational expenditure, despite our best efforts, fees would have had to been increased.

So what does 2015 hold for OGC? Overall I'd expect basically more of the same. We do need to keep a close eye on costs and ensure that where the club does spend its money we do wisely and in a way that gives the best 'bang for our bucks'. As planned, the club did purchase several new items last year such as the two new parachutes and it is planned to buy one new one each year until the club's fleet of parachutes have been modernised. Like many other clubs, we bought a golf cart as a cheaper and safer means of retrieving gliders and this is proving to be a great success, particularly with the younger members who would otherwise be unable to retrieve gliders with the tractor.

Other notable 'CAPEX' investments on the horizon include having to replace all the club's radios with 8.33 MHz capable equipment by Jan 2018 and the club is currently in negotiation with various suppliers and trialling possible radios to ensure that where possible the chosen product is both simple to operate and are OGC proof - not a small ask! We are also investigating the costs and benefits of a possible move to Dyneema from the traditional steel cable and we are also pondering the perennial question of how and with what the OGC fleet could be modernised. Sadly new K13s are not an option alas.

We will keep you updated as plans come to fruition and as always therefore you can help with this by ensuring that OGC equipment is not abused and is looked after as if it was your own as ultimately it is and needs to give years of good service.

## The Chairman's Corner (contd.)

What other challenges will 2015 bring? It's clear that airspace will continue to be an issue for everyone and the CAA & BGA will remain crucial in ensuring that this precious and limited national resource is used fairly. We await the latest response from TAG Aviation concerning the Farnborough proposal and at the same time we are gearing up to respond to the Oxford Radio Mandatory Zone proposal and the proposed Brize airspace change, details of which are awaited. We will endeavour to keep you updated on these and how you can help when required. If asked to help, please do not leave it to others to do as your voice is critical too.

On the subject of airspace, please can I make one more impassioned plea that we do not give the regulators any ammunition to regulate by bad or unprofessional airmanship. One of the speakers at the recent BGA conference was Tony Rapson, the head of the new CAA GA unit. He made it clear that the CAA's primary concern is the safety of airline passengers and that generally gliding is perceived as 'the good guys' and not of any real concern. However, equally he cautioned that the day that, God forbid a glider or GA aircraft comes into contact with an airliner then no matter who is to blame, recreational flying, including gliding will change beyond recognition overnight. Please keep this in mind as for example it is clear that the Oxford RMZ proposal is attempting to be justified on the basis of a safety case derived from uncontrolled traffic, including gliders, in the vicinity of Upper Heyford this year, all perfectly legally entitled to be there I may add.

Finally, on the subject of safety, a key message from the BGA is that this year there was, sadly, one fatality.

However with there being four mid-air collisions and several rigging related accidents I am told it could easily have been sixteen - an unprecedented number. No doubt the BGA will be looking into the specifics of these accidents and whether the way look-out is taught for example needs to be reappraised, or are pilots too focused on gadgets these days? Whatever the outcome of these, please, please keep a good lookout and likewise when rigging, let's develop the culture of not disturbing anyone who is rigging or carrying out a DI of their glider until it is finished.

To draw this to a conclusion, the club is in a good shape but we must not get complacent. I am grateful to you all for your continuing support and my thanks, like yours, must go to the unseen volunteers who just quietly get on and do what is needed on Tuesday and Friday nights etc. As always, more help is needed and if you find yourself asking what you do for your club, please consider what more you can do to help and speak to me, a committee member or any of the volunteer crews. For example, we need someone to help organise the Friday night flying that plays such a key part of the Club's activities - could this be you?

I remain firmly of the opinion that OGC is one of if not THE best club in southern England and with your help we can build upon this as a truly inclusive, fun and friendly place to fly. All that remains therefore is to wish you and your families a happy and peaceful Christmas and I hope to welcome in 2015 with as many of you as possible at the OGC NYE party, the only way to party!

Best Wishes

***Chairman Paul***

## A Gliding Family

*Chris Woodcock*

My son Mallory and myself joined OGC in 1991. For the summer hols I offered MAL the choice of a trip to Spain, sun sangria sand and the other S word or a week's gliding course at Booker. To my dismay my 15 year old son opted for gliding - if I did it with him. Booker was a rip off, very expensive, and we hardly completed half of the launches I paid for, not down to weather, just volume of bookings. I don't know if any members have flown from Booker but it is quite dangerous at times when you air tow towards the retail park, if anything goes wrong there is no margin for error with recovery. On one occasion I was P2 when the tow aircraft lost a cylinder. My instructor took control and despite the tow pilots signals to release she hung on - there was nowhere to safely land.

We joined OGC and my son and I felt welcomed by the members. MAL went solo at 16 and for once I beat him soloing at 54 launches. I continued to enjoy the club and obtaining bronze and silver badges and purchasing a standard Cirrus which was, in my opinion a superb glider. MAL moved to the USA and continued flying powered aircraft, progressing to CFI at a flying school, and is now a Master pilot, a colonel in the USAF reserves and chief examiner for the FAA, all started from the flying bug he caught at OGC.

I retired from gliding 16 years ago for reasons I won't go into, sold the Cirrus and I thought that was that. My son visited a few months ago and my Grandson Harrison who many of you know, earwigged our reminiscences of the past. Will you take me gliding Granddad? Was irresistible, so back I came to WOG. We met many members I knew in the past, my Grandson was hooked and I am going through the re-training which believe me is hard for a (now) old git who used to carry out all of the operating functions getting re trained and saying yes sir, three bags full sir!

I would like to sincerely thank all OGC members on behalf of Harrison and myself for the warm and friendly reception we have received from you all on our joining.



## Daisy Did Denmark

*Text and photos: Dave Weekes*

The annual Vintage Glider Club International rally seems to come around quicker and quicker- it must be a sign of advancing years. For the first time the rally was held in Denmark at the National Gliding Centre, Arnborg which is conveniently central in the mainland bit of Denmark. For the geographically challenged, Denmark comprises not only the bit sticking out from Europe (Jutland) but also several large islands in the Baltic. Copenhagen the capital is on Zealand and if you go any further east from Copenhagen you're a) in Sweden and b) soaking wet.



**Photo by Steen Hansen – (Nordic Gliding Magazine)**



**Now that's a glider! – The 2G**

people, four gliders and two dogs. Not a bad showing by OGC!

Weather? Slightly mixed it had to be said. The first day I had 10 knot thermals to 5000'. There were other days with good soaring including one when Gary and Coops completed an excellent 100 k triangle in Loulou but it went blue later and Haste landed out in the K6 after pressing on. I also went later in the Skylark and chickened out! We did however get hit by the leftovers of Hurricane Bertha and lost about three days flying in all, but not bad out of 10 days.

