



FINAL GLIDE

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Edited by Claudia Bungen

NEWSFLASH: The first ever National Gliding Week will take place in June, and OGC are going to borrow the Gliding Simulator to do some PR work in Oxford. More info to come (or ask Steve McCurdy, our BGA communications man)

NEW HANGAR EXTENSION AT WESTON

Norman Machin, an ex Chairman, way back in 1997 had drawn plans for a proposed hangar extension.

When I took on the position of Chairman, I had decided that the planning application that had been made previously should, if at all possible, be resurrected, before it expired. This was important as we couldn't be sure the Land Agency would agree to it again at a future date.

Two main reasons for the building were:

Firstly, the driving of buses and winches etc. into an area of parked gliders was an accident waiting to happen, especially as the brakes were poor to say the least!

Secondly, the excessive accumulation of rubbish and engineering bits and pieces, although required, were gradually eating up valuable glider storage. Both of these issues look very unprofessional from any sensible person's point of view.

The original plans formed the basis for our planning application, but the design was over-complicated in as much as the roof was to have its Apex at right angles to the main hangar. This would lead to a restriction on the final height we could have at the entrance. Another change that we made was for the extension to start from the front of the hangar. This would reduce the length of driveway, plus allowing an extension to the glider workshop at a future date

To avoid losing our planning application we actually made a start 3 days before it lapsed, by placing metal stakes at each corner! Not strictly a start!

From here we obtained quotes for the base, as this would definitely produce a start and at least

give us a hard standing!

Nothing is quite as simple as that. The first quote was too high at £11,000 due to a very high specification drawn up by Norman. The second quote at £5,800 was for the supporting ring beam only, to be in filled with road blocks at extra cost. This was a non starter because the builder concerned never could give us a definite start

date. After a long time, quote number 3 was obtained from an ex-club member, who I have known since the early 70s, who was suggested by Jim Doyle. His price of £8000 was accepted and he started within 3 weeks and did a good job.

It was decided at committee that we could possibly afford to go ahead and get a costing for all, or part of the building.

We tried the local engineering firm in Chesterton who quoted over £16,000 for the steel structure only, with no cladding. Thanks to Neil Turner, we obtained further quotes. We finally settled for Leofric Structures Ltd. An unknown firm. When I checked them out I found that they had moved premises! Not a good start. I eventually tracked them down to a small office in Banbury. Nobody there! After a phone call the man who organized the quote gave us his assurance that all was well!

To cut a long story short, work commenced 3 weeks before Christmas and finished the 22 December. Neil, Paul and myself acted as site foremen to ensure that the building was erected to our overall satisfaction.

I think for the cost of £13,080, the final cost of the structure, we have a good, sound, well built extension that we as a club can be proud of.

The access road to the extension has been approved and will commence as soon as the weather allows.

It is now up to everyone to try and maintain a clean, clear hangar for glider storage only. We will now be able to have all the club fleet rigged at any one time.

(Peter Brooks)

Hot off the mailserver (11th Feb): The roadway to the new extension is being completed as we speak. There was a big trench there last night which should be filled in with stuff today.

Well, we hope it is being done before Saturday, otherwise we will not get anything out of the hangar at the weekend as all the stuff was piled up in front of the hangar last night!

(Nick Hill)

Also in this issue

**Two new winches
for OGC**



Bowland Forest



**Cross-Country
Course for free**



**Flying in
Omarama**



A first Solo



Sutton Bank x 2



Germany x 2



**Soaring the South
Downs**



and much more...

FINAL GLIDE RE-BORN

Phil Hawkins

After a gap of more than two years we are back with a bumper issue for the start of the 2004 season, thanks to Claudia who volunteered to act as guest editor. My work and family commitments have increased enormously in the last couple of years. It was frustrating to have so many interesting contributions for the magazine, and yet no time to produce it.

For that reason, some of the articles you will read here have been in the pipeline for a long time, whilst others are new. True, some regular columns are missing, but this is only due to a temporary lack of contributions. In some ways this is a general round-up of what's been happening in the Club for the past two years. We sincerely hope that the next issue will not be so long delayed.

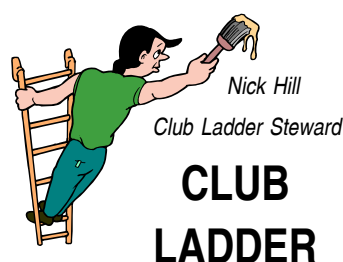
Editing a magazine, even one with such a limited circulation as ours, is one of those jobs that sounds easy but isn't. The trouble is that most Club members prefer to read what other people have written, rather than write anything themselves. Bullying potential authors is a never-ending job. Some people do appreciate being asked, but this is usually a long process of gentle persuasion on the editor's part. Using the power of the computer is essential when assembling the magazine pages. Think of the old days when cutting and pasting really meant scissors and glue. It must have been a nightmare to achieve any sort of consistent "look and feel" between one page and the next. But even when a number of potential articles are available, the editor's task has barely begun.

Claudia began by learning Power Publisher, the software with which previous issues have been produced. Of course, you never

start with an absolute blank screen. You do it the easy way by copying the previous issue as a template, using the same column spacing, the same page numbering layout, the same margins, etc. And then, setting a document onto a page isn't as simple as it may seem. What will the page look like? How many columns? Full length or split? Horizontal or vertical dividers between articles? Any graphics available? Will the graphics be part of the headline, overlap columns, or occupy one or more column widths in their own right? The editor's imagination and creativity come into play here.

Then there is the task of squeezing a piece of text into the space where you want it. Changing the font or font size will help, but often the editor must wield the delete key to reduce the article to manageable proportions, correcting spelling mistakes and grammatical errors at the same time. I have been known to work a whole evening on just one page, adjusting the size and placement of headings, authors' names and pictures.