On another day Peter Boulton made the wise move to do his first ever field landing rather than try to creep back to the airfield over woods and lakes – and fields don't come much better than the one he picked! Huge, flat, stubble, excellent access and friendly farmer with English-speaking son. Definitely a 10 out of 10.

Anyhow, the Danish Vintage Glider Club (DaSK) also has its centre at Arnborg and has recently completed a magnificent hangar and workshop complex.

The Danes have always been prominent at VGC rallies with their crazy 2G two-seater primary (ask Haste about it) and it was high time they organised the International VGC Rally.

And it was very well organised too. Arnborg is a seriously big airfield, with room both for four lines of winch launching and a couple of rows of aerotows, with space for landing in the middle. Jutland is only about 85 miles wide at Arnborg and from a decent thermal you could see the North Sea and you didn't have to fly too far east to see the Baltic.

So who went? There was a major input from OGC and ex-OGC members. Loulou the Capstan was accompanied by Graham Barrett, Gary and Janet Cuthill and Martin and Sue Cooper. Daisy was towed over by Peter Boulton and accompanied by Peter and Ursula Brooks. Haste and Hil took the K6 and I showed up from Scotland with BLW the Skylark 4. Just to add to the mob, Howard and Jane Stone arrived from Spain. Thirteen



**Peter in his field with Danish farmer and family**



## Daisy Did Denmark (contd.)

There were the usual social events organised, including the infamous and eternally alcoholic International Evening.

It had been (partly correctly) rumoured that the local booze was expensive but this was countered by the extraordinary quantities of cans and bottles which emerged from OGC vehicles and trailers. The photo below was taken only part way through the rally!

It's been confirmed that next year the rally will be in Holland, near Arnhem. Which is much nearer than Denmark (another geography lesson). And much much nearer than Finland which is where the 2016 rally will be. So if you fancy going to a VGC rally, get access to a wooden glider or even a very old glass glider and start booking the ferry!



**Arnborg Airfield**



**The new DaSK hangar at Arnborg**



**OGC's recycling centre**



**Most of the OGC Arnborg massiv**



## Second And Last – Juniors 2014

*Text and photos: Tim Marlow*

In August I was one of 47 competitors in the Junior Nationals held at Lasham. This was my second Juniors after taking part in the two seat training of 2012, which is an excellent way of gaining competition experience, I highly recommend it!

As many of you will know I borrowed DKR from the club to take part in the competition. I had learnt during the two seat training that flying a type you are familiar with is very important, as your concentration is really needed around the start and in thermals with so many other gliders in the air.

Given the large numbers taking part (competition maximum is 50) there was a good buzz about the place and a large spread of abilities from British Junior Team to complete competition novice. Luckily, a large part of the event is teaching people how competitions work and help is usually not far away.



Front section of the grid; Day one.

We managed to fly on all but one day and a pattern soon developed for me: Wake, eat, rig, grid, brief, fly, land out, ... , de-rig, drive, eat, sleep. By landing out on all but a couple of occasions I managed to ensure the Astir was warm and dry in the trailer and got to rig it a number of times. Eventually this was down to around 15 minutes, I did apologise to one helper that it had taken longer than usually and received the reply "No worries, I helped X the other day and it took over half an hour to rig their Astir!" At first I found the competition organisers keenest to fly in all weathers a little confusing, but ultimately I think it helped to push the envelope a bit more and to experience new things, which is why I was there.



Scrubbed day looked like this.

My thanks to the club for use of DKR and if you can, I highly recommend taking part in the two seat training or the solo competition. Feel free to ask me any questions! Highlights of the week included:

Watching streams of sparks ensue from the skid of the k6cr on launch, every day.

Hearing that one competitor had locked his keys and then his spare keys in his car at the same time.

Not getting lost or busting any airspace.

Hearing every farmer ask if 'the wind had stopped' and thus my arrival in their field.

Finding I had landed near a bus route that lead to the town of Avebury, where a meal and beer was enjoyed with 3 other pilots.

Going from the back to the front of the grid in under 5 minutes as everyone pulled off due to rain.

In my experience it is usually very difficult to be over prepared and all too easy to be under prepared, in this case I knew I should have done more flying before the competition and I might have got a better place if I had, but at the end of it all I had fun and that's what counts. I finished 37<sup>th</sup> if you are interested. Which was the highest placed Astir, though I am not sure if that is really anything to shout about.

My only regret is not taking the chance to offer an airspace warning product to a competitor who had picked up points for busting the Solent CTA.

## More Pictures – Juniors 2014



Another image in the 'Astir in Stubble Field' series. Full volume only £2.99!



I started at the back and finished at the front, grid cleared due to rain!



## Yet More Pictures – Juniors 2014



Driver insisted on a photo shoot. This was after the realisation that the white thing from the sky was in the field and I had just appeared from it.



A little off topic, but I found a photo of a mock aerotow (I assume!) with the Jodel D9 I have a share in, does anyone recognise the pilot?

**FINAL GLIDE** is produced using Word. It is available as a PDF in the members' area on the OGC website: [www.oxfordgliding.com](http://www.oxfordgliding.com)

As Final Glide is available for download from a public website, members' addresses have not been included.



Photo: Paul Smith

## A Day In The Life Of Corp Pilot On PC12 NG

*Simon Walker (a former OGC member and instructor – ed.)*

The PC12 is Swiss designed and manufactured, and is beautifully built. It is a pressurised, single engine turboprop aircraft that can carry 10 people, operate from short unprepared strips, cruise at 30,000' at 280 knots TAS and has a range of 1,800 nautical miles.

Operating the Pilatus PC12 NG is fun. The aircraft is very capable, easy to fly and the flight deck is a pleasure to use with a sophisticated avionics suite. It utilises a Primus Apex glass cockpit with a full Flight Management System, a very good autopilot, automated power management, load shedding, start sequencing etc. The aircraft is equipped with TCAS (Traffic Collision Avoidance System), TAWS (Terrain Awareness System) and EGPWS (Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System). The engine is a Pratt & Whitney new generation PT6 turboprop with a free turbine driving a four-bladed prop at a constant 1,700 rpm. Engine management is simple with the FADEC (Full Authority Digital Engine Control) system. It has a big high lift wing, massive flaps and a soft, long stroke trailing link undercarriage with fat tyres (which means even I can land it reasonably well... some of the time).

Typically, we have ours in a luxury 6-seat passenger configuration (we can add seats quickly if needed) and we operate at 28,000' and keep the turbine temperature down

to 750 degrees. This improves our engine life but does mean our TAS usually works out to between 260-270 knots.

Most often, the challenge we face is the type of flying that we have to do.

We operate single pilot. This means that all the work is handled by one pilot. Usually we have another captain on the flight deck as the passengers prefer this. The second captain does nothing other than make the passengers, and the pilot flying, tea and coffee. Though he is there if I was to become incapacitated and also if I want any workload relief, for example, radio comms, nav etc. if things become particularly busy. However, they will only do something if specifically asked and directed to.