CB: And now, after weeks of copying and pasting, proof-reading, spell-checking and formatting, resizing boxes, implementing graphics, losing the whole file when the application crashed, rebooting the computer, copying, pasting and reformatting everything again, saving 7 backup copies of the file, just in case, printing pages and proof-reading and DTP-checking them again, here it finally is: Final Glide issue no. 23.



For many years OGC pilots have been found sitting in the clubhouse with a beer and scribbling in a celebrated red book.

For the uninformed, this is nothing to do with "This is Your Life" but is the OGC cross-country book where pilots enter details of their epic soaring flights.

At random intervals the club ladder steward allocates a score to each flight, and at the end of the season the pilot with the highest score made up from their best four flights is awarded the club ladder trophy.

For the last season 2002/03 the results where:

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Total
H Stone	2903	2120	1629	1556	8208
M Hastings	2359	1638	632	540	5169
G Crawford	1813	1293	640	497	4243
G Barrett	1227	1212	1042	635	4116
D Weekes	1076	16			1092
C Büngen	499	167	109	30	805
P Morrison	586	110	89		758
R Jackson	316	198	153	114	781
A Butterfield	186				186
S Calvert	132				132

As well as being recorded for the OGC ladder these scores are also entered in the National Ladder. For the 2002/03 season Howie's score of 8208 was sufficient to place him 32nd in the National Ladder.

I would like to encourage anyone with cross-country or height-gain flights to enter them in the cross-country book. I will score all flights entered in the book and periodically update the current ladder displayed in the clubhouse as well as entering all scores in the national ladder.

For those with internet access, entries to the national ladder can now all be done via the web site <http://www.aircross.co.uk/bgaladder>.

This site also allows anyone to see the current state of the national ladders and see how OGC pilots are doing compared with everyone else. You will have to register to enter flights but having done so there are various advantages:

- You can enter all details of the flight
- The system will calculate your score and reflect the changes in the ladders immediately
- The scoring calculation will give you the best score on the basis of several methods and accepts landout LAT/LONG coordinates.

A few points to note are:

- a) with the latest rules there are various scaling factors which apply depending on the task shape. If your aim is the maximum points score then you need to be careful in your choice of task
- b) if you use GPS barrels rather than FAI TP sectors you will be scored on a slightly shorter distance.

If anyone has any questions about the club ladder, national ladder, scoring, glider handicaps etc. then just ask me.

AGM REPORT Phil Hawkins

The 53rd AGM was held at the Club on 22nd November 2003. About 50 members turned out on a damp drizzly evening to hear Chairman Peter Brooks' lively address. As always the annual statistics were reviewed, including the interesting fact that there were 348 cable breaks during the year, including simulated ones, and 119 launches were given free to instructors flying solo in their own gliders.

There were at least four first solos this year (Lisa Hastings, Rebecca Stone, Peter Boulton and Gina Pattisson), at least three completed Bronze badges (Simon Calvert, Paul Freer and Nick Beloff) and at least four completed Silver badges (Anthony Buck, Dave Bray, Rob Jackson and Simon Calvert). Claudia Bungen attended the BGA Basic Instructor course.

The Chairman thanked all those who had worked so hard to keep aircraft and ground equipment in good working order, including Paul Rogers, Dave Weekes, Mark Pollard, Martin Hastings, Graham Barrett and Brian Payne. He acknowledged Ian Shepherd's ground-breaking installation of the automatic computer logging system, recently featured in *Sailplane & Gliding*. He extended special thanks to Garry and Janet Cuthill for their hard work on Friday night bookings and trial lessons, and to Neil Turner for his acquisition of the backup winch "Taffy". Peter regretted the deaths of two long standing members, Tom Lamb and Dave Roberts. Tom had been a popular member for 32 years and had died on the morning after the previous AGM. Dave had died earlier this year after being a member for at least 50 years, and had left money to the Club in his will. Treasurer Ian Shepherd reported on a record breaking year, with the biggest income ever and the biggest expenditure ever. Currently we have 143 members but only 91 of these are full

flying members, perhaps some 10% down on recent years. He was concerned about the "churn rate" of new members. For example there were 19 new members this year but only two of these attended the AGM.

Club officers for 2004

President:	John Bridgeman
Vice Presidents:	John Gibbons, Graham Barrett
Chairman:	Paul Rogers
Vice Chairman:	Mick Moxon
Secretary:	Karen King
Treasurer:	Ian Shepherd
Committee members:	Mark Pollard, John Hamilton, Rick Underhill

Award of trophies

Martin Hastings (CFI) presented the **Simpson Cup** to Graham Barrett and John Hanlon for a 270km flight in the Capstan, the **Dennis Farmer Memorial** trophy to Anthony Buck for the first 5hrs of the season, the **Deep Breath Cup** to Phil Hawkins and Neil Swinton for their 10,000ft climb in the K-21, the **Club Ladder** trophy to Howard Stone, the **Flying Brick** to Simon Walker for taking a launch with his tubes taped up, and the **Two-Up** trophy to Chris Shepherd.

AGM Catering

A massive buffet and BBQ was prepared by Fiona Buck, Lynne Barrett, Hilary Hastings, Neil Swinton, Janet Cuthill, Ursula Brooks, John Hamilton, Peter Boulton, Claudia Bungen and Frank Luke.

ONE SMALL STEP FOR A PILOT Lewis O'Neill

I've always had the bug for flying, I guess it's in my blood, and I've got the backing of my family. They are behind me all the way. We knew it was going to cost but it's my dream.

I guess my first step was looking up the local gliding clubs. I made a phone call to the Oxford GC and was invited to visit the club. I went when a competition was in progress, this was when I knew that gliding was for me, with the water gushing out of the wings and the sweet whistling tune from the glider wings. This was the first time that I met Cris Emson, and I'm sure that he could see my dream coming true.

Then I was offered an appointment to see the cadet board, and I'd have to fill in a questionnaire. I took my time, did some research, and returned the form to the Club. I was also asked a series of questions, which I answered to the best of my ability. I was lucky, I guess, I passed and with the help of a cheque from good old Dad for my membership I was in and on the first run of the ladder to 'Going Solo'.