We usually share the legs flying, swapping roles at each destination for the next leg of the flight.

One of our regular passengers however only wants one pilot on board... these flights can be a lonely affair and you really miss not only the company, but also the ability to bounce ideas off someone else, an extra pair of eyes, thoughts on the weather, silliness to keep spirits up when tired etc...

It's can also be lonely in the middle of the night at flight level silly when on your own and things start going wrong and you're having to make critical decisions. We had one airframe that gave me nightmares. Autopilot disconnects at critical times, pressurisation problems, heating quitting (ice on the inside of the cockpit windows), storm scope failures, partially jammed controls at altitude (the engineers had not packed the control rod bearings with high altitude grease) it



## A Day In The Life... (contd.)

was never ending... thankfully that airframe got sold to the USA. I couldn't have been happier.

We do not have an operations department so the captain has to handle all of the flight planning, organising of handling agents at the destinations, refuelling, catering and any borders or customs considerations. We also clean the aircraft, deal with the toilets, handle the aircraft accounts and paying of bills etc... oh the glamour...

Our area of operation usually includes Europe, North Africa and very occasionally Russia.

Sometimes we will have very short notification times for a flight. It can be quite a mad affair to get all the planning into place plus all the paperwork that has to be done.

The passengers very rarely turn up when they say they will. Sometimes they will turn up with more passengers than you were expecting and sometimes they will arrive and tell you that they have changed their minds and now want to travel to Ibiza instead of Rome and, "are we ready to go"... all this usually happens at about 11 p.m. after you have been waiting for them for 4 hours and have been living on peanuts and cheesy biscuits pilfered from the aircraft stores!

I'll often have two or three flight plans in the system and, when one flight is delayed, they all need to be delayed. It can be quite a juggling trick.

Delaying flight plans at the last minute can often result in your slot times getting moved around by Euro Control. You soon learn to work the system to try and avoid slot time delays. If sending ready messages via the flight planning system does not work I resort to calling Euro Control in Brussels and speaking to a human being. It's amazingly effective!

We operate into all the usual major European destinations

but, as the aircraft has the capability to do it, also into all sorts of funny little airfields. From dirt strips on Islands off the Dalmatian coast to private polo fields, to funky little places tucked away in the bottom of alpine valleys and to ice covered altiports stuck on the side of mountains.

I usually don't have to worry about fuel planning too much. We rarely carry more than 3 passengers. In which case I fill the aircraft up with fuel wherever and whenever I can. (It'll take 2,700 lbs of Jet A1)

This kind of flying is definitely a case of know your aircraft... well...

With a full fuel load, 6 knots of headwind, 3 passengers, ISA conditions and a paved surface, getting out of a 700 meter strip is not a problem using a short field take-off technique. However, you really do need to know your aircraft. Landing wise 500 meters is easily do-able. The Vref speeds (over the hedge) can be as low as 77 knots. Properly flared landing with full reverse thrust (props into beta range) and hardly any braking is required at all. It really is an amazing aircraft.

Operating at 28,000' has its problems... we can sometimes find ourselves in very poor weather. Picking your way through central European storms at night can be very tricky and you need to have your wits about you. If you fly into a large cell the chances of coming through unscathed are not good. Thankfully the aircraft is fitted with a good weather radar.

Pressurisation is automatic via the digital CPCS and just needs monitoring.

The aircraft is certified for flight in know icing conditions. It used pneumatic boots for the flying surfaces and bleed air from the compressor stages of the turbine for engine intake heating. Bleed air is also used for the pressurisation and environmental control (the heating and cooling).



Photo: Alex Rose



## A Day In The Life... (contd.)

Take-off is performed manually until flap retraction when the autopilot is usually engaged. Often though I like to fly the aircraft as long as possible. However, in a busy terminal area with lots of traffic and radio calls hand flying can be pretty damn difficult... in which case far safer and easier with the autopilot. In the cruise the autopilot is always on. Hand flying at 28,000' is incredibly difficult. There is little aerodynamic damping and the slightest of control column movements initiates a large departure from straight and level flight.

On arrival into a commercial hub we are usually mixing it with the jet traffic so have to keep our speed high so as not to create too much of a problem for the controllers. Some of our regular destinations know us by now and often when operating into Nice, for instance, I can cancel IFR whilst in the descent and position for a visual arrival which can save quite a bit of time. The Nice controllers love our arrivals as, from 3,000' overhead the airfield, I can close the throttle, throw out gear and flap, fly a very tight and abbreviated circuit, turn final over the runway threshold and make the runway high speed exit from the runway. They enjoy the spectacle and we enjoy the flying and the owners love it.

Usually though we'll be on a STAR and then vectored onto whatever approach system they are using... almost always an ILS (Instrument Landing System). If I'm tired and it's late or the weather is bad then I'll let the autopilot do all the work and just disconnect at the minima call and hand land it. If the weather is better and I'm feeling perky then I'll hand fly the ILS once established on the localiser.

At the other end of the spectrum, making a night approach into an uncontrolled little airfield with only basic runway lighting in the early hours with red rimmed eyes can be very stressful. It's why it's very important to rest well whenever the opportunity presents itself.

The most fun is had outside of controlled airspace when operating into small airfields. With the autopilot disengaged and just using proper hand flying skills.

Unusually, if our destination is closed due to weather or otherwise we will have to divert. I however very rarely divert

to our stated alternate airport. If we can't get in I will usually request to hold somewhere and then invite the lead passenger up to the cockpit for a conversation about where they would like to go instead. It may well be that they are travelling on business and have important meetings or that they are trying to get to one of their homes somewhere.

Usually they know the local area better than I do and can make good suggestions, or they will have other business that they can attend to.

This can make things interesting from a re-planning in the air front... especially if you are on your own.

When you do finally get on the ground somewhere the passenger's bags need to be unloaded, fuel has to be uploaded, the plane has to be cleaned and put to bed, toilets emptied, paperwork all done.

Finally you'll get to a hotel where it's too late to get food so you end up eating more peanuts and cheesy biscuits and chocolate from the mini bar before grabbing a few hours' sleep... ready to get up early again the next day to wait for the passengers all over again.



Photo: Peter Boulton

There is no schedule and you never know how many days you'll be away. Earlier in the year I got told I had a two day trip. I didn't get home for three weeks and I only had one day not flying in that period. If I look at the logbook it was Lydd, Denham, Nice, Milan, Tivat (Montenegro), Dubrovnik, Hvar (Croatia), Brac Island, Brindisi, Milan, St Tropez, Rome, Paris, Nice, Ibiza, Nice, Ibiza, Nice, Ibiza, Nice, Ibiza, Nice, Cannes, Palermo, Catania, Mykonos, Bodrum, Catania, Nice, Ibiza, Nice, Bournemouth, Lydd, Durham, Venice, St Tropez, Zadar (Croatia), Florence, Durham, Florence, Corfu, St Tropez, Denham... That's a lot of flying and not a lot of time to wash the old underpants.