The club offered me a cadetship, so it was now down to me. It was going to take up a lot of my time, weekends with my mates or the girls could go on hold for a while. Every weekend my parents would get me up and take me to the airfield. It was not going to be just flying – I had to help in the hangar, get the gliders out, clean them and hang around in really cold weather in the middle of the airfield. This sort of thing was not for the faint-hearted, but what the hell, if I wanted to fly then so be it.

Then I got my first flight, just to see if I liked it, and my instructor for the day was Gordon Craig (thanks Gordon). I will never forget this flight as long as I live, it was just as the sun was going down, and the sky was red. It was the most

amazing thing I've ever seen, not a sound, just the two of us flying around like birds into the sunset, you could have been forgiven for thinking you were asleep and dreaming. It was all over to quickly and we were down, they say my smile reached each ear, I loved it. Yes this was what I wanted to do.

Over the ext few weeks I spent every available waking moment at the airfield and according to the team there, I never lost that grin, it became my trademark. For weeks I continued to do whatever was necessary to get a flight, even getting involved in a 'dawn till dusk' event. I'd never been so tired, but hey! I'm flying. Mum and Dad were great getting up early on Saturdays and Sundays, ferrying me back and forth from Kennington to Weston, they never complained (thanks guys).

One training session that will stay in my mind is a long soaring flight I had with Haste, it lasted 30 minutes and we became one with the birds, just the two of us, chatting sometimes and silent the rest, just enjoying our time with the birds.

It was getting close to my birthday, September 15th and possibly my first solo flight, all I had worked towards. Well, the big day came, and all hell let loose with the weather, it blew gales, hardly the ideal situation for taking to the sky for the first time alone. To say the least, I was really disappointed, but I realised safety came first. I would not have wanted to put my colleagues and friends in a difficult position. They explained to me it was too windy and we should try again next week.

Well, there was disappointment all round. Mum, bless her, had even gone out and bought a camcorder for the event. Anyway the following week came (at last) and the O'Neils were poised

with the equipment to make the next blockbuster and earn me an Oscar. Here it was my time, and I wasn't sure if I was feeling excited or just plain sick. Haste took me up for a check flight, and it went well, but to make sure we went again for a second run. I know now that Haste wanted to be sure I was ready. Mum was poised with the camcorder, and the last words from Haste to stick in my brain were "Lookout, you crazy bastard". Every time I fly solo now I hear Haste's voice, and it still makes me smile.

Well here it is, checks done, connect the winch "OK Lewis", I hear from the van, thumbs up all round and "Taking up slack". My God, this is it. Everything seemed to fit into place mentally and before I could think of Haste and his words of wisdom, I was releasing the cable and flying alone. Then, there it was in the back seat – Lookout, you crazy bastard. It seemed to be over before I knew it, time to think about my approach, check around, yes it's fine, down I come. I made it, a good landing, and close to the van too, a bonus. Everyone was watching me as I pushed the glider back to its spot, to a chorus of "Well done, Lewis – great flight". Haste was straight over, asking if I wanted to go again. That really was a silly question, and this time I felt more at home and less nervous.

Well that was it, my first solo flight. I've done a few now and despite going solo I've always got company, Haste. Thanks, Haste you're a great instructor. I owe you a lot and will remember what you and the other guys have done for me for a very long time.

You should never forget that feeling of your first solo flight, whoever you are and however long you have been flying. It's the best feeling ever, and mine will stay with me for the rest of my life.

THANKS EVERYONE

30TH VINTAGE GLIDER CLUB RALLY

ACHMER, GERMANY

Dave Weekes

The Osnabrücker Verein für Luftfahrt – Osnabrück Flying Club to you and me – operates from Achmer airfield in Northern Germany. The airfield was once similar in shape to WOTG, although much larger. In World War II, it was used for operating Me 262 and Arado 234 jets which attracted the displeasure of the USAAF and the airfield was heavily cratered by many bombing raids. The club rebuilt a wide grass strip along the same alignment as our long run. The rest of the airfield is used as a British army training area and has become heavily wooded. Many little round ponds still exist in that area, and the whole airfield is surrounded by notices saying “Danger, Unexploded Munitions”. Well it’s one way to encourage fully held-off landings.

The OVFL (www.ovfl.de) is a gliding/motorgliding club with a heavy bias towards “Oldtimers”. The club owns a couple of K21’s, a DG300, an LS8, Astir, DG 101 a K13, a couple of K8’s, two SF 25 motor glider tugs and a Rallye DR 400 tug. More interestingly, they also have an Lo100, two Grunau Babies, a Condor IV and a Kranich III. The private fleet includes a Weihe 50, Kranich II, Olympia Meise, K7 and a Foka 4. They rebuild wood gliders on-site and apprentices are taught restoration techniques through a Government funded programme.

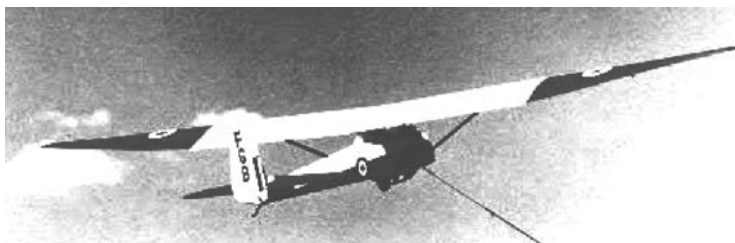
Just to annoy you all, winch launches were € 5 (£3.20) and an aerotow to 2000’ (600 m) was € 18 (£11.50)! For the rally they had their two drum winch and a four drum Van Gelder along with the three tugs. The tow out vehicle for the four cable winch was a BMW (just like Steve McC’s!) with an ingenious auto cable detach/self folding towing bar. Because of the poor weather conditions, a lot of circuits got flown and launch queues could be long – but by the end of the week and with excellent organisation by the launch crew, over 300 launches were achieved in one day!