You start to pack liquid soap after a trip like that... oh the glamour of hand washing your undies.

Generally the job is either a lot of hard work at a frenetic pace or sitting in the cruise planning what ifs and wishing you had another 100 knots of airspeed.

The great things are getting to hand fly as much as possible, stunning cloudscapes, sunsets, sunrises, majestic mountains and getting paid for it... I call that a win.

## The End Of An Era – For Me!

*Text and photo: Dave Weekes*

I've just sold my share in BNK, the Skylark 4 to Alex Rose. Looking back through my logbook I first flew 438 (as BNK was back then) on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1990. So I didn't quite make it to 25 years of ownership but it was close!

And what's happened in that time? 370 flights and 470 hours of pure enjoyment. Not the most intensive use but I did keep having to go away to earn a living and then later on, becoming an instructor did no good for my solo time.

I'd needed my 5 hours to complete my Silver C but couldn't face trying it crammed into a K8. In 1991 I took BNK to the Long Mynd and we finally did it – and before anyone says "5 hours in ridge lift – easy", no it wasn't! The ridge lift was being affected by wave and was switching on and off – it was the hardest 5 hours scratching I've done in my life!

Then I got stuck into the novice class in the Inter-club league which was real fun – especially if you beat people in glass gliders! That took us to Hinton, Bidford, Bicester, Shenington, all back in the days when you had to smoke barographs, navigate by map and take photos of your turn points. Things have changed! And in September 1995 we had our first trip to Feshiebridge. The first flight there got me to 9750 feet in wave and I was hooked. Guess why I live at Feshie these days!

In 1996 BNK and I were back at Feshie again and we scraped to 10500 feet which got us Gold height (by a margin of 50 feet) and landed out 5 miles from the airfield! In August 1997 we did WOTG – Newbury – Melton Mowbray – WOTG for a Gold distance and Diamond goal. OK it took 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours but I was well pleased I tell you. The only problem was that I couldn't fly Inter Club League in the novice class anymore, and flying intermediate in wood against people in LS4's wasn't really on.



So things went quiet for a year or so – too many logbook entries saying "BI backseat practice" etc. but there were some fairly respectable cross countries. Then in October 2000 we had a trip to Aboyne, and purely thanks to Rick Underhill getting me out of bed ridiculously early we ended up at 21500 feet for a Diamond height.

So then the question arose – could I make all three Diamonds in BNK? The thought of doing 500 km in a wooden glider gave most people a good laugh. Expect for one guy I met who commented "500 km in a Skylark 4? It should be easy enough!" The only problem was that his name was Derek Piggott. And no, I still have not done my 500 k, but I still have a Skylark 4 (BLW) so there's still a chance!

In 2002 we had our first experience with the Vintage Glider Club. The International Rally held at Achmer in Germany was a hoot. Since then we've been to Germany twice more, Austria twice, France, Lithuania and even Norfolk!

Along the way 438 changed into BNK, the rather dull maroon white and black paintwork changed to the much brighter red white and blue (bless you Mike Williams) and we acquired a metal trailer in place of the rather horrible wooden one that we had originally.

When I first flew BNK Tom Lamb, a previous owner told me "It's flown a lot more hours than you and can fly a \*\*\*\* sight better. So don't interfere with the controls too much". And that's still very good advice. Take note Alex.

It's been a great 24 years. Thanks BNK. That gold badge on the instrument panel is all yours.

# Money Matters

## Treasurer's Report for 2013 - 2014

Martin Brown



Photo: Martin Brown

I presented my second annual financial report at November's AGM. I have always said that I will do up to three years as Treasurer and then I will step down. My re-election at the same meeting marked the beginning of the third year so the Club will need a new Treasurer to take over next November.

### Anyway, thinking back to last year's AGM for the moment...

The Club saw a significant overall reduction in membership numbers during 2013. The new members we had obtained were mostly juniors who pay reduced-price fees so member income from subscriptions and flying fees was down considerably on the previous (record-breaking) year.

At the same time as reporting a reduction in income I had to report an increase in anticipated future spending. Our new lease was due to come into force meaning an immediate increase in ground rent of £1500 (plus legal costs). All Club aircraft radios will need to be replaced with updated models by January 2018 at a cost of around £1,000 each. If that wasn't enough, our stock of parachutes is becoming quite elderly so the Committee announced a plan to replace them at a rate of 1 per year after an initial purchase of two units.

To cover all these extra costs the Committee proposed an across-the-board increase in prices amounting to roughly 11% for a typical member. These increases were reluctantly accepted by those present at the meeting.

### OK, that was last year, how did we get on in 2014?

Very well in fact! For reasons we have never really understood, membership numbers experienced a very positive rally during the year. We signed up new members at a rate of about one per fortnight and almost all of them were adult members paying full price fees. We also lost more established members, which is regrettable, but it does mean we ended the year with a strong membership made up of keen new members. The all-important subscription and flying fee income was back to 2012 levels despite not being able to fly at all during January and February 2014 due to a flooded airfield.

There was further good news on the expenditure front as well. The new lease has still not been signed which means that the £1500 earmarked for a rent increase was not needed. It doesn't become due until the lease is signed and the charge is not back-dated.

We purchased 2 new parachutes as agreed at a cost of almost £3,000. These should have a lifetime of 15 – 25 years if they're looked after.

Plans for replacing radios are still ongoing. We have a further 3 years to comply with the new regulations and so far no purchases have been made but this is something that won't go away.

The higher than expected membership income coupled with lower than expected spending has left us with a healthy cash surplus of £13,000. This is a similar level to 2012 and a long way above last year's figure of just over £4,000.

### Good news all round then, so what's happening to Club fees?

Your Committee has decided that there should be NO INCREASE in Club fees at this point. Under normal circumstances we would be recommending an increase in line with inflation but given the unusually high increase in fees last year and the fact that our rent payments have not increased as expected, it was felt that current levels were sufficient for the time being.

One aspect of our fees that we do not have control over is the charge that the BGA makes in respect of each member of a BGA club. This increased in October from £29 to £30 for all members over the age of 21 (under 21s go free). In effect this means that over-21 membership renewals will rise by £1 from December.

### Any other changes?

As noted above, our membership profile has change considerably over the past 12 months. We now have a lot more student members than we have had for some time. This means that the load on our training fleet and instructor team is higher than we have become used to. Providing value for money for our members is our priority but we remain reliant on income from trial lessons in order to keep fees as low as possible. Clearly, the more trial lessons we do the less capacity we have for our student members so we are making some strategic changes to our trial lesson structure and pricing with a view to reducing the number of launches used for trial lessons whilst maintaining income.