And if you think that the Europeans are obsessed with documentation, there were no site checks (it would have been difficult!), no waiver forms and no checks on whether you held any kind of licence – just enjoy your flying. There were however extended daily briefings in three languages and any offences got a stern mention from Ulf, the director of flying.

The main impression you get from a VGC rally is variety and colour. Let’s face it, modern gliders look like they were sculpted from marble but they are all pretty much the same shape and boringly white. They just fly well that’s all. Whereas the vintage gliders come in all shapes from wire braced primaries through gorgeous gull wings, with and without struts, straight wings, elliptical wings, fuselages of enormously varied shapes with open cockpits, tandem, side by side or even no cockpit at all! Of course some of them also fly like bricks but they do it with maximum style. And colours – anything from beautiful varnished wood to horrendous colour schemes which

should not really have been applied in the first place – a cream two seater outlined in pink unfortunately sticks in the memory. But a gull-winged fully aerobatic open cockpit Habicht done in cream and sunburst red stripes looked wonderful – and did aerobatics brilliantly too.

In Germany, in stark contrast to the UK there seems to be enormous public interest in gliding. What’s the statistic, nearly half the world’s glider pilots are German? There wasn’t even a fence between the road and the airfield, and every day of the rally there was a crowd looking at gliders, peering in cockpits, watching the launches and landings, taking millions of photos – and not getting in the way. Small children brought by their parents or grandparents. Grandparents brought by their children. One day about 50



leather clad members of the local motorbike club pulled up and watched gliding for a couple of hours. The local TV featured the rally. The local newspapers had printed extensive articles before and during the rally. It’s a different world out there.

But the VGC members themselves were the best bit – they’d come from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland the UK, USA – even Japan. About 350 of them with 110 gliders. 48 from Germany, 25 from the UK and the rest mixed. Like the Juniors, but with forty years more experience in partying.

The Japanese couldn’t bring any gliders but carried their own body weight of cameras. They each took loads of pictures of BNK and reacted to being told the type by saying “Haaaaa, Singsby Skyrarkfour” in tones of the deepest respect. I don’t know if they were like that with all the gliders or whether “Skyrarkfour” has some greater meaning in Japanese but it was very gratifying.

The Danes were there with the G2, an incredible two seat Primary – pretty much two seats on a plank with wings attached. A ride in the front seat gave you a view of your feet – and the ground. Anyone could have a ride for the price of a launch ticket and an €10 donation to their new hangar fund. The most fun I’ve had with my clothes on for the longest while – and I’ve got the video to prove it. Tony refused point-blank to go near it.

There were six T21’s, mostly German and Dutch owned and refinished to standards which would have totally bemused Fred Slingsby. The German owners of one T21 had embraced the

“barge” motif enthusiastically. It was fitted with rowlocks, paddles and a foghorn which was sounded as they went up the wire

Letting other people fly your glider is a tradition of the VGC and many are insured accordingly. I was offered the “Blue Brick”, a T31 and told the solo speeds “Oh and if you fly anybody else, remember that the gross weight will increase by another 30% and add a few more knots”. A solo conversion to the T31 was successful and I was sitting in the launch queue for another go. “Is this seat free?” a German girl asked, pointing at the back seat. “Er yes, but you should know that this will be my second-ever launch in this glider”. “That’s OK” she said, climbing in “I fly a Grunau Baby, it’s just the same”. So I got us to the top of the wire and said “you fly it then”. To judge from the noises from the back seat, it’s the most pleasure I’ve given a girl in a long while.

In return she fixed me a ride in the back seat of a Ka 2 – a sort of two seat enlarged K6. It seemed to fly like a K6, because we spent an hour low down in dubious soaring conditions,

with the airfield very far up the horizon. I was totally relaxed – if we’re going to land out, he’s flying, it’s his glider and he speaks Ger-

man. He certainly knew his aircraft a lot better than I did, because he simply flew it back to the airfield, at what I regarded as very low level and did a straight-in landing – even using the airbrakes! Just call me chicken. A lovely aircraft though. I also flew a Swallow, another first type and the one and only Skylark 2S – a Skylark 2 which has been modified with a lower wing position, a Dart canopy and altered wingtips and ailerons. It was far lighter and quicker in roll than a Skylark 4 – but that wouldn’t be difficult!

The Swallow guys had a go in BNK on a day when there was very little lift. We were waiting for another launch when this strange German with three days of stubble, a permanent broad smile and wearing a knotted handkerchief on his head said to Tony. “The Skylark 4 is one of the few gliders I’ve never flown. May I fly yours?”

“Does our insurance cover us for non British pilots?” Tony asked me. I dragged him to one side. “Who is this guy?” “Jochen Ewald – he test-flies gliders”. The name did ring a bell (*See the Feb – March 2004 S&G for an article by Jochen*). “I assume that you’ve got more than a Silver C and 200 hours?” The smile got even wider “A few more than that”.

So he climbed into BNK after approving the fact that we have a weak link in our canopy stay. Could this be from hard experience? He approved of the large cockpit even more. “We’re in no hurry – fly it as long as you like”. Not much of an offer, given that everyone else was flying circuits. So he launched and vanished for nearly an hour! He came back with an even broader smile. “For conditions like this, it is a wonderful glider”. Maybe it’s the knotted handkerchief that does it – where can I buy one? Jochen

30TH VINTAGE GLIDER CLUB RALLY (CONTD.)

proceeded to burn a roll of films on BNK. Can we expect a belated review of the Skylark 4 in Aerokurier? Who knows. We got him to sign the logbook. Tony reckons it could add pounds (well at least £2) to BNK's value.

Later Chris Wills broke Tony's heart. "Would you like to fly my Kranich II?" Do bears s**** in the woods? "Do you have an instructor's rating?" "Er, no". "Have you got a Silver C and 200 hours?" "I haven't got 200 hours yet." "Oh dear, what a pity" said Chris. Then Tony broke my heart, because he didn't tell me about this offer for a couple of hours, and by the time I got to Chris, the Kranich was on its way back to the hangar. Curses! Possibly just as well though, mastering the intricacies of droppable wheels on a first aerotow on type in an irreplaceable glider might have been interesting – but that's the VGC.