A single-launch Trial Lesson will now cost £45 (previously £39). The Mini-Course as we know it is no longer offered for sale (but any that have already been purchased will be honoured). In its place we now have the 'Trial Lesson Extra' which is 2 launches at a charge of £80 (3-launch mini-course was £89). The 4-launch Family Group is now up to £140 (was £120). Extra launches can be purchased at £35 dependant on availability on the day.

Last year I introduced the 'Treasurer's Special' with free soaring in single-seat gliders during the winter months. This is back for this winter to encourage members to take k8s and Astirs onto the airfield to help relieve the load on the K13s. The first 30 minutes of flying time in these gliders will be free of any soaring fees. You will be charged per minute beyond 30 minutes but on the rare occasions that soaring flights are possible it might be polite to come down after half an hour and let someone else enjoy them. Soaring fees will be back to normal from the beginning of March.

That's all from me. Thank you for getting this far and please keep flying and bringing in the money!





# 7 Years OXFORD GLIDING CLUB



## Newsletter

Neil Swinton

We have been publishing a regular newsletter on Thursday evening for a little over a year now, and from the feedback we get we do believe they have been useful and even entertaining.

The newsletters are composed by myself (Neil Swinton), and Mark Brooks.

We do try to keep the content relevant and useful, for example the weekly rota. But we do also try to let people know what is going on at the club, especially if they have not been around for a few weeks. There are also occasional communications from the committee or the CFI sent this way. This is an important way to reliably reach club members since not every member gets the list server emails.

We are using a bit of software called 'MailChimp', which lets us compose the newsletter on-line and collaborate and QC check between authors. This allows obvious spelling mistakes and (most) lost apostrophes to be corrected before publication. MailChimp allows us to schedule a newsletter publication in advance, so we don't need to be around and on-line at publication time. It monitors who has received the newsletter, when they were opened, and any links which were 'clicked'. It also securely holds our email address list centrally, so we don't need to have copies of it distributed around on various people's PC's. And it costs nothing, and is advert free. We hope every club member, and some valued ex-members get the newsletter each and every week. If you do not get the newsletter, and think you should, please get in touch with the authors, by emailing 'newsletter@oxford-gliding-club.co.uk', and we can try to help. There are a couple of things to try first however. The commonest reason for not getting the newsletter is that your email program thinks it is spam. Look in any spam folders to see if they are skulking inside. If you can access your spam filter settings, try to lower them on a temporary basis to see if the newsletter arrives (they are sent out Thursday nights from 7pm onwards). Finally, try to put the email address 'Newsletter@oxford-gliding-club.co.uk' in your Email address book as that can convince your email program that the newsletter email is valid.

If you would like to contact the authors, please do so by emailing 'newsletter@oxford-gliding-club.co.uk'. Or simply reply to the newsletter and it will reach us - (and it won't be sent out to everyone else, don't worry)



### Halloween Special:

As can be seen above, there was a fun event last Saturday with the OGC Halloween party. Lots of people made an effort with spooky, weird and - to be honest - plain daft costumes which all helped with the party atmosphere. We were all impressed by Alan Fowler who 'called in a few mates' and gave us a live band for the night, which was simply excellent.

Also excellent was the food, prepared by a team of Tim, Martin, Richie, Di, Kayleigh, Emma and others.

The puddings, including BananaOffie with a Halloween theme, were brilliant, see photo's below.

Thanks to Liisi and Becky who pulled it all together for us.

The 'newsletter' sponsored award for the best costume was chosen by Paul Smith (whose birthday it was), and went to Di.

Seeing as how she spent all afternoon preparing puddings for us all, we hear she was delighted with the prize of a small Tesco's Cake...



## Thoughts About Flying

*Simon Walker*

Much to my displeasure I have been away from gliding for some years now as I have been busy flying noisy, smelly powered aircraft. I became an instructor / examiner and spent a few years at a large training facility in the UK teaching PPL, Multi-Engine, Commercial, Instrument and spending some of my days flying creaky old piston twin



Photo: Eifion Herbert

engine aircraft on photo survey work. These days I fly a Pilatus PC12 NG turboprop aircraft around Europe in the corporate sector, but I still enjoy doing some instructing and examining as well. Preferably teaching tail-wheel and dropping in to farm strips for a cup of tea.

The transition to powered aircraft from gliding aircraft was generally easy in terms of manoeuvring and control however, there were many areas of power flying that seemed a dark art at first. I well remember having to gain a better understanding of airspace, traditional navigation technique (no GPS allowed), radio telephonic communications, radio navigation, air law, emergency procedures, aircraft technical study and many more. Learning these things was great fun and broadened my understanding of aviation immensely.

Having said that, in general, powered aviation didn't provide the joys and communion with your aircraft and the environment that gliding did. I think maybe that's why I enjoy flying around in the Piper Cub and Maule M5 so much. I get to pretty much ignore the radio, choose my own circuit, slipping turns, side-slipped approach control, proper landing technique... all the things glider pilots do naturally.

Whilst instructing I had the good fortune to teach several glider pilots who wanted to gain their powered licences. It was always a joy because they could actually handle the

aircraft well, invariably displayed good judgement and, even more importantly, good decision making skills... and I didn't have to call out "Rudder" all the time!

I believe that we are very lucky to have been taught to fly in gliders. Many powered pilots do not fully appreciate close airspeed monitoring on final, wind gradients, flight at critically low airspeed, spin recovery, field landings, being able to 'feel' what the aircraft is telling them, in the way glider pilots do.

I got a little bit tired of seeing this kind of thing and of reading about landing accidents in the AAIB bulletins along the lines of "I don't know what happened, the ground just rushed up at me"

So, when instructing in power I started to use many of the gliding instruction tips and tricks to try and produce better power pilots. Simple things like, whilst on approach, making them call out their indicated airspeed every few seconds and to call out and carry out corrections.

I used to make them tell me how the airflow might be moving over hills, buildings, trees and objects on the ground and to explain how that might affect the landing / take-off phase.

Whilst on cross country exercises I would talk about lift and sink, convection and air masses etc. How to minimise their cruising altitude variations by interpreting the sky ahead. To expect sink, lift, sink and to anticipate.

I used to particularly enjoy demonstrating by thermalling a 152!

Though no longer in the PPL syllabus, I used to take them spinning. I would start the lesson by making them fly a few knots above the stall and make varying turns... to let



## Thoughts About Flying (contd.)

them feel what the aircraft was doing and, yes, to sometimes inadvertently spin it from those turns... all the things that you guys and girls now instinctively know.