OK the weather wasn't great, but I flew seven days out of eight. Most mornings were cloudy or even raining and the official weather forecast at the briefing would be disastrous. Then Ulf would say "Yes, but in my opinion we will be able to fly this afternoon". And that's pretty much how it worked, every day but one.

An outstanding example of OGC heroism, Eugene Lambert dropped in on the rally and stayed overnight – on his honeymoon! There's nothing like starting off with a huge brownie point deficit. But he was impressed with the variations of glider shapes and colours too.

To pass one wet morning we visited Hermann Hackmann's workshop. He is an old-style woodworker who is in the process of building a Reiher – a gorgeous gull-winged glider – from scratch. So far he's completed the tail, rudder, fuselage frames and about 100 different sized aileron ribs. The fuselage frames were laminated out of eight lengths of 3 mm square spruce and 0.8 mm ply. Absolute works of art which will be completely hidden by the fuselage skinning. It tended to make one more careful when rigging and flying your own wooden glider.

And the VGC's social life is something else – they've been practising for 30 annual rallies now. On the International Night, each country, other than the host, sets up a stall and provides free "typical" food and drink. The experienced UK mob had come with twenty gallons of beer, considerable quantities of cider and Scotch and were tooled up to fry fish and chips – served wrapped up in English newspaper – hugely popular, as was the Scotch. I could only chip in a bottle of cooking Scotch, several chunks of extra-strong cheddar cheese and six packets of crisps.

The other countries had also done well – mostly in the alcohol area. Inevitably the French had wine, wonderful cheese and jambon cru. The Swedes had pickled herring, Aquavit and hats with horns. The Danes had some high proof alcohol and hats with bigger horns. The Finns had something stronger than Aquavit. The Austrians had lederhosen and schnaps, the Japanese had rice wine, the Dutch had Genever, wore clogs and little Dutch caps. The Americans had Coca-Cola and popcorn. Ah well, but the Coke was welcome after touring the other stalls a few times. The Italians and Spanish? – by then I was in no state to remember what they had. There is video evidence of the evening but it will be heavily censored prior to public viewing.

The Germans night was based on potatoes. The booze as well as the food. It's amazing what you can do with a potato. Fried potato cakes with apple sauce as dessert was new on me but I went back for a lot more. The memory of the International Evening was still strong and I stayed off the schnaps. Tony and Steve didn't.

The last Saturday started blue and got very hot and humid. The viz was awful but cloudbase got to about 3500' so I flew around that part of Germany for about three hours. In my absence a visiting Tandem Falke carelessly taxied over the winch cables while the Blue Brick was being launched. This resulted in the Falke being tipped

on its nose and the tail being virtually sawn off by the cable. The T31 had to do a downwind landing but both they and the people in the Falke were OK. The Falke definitely wasn't. The Blue Brick has been awarded a "confirmed kill" and a little outline of a Falke is to be painted under the cockpit before the next rally.

Overall the organisation was wonderful. Ulf's young launch crew, both on the winch and aerotow were brilliant and then they ran the bar all evening. A great laugh all of them – and of course they all spoke far better English than my German, although my German picked up during the week to the extent that I could understand an old boy telling me about learning to fly a bungy-launched primary in 1940. "30 seconds down the hill and 30 minutes to get it back to the top again" – and we complain about our launch rate!

On the way home we diverted through Arnhem and across the bridge, looking for the Aborne museum. We finally found it accidentally in Oosterbeek. I'm not sure when a British-built wooden glider last visited Arnhem but at least BNK survived the experience.

Tony's star navigation got us from Calais to Achmer and back without problem. Steve, with a minute map of Europe and a sleeping crew took five hours longer to get there, having gone via many strange Dutch places. He was mocked but justice caught up with us. The haul back to Calais was on virtually empty roads. Then we hit the M25 and signs "Queues westbound". So we went northbound and hit a huge accident-induced queue. Tony had given up navigating and I ended up on the A20 heading for London. No worries I thought, at 10.30 on a Sunday night, Central London will be empty. It wasn't. I don't know who last hauled a glider trailer round Marble Arch in heavy traffic but he's probably still sweating too. Steve got off the later boat, sailed unchecked round the M25 and arrived at WOTG well before us.

It was a great week. The weather could have been better – or a whole lot worse!

MEDICALS - THE FACTS

Claudia Büngen

You have probably all heard of the new medical requirements for glider pilots in the UK.

Previously, to fly solo in the UK, a self-declaration of fitness was sufficient. This self-declaration is included in the OGC membership form, so once you signed that you fulfilled the medical requirements. Only for instructors slightly stricter rules applied.

Last year in March new rules were introduced. Compared to most other European countries we still got away very, very lightly. You still don't need a full-blown medical as a glider pilot in the UK.

The medical standards follow the DVLA requirements. For solo pilots at the moment these are the DVLA Group 1 (private drivers), and for instructors DVLA Group 2 (professional drivers, previously called Heavy Goods Vehicles and Public Service Vehicles) requirements. Full details of these standards are available under

www.dvla.gov.uk/at_a_glance/content.htm

More detailed and accurate information is available on the BGA website under <http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/medical.htm>

If you solo(ed) after March 2003 you need a self-declaration form that is signed by you and countersigned by your GP, confirming the compliance with the requirements of the DVLA Group 1 standards.

There are certain age-related intervals for renewing the self-declaration.

People who soloed before March 2003 have "grandfather rights", i.e. their self-declaration is still valid until they reach the age when a renewal of the new declaration is required.

Instructors also need to sign a self-declaration form in certain intervals, get it countersigned by their GP, and fulfilling the requirements of the DVLA Group 2 standards.

Self-declaration forms and briefing notes are available from the OGC (on the notice board in the clubhouse) or from the BGA website.

TED LYSAKOWSKI AWARD: A CROSS-COUNTRY COURSE AT LASHAM

Claudia Bungen

In June 2002 I was awarded a free cross-country course at Lasham – here's how the week went:

23-06 Arrived at Lasham, I thought Nick and I would have a nice relaxed dinner together, but no: I had to do motorglider field landing checks as I hadn't landed out for over a year. So off to the Falke and doing field landing checks on Sunday evening. I'm quite nervous, but the instructor tells me that he'd flown with a Concorde pilot the day before whose circuit planning was a lot worse.

24-06 In the morning briefing it is decided that a Concorde pilot (must be the same as above I guess) who desperately wants to do his 50 km takes the Discus 399 that has been allocated to me for the week, and flies to Bicester and gets an aerotow back. Meanwhile I'm going to fly the Grob Acro III with Pete Masson round Birdlip (200 km). Great fun, and it's a great confidence-booster when a World Champion calls you a "fine pilot"!

After we get back to Lasham I'm supposed to do some circuits in the Discus to familiarise myself with it.

Unfortunately Mr Concorde has landed out on his way back from Bicester, after getting an aerotow from there! – He just about made it to Didcot and had to get an aerotow retrieve back from there. By the time he's back it's too late for me to fly the Discus. – Later we find out that he got to Bicester, climbed out of "my" Discus, and said to the Bicester people: "I'm from Lasham, I've done my 50 km, and you shall be giving me an aerotow in 15 minutes." To which the Bicester people chuckled and replied "where's your barograph or logger", and it turned out he had neither. But it wasn't until the last day of the course, when he filled in his badge claim form, that he realised why the Bicester people started sniggering when he told them he hadn't got a barograph or logger...

25-06 Weather isn't brilliant, overcast and dull, so I do an aerotow and two winch launches in the Discus to get used to the glider. Very nice to fly, it feels like a glass Ka8 – as if there were two wings growing out of my shoulders. It does exactly what I want it to do, and all my landings are spot landings exactly where I want the glider to be. And it glides and glides and glides... – I'd like one for Christmas please.

26-06 Very blue, very difficult day. Some strong, but very tight thermals, and equally strong sink around. Another Discus pilot and I are supposed to follow another pilot in his Nimbus 3D. Unfortunately the Nimbus is always quite a bit higher than me and has lift where I don't. So I stay in the vicinity of the airfield and struggle to stay airborne between 800 and 2500 ft for 2 hours.

Very frustrating, especially when in the debriefing we are told how to fly on blue days. All the tips and hints that I would have needed before the flight are revealed in the debriefing. Not what I expected.

27-06 A 100 km task is set as the course is mainly aimed at people who are after their 100 km diploma. The task is Didcot out and return, but the conditions

are such that I never get past Basingstoke.

Another very frustrating day – is a cross-country course a waste of money for me? Am I too stupid or too much of a chicken to go cross-country?

Today, Pete Masson and Gordon Macdonald, the deputy CFI, who runs the course, have gone off together in the Duo Discus. When they get back they see me sitting on the airfield and Gordon drags me over to the Duo. We try to do the same task again, this time in the Duo Discus, but we never get past Newbury – well at least my failure in the Discus before wasn't entirely my fault if even the course instructor in a Duo doesn't get much further... I am feeling a bit better, and flying a nice glider does lift the spirits!! (Although how anyone can design a cross-country glider with such an appallingly unsuitable cockpit remains a mystery to me...)

28-06 I want to leave the course with a good feeling, so I ask whether we can do a lead and follow, as I want to go cross-country in a single-seater at least once during the course.

The idea is that Gordon leads in the Grob Acro III "45" and an Astir and I follow him to Bicester and back (160 km). It's a nice day, and we head off, only to find ourselves in a gaggle with at least 5 other Lasham single-seaters that all decide to follow us. It gets a bit crowded at times, and a 2 to 1 lead and follow would probably have been better, but on the other hand it's good practice for thermalling in gaggles.

In the beginning Gordon still calls the Discus and the Astir, 399 and 212, individually, but in the end he just says "Lasham gaggle – 45..."

Best climb is over the power station at Didcot, from then on the Lasham people get worried because the weather gets worse towards Bicester.

I however begin to feel quite comfortable because this is home and I even recognise some fields that I had selected on previous flights. I'm quite happy just

to get to Bicester and then maybe having to land there, as there's also a big OGC outing on that day, and half the club is at Bicester anyway.

I also notice that Radio Oxford is really quite bad and dominating 130.1 when you have to listen to it as an outsider – you don't notice it that much when you are actually part of Radio Oxford...

Right over Bicester airfield we find one thermal which gives us enough height to head off back to Lasham. Now it's easy, with a 10 kts tailwind and some nice looking clouds ahead we soon reach Didcot, and from somewhere not far South of Didcot it's a final glide in a nicely floating Discus back to Lasham. As usual I don't trust the final glide calculator and arrive at Lasham with too much height. Never mind, normal circuit and the week's last landing next to the trailers.

In the debriefing we hear about the Concorde pilot's missing barograph number, and he is extremely upset when he realises that he has to do his 50 km again – but at least he won't have to do it in a low-performance Discus but plans to use a proper glider (the Surrey & Hants Ventus) next time... (ed.: maybe he's the one who bounced the first of the three last Concorde to land at Heathrow)

Conclusion: Looking back I thoroughly enjoyed the flying in the Discus, the 2-seater flights with Pete and Gordon, the lead and follow on Friday and the fact that I could just concentrate on flying for a week and got a lot of practice in aerotowing.

For that I am really grateful that I was chosen for the Ted Lysakowski award, as I would never get that chance otherwise.

As the main goal of the course was the 100km diploma however this was not really suited to me. Despite this I did enjoy myself and the flying helped me regain my confidence for cross country flying.

Ted Lysakowski was a competition pilot who died in a gliding accident a few years ago.