There is limited time in a PPL syllabus, with so much navigation and cross country to get through, so the slow flight and stall/spin sections are sometimes skipped through far too quickly.

I threw the power rule book out the window when it came to practice field landings. Most instructors used to give the simulated engine failure at 2500' – 3500' leaving plenty of time to fly a fancy circuit all the way round the chosen field. I used to give mine at 1500' – 2000' and teach the gliding technique of planning the way in to the field and judgement to gauge positioning. I would cover all their instruments apart from the ASI and demonstrate how to estimate height using detail on the ground.

I've had the misfortune to suffer 5 engine failures in piston aircraft now (1 x constant speed unit, 1 x carb icing, 1 x carburettor fault, 1 x piston & cylinder disappeared overboard, 1 x fuel blockage), that's rather a lot for one

lifetime, and have never failed to safely get it back on the ground intact. I owe gliding instruction, not power instruction, for that.

There are many more examples of great techniques in gliding having commonality with power flying... so much so that I used to wish that all my power students had done, at least some, gliding first.

So, having seen aviation from both power and gliding, and having taught in both, I can safely say that glider pilots should feel very proud of the true piloting skills and airmanship they possess and that students at OGC are very lucky to have extremely fine airmen and women as instructors that equip them with a skill set that makes them part of a very elite group.

Incidentally, I used to sit in C172s, PA28s, PA34s etc., wishing I was in a glider, especially on those booming summer days when the streets disappear over the horizon. Now I sit in a computerised flight deck at flight level silly looking at amazing lenticular clouds over the alps and wishing I was in a glider!

---

## A Remarkable Day Wednesday, 1 October 2014

*Text and photos: Phil Hawkins*

Mostly very sunny after a damp start, with good scattered cumulus and upper waves.

In the morning before going to the airfield we did a wood-collecting expedition to our marked stack in the forest behind Insh village. I picked up Ruaridh's black trailer from the stables and took Peter Brooks in my car, while Fiona and Martin Brown followed a few minutes behind us with Peter's car and our little trailer.

Chainsaws not allowed in the forest but we had both bow saws going, although the old one really isn't much good any more. It took about an hour between the four of us to fill up both trailers. We returned home with the big trailer, but the others took the little one with its load directly to the airfield because we had just heard the first aerotow of the day overhead, and they wanted to see what was going on.

We unloaded the 6ft logs in Loch Imrich drive, then returned the trailer to the stables, chatting to Lorraine briefly. Stopped at the

allotment to pick a bag full of spinach leaves for Caroline, who wanted them to go with the curry tonight.

When we got back to the airfield Martin B and Peter were getting ready to fly in DaisyETA and Martin C was going to fly Dave's Skylark again. They all had good flights of around 2 or 2½ hours. Meanwhile we ate lunch outside in the sunshine, listening to the radio. Jan and Moritz were exploring the wave, but it sounded like Moritz did not have the oxygen fitted in the club Astir and was regretting it. Initially they were in the Aviemore area but moved south to upper Glen Feshie and Glen Tromie.





## A Remarkable Day (contd.)

After Martin and Peter had landed, having played with weak bits of wave up to 6000ft, Fiona and I launched at 3pm. This was definitely the best flight of the year so far for both of us. I pulled off the tow at 1800ft in strong lift on the ridge, and did one pass at minimum speed as far as Loch Nam Bo. By the time I got there we were at 4,000ft or thereabouts. Returning along the ridge wasn't as good, so I tried traversing the middle of the main bowl, which sometimes works. Wave was contacted on the second visit to Loch Nam Bo, which went fairly gently up to 8,700ft and then topped out.



I remembered what Moritz and Jan had said about the waves at Glen Tromie. Generally speaking there was a lot more cloud cover to the south than the north, but the Glen Tromie area did look a bit lumpy with some vague gaps between the cloud tops. I pushed forward through medium sink for several miles, losing about 3,000ft before reaching the second wave system. It was a beautiful afternoon looking down at the reflections in the lochs, and as we climbed higher it was surprising how many of them we could see and identify. The three lochs in line with Glen Tromie (Loch an t-Seilich, Loch Bhrodainn and Loch an Duin) marked the best wave spot, and we also noted Loch Cuaich and Loch Laggan further to the right. Fiona remembered Loch Ericht and Loch Pattack from her pony trek last month, and they were clearly visible. Other more distant waters were reflecting the afternoon sun brilliantly whenever they were aligned with cracks in the cloud cover.

The wind in this upper wave system was much stronger, and I was cruising along the edge of the Glen Tromie gap at about 43 knots making extremely slow headway. We were in 4 knot lift for long periods, enjoying the tranquillity of the wave and the sunlit cloudscape. The distant visibility wasn't as good as the day before but that didn't really matter. I changed my altimeter setting to QNH passing 10,000ft but left Fiona's altimeter on QFE. Scottish Information on 127.275 MHz could not hear my calls but at least I listened to them for any conflicting traffic, and I noticed they were telling other aircraft about the "gliding festival." Our best height was FL145 or about 13,700ft above the airfield. This beats our blue wave flight in 2009 by about 500ft. We had

oxygen on board but didn't use it, although I would have done if we had still been in good lift at that point.

Decided to descend when I realised the entire wave system was beginning to drift downwind to the east. By that time we were both fairly cold anyway. Landed around 5.15pm *after twice clearing my blocked ears on the way down.* It took some time to get my feet warmed up, stamping them regularly as the glider was being towed back up the airfield by Peter and Martin C. It's turning into a vintage Octoberfest, therefore. All three members of the Vega syndicate (Pete, Alister and Andy) had successful flights over 10,000ft. Jan Ketelaar was pundit in his Cirrus reaching 17,000ft while Moritz limited himself to 12,500ft without oxygen. Dave Weekes also had a good day including taking a voucher holder to over 5,000ft for his first ever flight. Les Blows has arrived (via EasyJet) and did some instructing with John Dick and others.

## A Remarkable Day (contd.)

In the evening Caroline and the ladies were serving up various curries to hungry aviators. It was Slimming World night at Aviemore, and Fiona was delighted with her **3½ pound loss** this week, a new low point. When she got back she made beans on toast for me, and tucked into the curry dishes. Nice evening under a half moon, taking the little trailer home still laden with logs from this morning. Martin C came in to chat and sample Fiona’s whisky, although she decided against, having received warning messages from Jo at Chesterton. Martin walked back to Birkhill about 11pm, and we all went to bed then.

However, the phone was soon busy with further calls from Jo who was about to give birth. This meant Fiona got up again, packed her bags and mucked out the car, and I got up again to unload the logs from the trailer that had been left for the morning. She was off down the road to England a few minutes after midnight, promising to drive carefully and to stop for naps when she needs them. I stayed up for a while in the stillness of the night, writing about this truly remarkable day.

## A Summary of the Year 2014

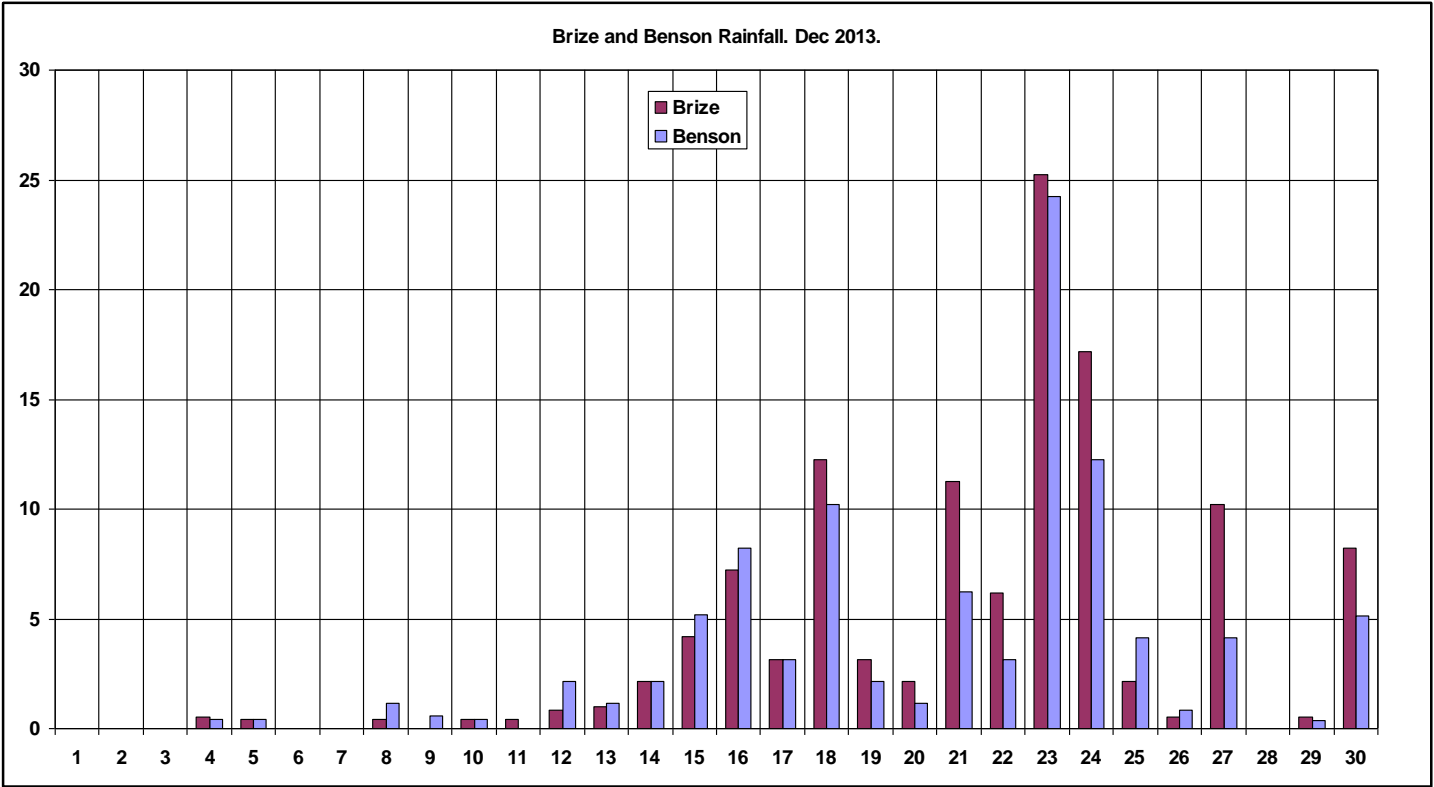
or  
**Who Mentioned Global Warming?**

Keith White

For the first time in many years, the RAF was not hurling bodies from the Hercules as we await the AGM, so there is *flying* instead. The AGM was well attended; about 50 in the briefing room - listening, commenting, and voting; and about 80 all told to enjoy the fireworks sourced by Jon “Woosh, ahhhh”, and the food supplied by our very own catering team of Di and Kayleigh “Can I have more please?”

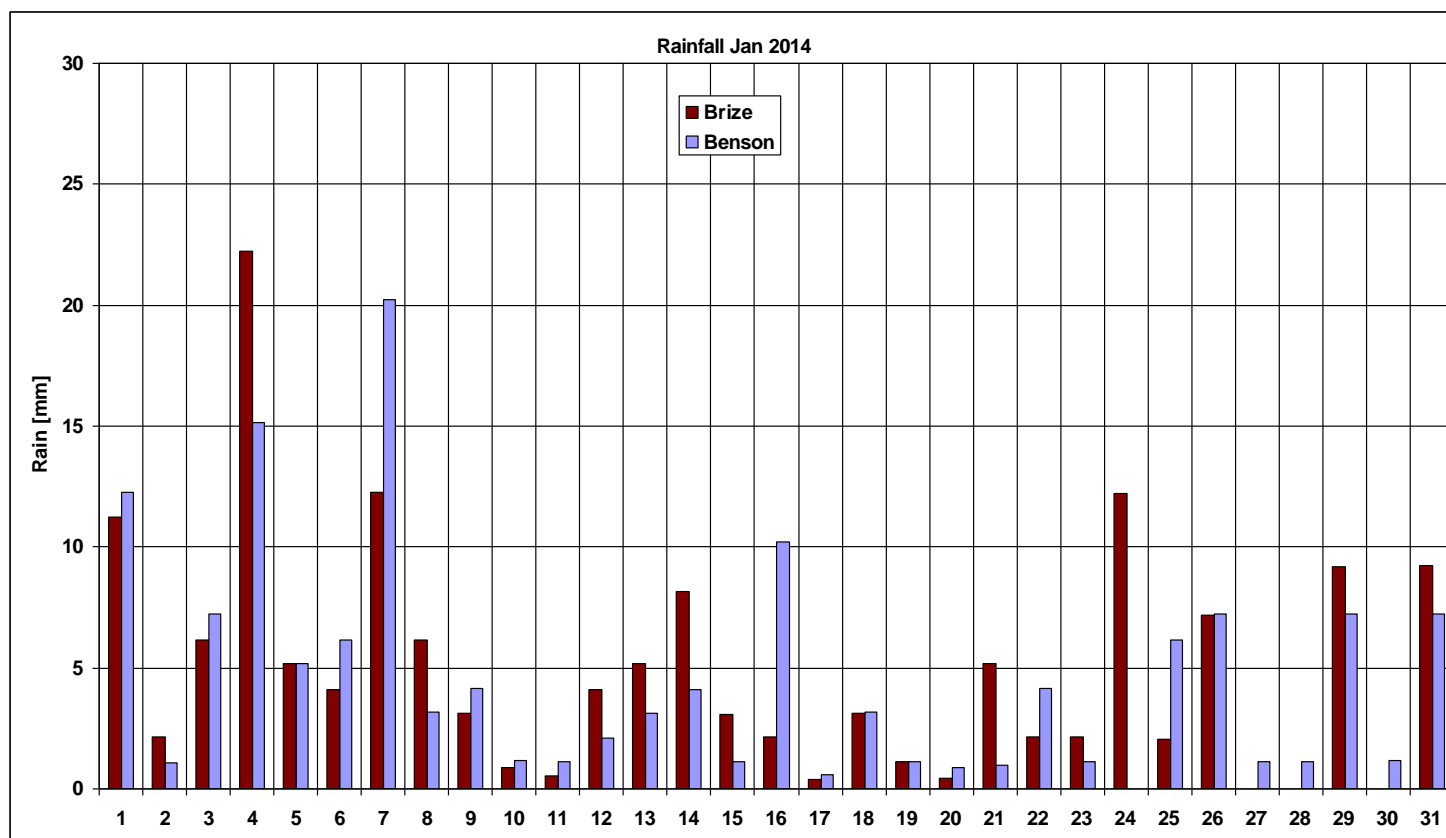
The weather, the weather, the weather! Botley Road is flooded and closed, and also the field. 15<sup>th</sup> Jan and still waiting for the field to be dry enough that the waterfowl return to Otmoor.