After his death his wife Krysztina and daughter Karen set up the Ted Lysakowski Trust.

The idea behind the Trust is that glider pilots who might not otherwise be able to achieve their personal goals are sponsored to help them get closer to their goals. To be considered you need to send an application form in, explaining what you have done so far in gliding and what you'd like to achieve, and why you think you deserve one of the awards.

There are currently three different awards: a week's mountain flying in Rieti, two-seater flying in a competition with a Nationals pilot, and the cross-country course at Lasham, which I did.

This included the cost for the loan of a Surrey & Hants Discus for the whole week, bunkhouse accommodation, all aerotows and winch launches, and the field landing checks in the Motorfalke. When I first wanted to apply three years ago various people told me not to bother as – so they said – this was only aimed at junior pilots. The following year I applied anyway and received one of the awards.

When I told Krysztina about the comment regarding the target group she actually got a bit upset and pointed out that there is no age restriction whatsoever, and that anyone who would like to be considered should apply.

So – if you would like to get one of the awards: get in touch with the CFI who receives all the information about the Ted Lys Trust and new application forms every year. The application deadline is normally in October.

FLYING NORTH FOR WINTER

Emma Cuthill

Having flown at only a few other sites, leaving Oxfordshire and heading north promised to open new horizons for my flying experience. My adventures were somewhat hampered by having no transport once up there, which is a pretty big problem when you want to get out into the countryside. I emailed the two nearest clubs, Bowland Forest and The Lakes, to find out if any of their members were at Lancaster University or living in or around Lancaster. The best response came from Bowland Forest. They put me in contact with a man who lived in the town and one rainy Saturday morning he collected and introduced me to Bowland Forest Gliding Club where I was met by a friendly welcome.

Their fleet is similar to ours. They have two K13s, three K8s, an astir and a super Falke. On my first visit I was shown the airfield, it's long (about three quarters of a mile I believe), narrow and covered in sheep (well it was until foot and mouth hit). The field lies between two ridges. My first visit was rained off as soon as I arrived, so I was back at

the university before any of my hall friends were even up! It all went down hill after that, as over the winter the field became so water logged, there was no flying for a while.

I returned in spring, unfortunately this time I had chosen a misty day, which never lifted. Was someone trying to tell me something? Neither ridge could be seen from the airfield.

Third time lucky. I went out again bright and early, before the average student knows the world exits. This time the sun was shining, it was a beautiful day, but apparently everyone else had realised that! I was a long way down the list. Luckily for me there were no sheep to move! I watched as glider after glider disappeared. I even witnessed one of their cadets going solo. Lunch was available at the farm cottage by the edge of the field, where stunning bacon sandwiches could be purchased. My turn eventually came as the thermals were dying out. It was my first time flying a ridge. After being launched by their SkyLaunch we flew off along the ridge and my

instructor explained the principles of ridge soaring. Although we never actually flew above 2500ft. we flew along the Parlick ridge (not sure on the spelling of that one) and then out into the open to try and find some thermals, which had regrettably all died out by that time. So again we topped up height by flying along the ridge, then out again to take in the sights. Its pretty stunning, the flat green of fields and farms surrounded by the two ridges, gradually blending into Bowland Forest. Having seen the sights it was time to land. Circuit planned and down we went. A fifty-minute flight over as we rolled to a halt. It was an amazing day and finally I understood why people from Weston would travel so far for a ridge. However, at 220 miles away... maybe this is a "Ridge too far". I would like to thank Robin McVean for his help in getting me to the club and to all their members for making me feel so welcome.

CLUB STRUCTURE

Phil Hawkins

In the past there has been some confusion between different groups of Club officers and Trustees involved in the running of the Club, and how these are elected. This article attempts to clarify the current position.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held towards the end of November, to allow accounts to be prepared following the financial year-end on 30th September. Members vote to elect certain officers involved in the day-to-day running of the Club: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Honorary officers are also elected, including a President and one or more Vice-Presidents.

Apart from the above, the AGM must also elect a number of "ordinary" Committee members. There must be at least three ordinary members, and not more than five. The Committee meets regularly throughout the year to discuss operational issues – currently this occurs roughly every six weeks. Club rules state that at least one Committee member must also be a Director, but during 2004 we are not adhering to this rule. However, one Director will attend each Committee meeting this year, thus ensuring feedback from the Committee to the Directors.

Who elects the Directors? AGM voters are asked to elect the Trustees of the Oxford Gliding Company Ltd. Currently there are six Trustees, but the required number is not specified and has varied in the past. Theoretically the Trustees meet after the election and appoint Directors from within their ranks, but in practice each Trustee becomes a Director. Traditionally the Directors meet annually, together with the Club Treasurer, immediately before the AGM. They discuss the financial performance of the Club within the past year, long term strategy for the future, and may raise any concerns for consideration by the new Committee.

The Directors agree they will not be paid for their services, but they take on *voluntarily* the financial responsibility of keeping the Company, and therefore the Club, afloat. Should any financial disaster befall the Club, the Directors would be jointly and personally liable. Share capital is nominally owned by the Directors, but this amounts to only £4000 and is of no practical benefit, having been unchanged on the Club's accounts since 1939.

The Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) and his deputy are normally appointed by mutual agreement between the Committee and the Instructors. The CFI will call Instructor meetings as necessary, to discuss safety and training issues.

The Trustees of the Site Trust Fund (STF) are a completely separate group from any of the above. There must be three Trustees, who are elected by the Committee (not by the AGM) and their term of office is for three years. The current term of office expires on 31st December 2003. The rules of the STF do not require Trustees to be Directors or Committee members, but in practice they often are. The Trustees of the STF act as guardians of the Club's savings, authorising cash to be used for Club projects as and when appropriate. Most recently this has included the hangar extension and the new winch drums.

Who's who in 2004

President: John Bridgeman

Vice-Presidents: John Gibbons and Graham Barrett

Chairman: Paul Rogers

Vice-Chairman: Mick Moxon

Secretary: Karen King

Treasurer: Ian Shepherd

Ordinary Committee members: Mark Pollard, John Hamilton and Rick Underhill

CFI: Martin Hastings

Trustees and Directors of the Oxford Gliding Company Ltd: Graham Barrett, Peter Brooks, Steve Evans, John Gibbons, John Hanlon and Phil Hawkins

Trustees of the STF: Graham Barrett, John Hanlon and Phil Hawkins



SOARING THE SOUTH DOWNS

Tony Hoskins

As many of you know, in order to further my rather dim education, I've let go my tight grasp on the apron strings and now find myself loitering around the little-known Southdown Gliding Club at Parham.

Firstly a quick description as I doubt many people have ventured this far into darkest Sussex. The club has a rather large membership of which probably 85% are solo pilots. In fact membership consists of about 210 and we are still actually seeking more members. The field is small but immaculate. The fleet too is very well maintained, and with three tugs and three two-seaters, there is always a glider available for whatever your needs.

So, what have I noticed that makes Parham different from Weston? Well apart from the mostly aerotow operation, the first thing one notices is the massive ridge looming over the airfield, which stretches 32 Kms to the East and 43 Kms to the West. This means that even clumsy cross-country pilots such as me can easily fly a 173 km triangle in constant lift by turning Eastbourne then Butser Hill (near Southampton).

As far as operations go, Southdown have morning and afternoon Duty Pilots and three

Instructors all day. The club flies Wednesdays and Weekends in winter, and Wednesdays, Fridays, and Weekends in summer. However the club is allowed to operate 7 days a week, which usually is the case during summer months. In general the airfield is very quiet and it is very pleasant not to have lots of parachutists descending from all directions.

Well, all this talk of the club, but not a lot of what I've been doing. Simple reason is because I have not been doing a great deal. Upon joining I was instantly bombarded with offers of aeroplanes. Within a week I was a proud owner of a very old T21. In fact this glider shows signs of last years boredom with gliding as the following "extras" can be found:

Standard Altimeter, ASI, Mechanical vario, and COSIM. Magneto Switches. A Gear Stick (4 forward gears, AND Reverse). Guns and Rocket selector panel and switches. There are plans to fit a gunsight at the next CofA.. **How very silly.**

On the positive side it is kept rigged in its own T hangar and its good for a bit of a laugh. Luckily for me, the mutual flying rules here at Parham mean that I can fly with anybody who is solo. Finding those mad enough to fly in the T21 in

February is good for me as it means I save the cost of hiring the club fleet (An hours hire of the Discus is the same cost as food for me for two weeks, and those that know me realise that that's quite a lot of money!).

So, do I enjoy the new club? Well apart from the ever increasing line of tug pilots waiting to shoot me each time the T21 emerges, and the rather poor social side of the club compared to Weston, there is a great deal of fun to be had. Fast runs between the trees on the ridge and touch and go's in the car park are all good fun, but nothing can beat the T21 CofA. The workshop here is too small to house the beast, so it needs to go into a garage in the nearby town of Storrington. However the fun part is that we have no trailer with which to move it. This has been solved in a fun and probably illegal way. Picture this, 5 blokes running along with the various parts of a de-rigged T21, being towed by a car along the main road between Petersfield and the Brighton for about half a mile through a large town. It has to be seen to be believed.

Don't worry though, we're not all mad down here. If any of you would like to pay a visit, just let me know and I can sort something out.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE NOTAMS (AND DAVE'S SOLUTION)

Dave Nisbet

In July this year, the CAA published an independent study that it had commissioned into why the number of airspace incursions had increased in recent years. Among the findings was the statement that:

"Some infringements were the result of pilots failing to read, or to understand, briefing material such as NOTAMS and Aeronautical Information Circulars"

In the body of the report it listed many of the problems that pilots were experiencing with the new system and concluded that "As a result of these shortcomings, many of which are still to be resolved, many GA pilots report flying without a pre-flight NOTAM brief, significantly increasing the risk of infringements". Not surprisingly the largest thread in their discussion forum was on the subject of NOTAMS! Not a good situation and a somewhat damning indictment of the new system.

Of course you all know what they were complaining about. You download the latest bulletin from the AIS website (assuming you could figure out what sort of bulletin you wanted, what the ICAO id of Kidlington was, is the printer full of paper) and for your trouble you get ten pages of information 80% of which is irrelevant and the rest is organized in such a way as to make finding Matt's keys on the airfield seem simpler.

I thought there had to be a better way so I looked on the internet. Unfortunately Notamplot no longer works since the new system came online and Notampro costs money. Being Scottish and wanting to improve my programming skills I figured that I could do better and the idea for NotamView was born.

My aim was originally just to turn the incomprehensible data supplied by AIS into something that I could display on my flight planning software – Strepla. Luckily the AIS system is a bit unreliable and, as a result, they have some pre-prepared data updated twice a day in a text format which can be obtained without logging in. The program

fetches this file, then looked at each NOTAM entry to find all the coordinates. Easy, I thought – that is until I noticed that they make mistakes – lots of mistakes. You will not believe how many ways they can express a simple coordinate! Anyway, the data was converted by NotamView into a format devised by Tim Newport-Peace for his FlightCheck program and could then be loaded into Strepla – success!

Then I opened my big mouth at the club and someone suggested that I go one step further and create something with a nice map that could be put on the club computer for everyone to use. The current version of NotamView is the result of that endeavour. Put simply, it will download the latest data from the internet, search all the entries for coordinates and work out the size and shape of the problems, filter out all those entries about radio frequency changes at Heathrow, hide anything that isn't active today (or tomorrow) and then plot the whole mess on a Map of the UK.

But wait there's more... You can also ask it to draw a task on the map so that you can see at a glance if your 500k will take you straight through the Red Arrows and get you slightly more publicity than the flight deserved. If you want to know what is going on in the red circle near Oxford you can simply click on the map and a line at the bottom of the screen