The average SW England rainfall in December, from 1931 to 2013, is 118 mm. December 2013 totals for Brize Norton and Benson are 120 mm and 99 mm respectively [312,000 and 258,000 tonnes of water on Oxfordshire], so not exceptional, but it mostly fell in the second half of the month.



And then continued into Jan 2014 ... and February.

## A Summary of the Year 2014 (contd.)



Some data points are missing from the Brize data, but it rained at Benson, so probably at Brize also - so it probably rained every day throughout January.

The average SW England rainfall in January, from 1931 to 2013, is 80 mm [maximum 181 mm in 1990]. January 2014 totals for Brize Norton and Benson are 151 mm and 141 mm respectively, so not the greatest, but considerably more than average.

We eventually got back onto the field on Saturday Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>; a bright, sunny day with just over 50 flights, but the Sunday was [you guessed it] rained off.

Things picked up a bit from the second week of March, with a total of 198 flights in the remainder of the month.

And here we are at Easter - a bit later this year, in late April. Friday is bright and sunny, but the RAF decide to fall upon the airfield all day - I am surprised that their chaplain did not have a word to say about that; Saturday at least flyable even if the airfield seemed surrounded by sink; Sunday dank and overcast all day and eventually more of the stuff from on high; Monday quite reasonable despite the precipitation forecast.

April 19<sup>th</sup> saw the start-of-season party, with a "onesie" theme. The highlight of the day must have been Martin B and Carole's departing in the DG505, having been sceptical of the theme, only to return dressed as Batman and Robin, having stopped over at Bicester. It is not recorded what Bicester members thought of this strange activity.

May 3<sup>rd</sup> and the prospects look better; in fact three 300 km flights were completed and Liisi achieved her 5 hour silver flight.

On June 28, JSX visited the Kirtlington village fete. Not good weather in the morning, but it cleared up in the afternoon, and the visit was appreciated by the organisers.

Unfortunately, also near the end of the month, the large tractor started drinking oil excessively quickly. Estimated cost to repair £1000, and it will keep Andy out of mischief for a while.

Not a lot seemed to happen during July and Early August. Although the weather was mostly quite good, the good bits did not coincide with weekends, and the ICL was a washout this year, so there was no winner.

Tim Marlow took Astir DMH to Lasham for the Juniors competition on 15<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Aug, and came a respectable 37<sup>th</sup> out of 47, having made friends with a number of fields during the week.

Those who drop in occasionally decided to monopolise the airfield for nearly the whole of August, so there was no flying-two-weeks this year.



## A Summary of the Year 2014 (contd.)

The regional finals were held on the last weekend of August, at Bicester, and, as undefeated locals, OGC flew as the Midlands team. Saturday was scrubbed, but Sunday was flyable. Against strong competition we came a creditable second, the results being:

Hus Bos ..... 11 points.

Oxford GC ..... 10 points.

Nympsfield ..... 8 points.

Norfolk ..... 7 points.

South West region..... 4 points.

On 5th Sept, George drove the bus into the rubbish at the end of the MT workshop, severing the power to the charger and putting all the lights and power out with a massive bang - perhaps a contender for the non-flying brick award.

On Sept 13<sup>th</sup>, there was a surprise leaving party for George, before going off to the army. We wish him all the best, and hope to see him, when permitted out of barracks.

The next Saturday, there was a joint barbeque with Shenington, which resulted in a challenge to a bowling competition [nevertheless, all had a good time].



On the 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, OGC played host to this year's BGA Development Committee Meeting. They all look suitably content, perhaps because they were looking forward to a healthy coffee break with jam doughnuts.



Photo: Paul Smith

The annual expedition to Talgarth was from 4th to 10th of October.

Richard Hall, Paul Smith, Mark Brooks, Haste (one day only but the best one) Baby Dave, Paul M, Liisi, Tim, and Richie were there.

Weather was not the best, with no wave flying, but a surprising amount of thermal soaring for the time of year.

[Courtesy of RH.]

Ed.: And this is the "Piston Broke Trophy", lovingly crafted by Martin, awarded to Andrew at the AGM for mending the tractor (again):

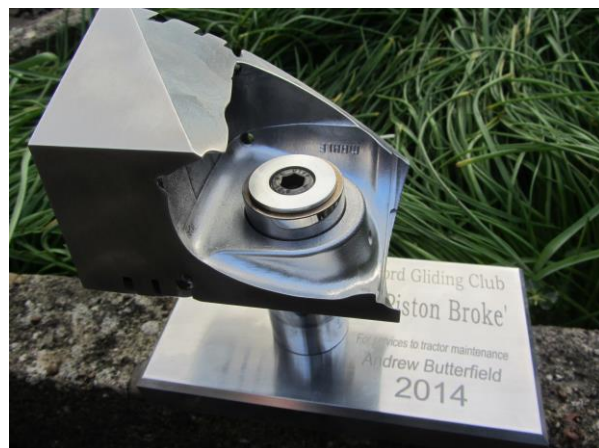


Photo: Neil Swinton

## Joint OGC – EDG Christmas Party, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014

### STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS

Tim Marlow just sent me these four photos of the joint OGC and Sherington Christmas party + ten-pin bowling evening, to which the fine people of Sherington Gliding Club had invited us. Looks like fun was had by all:

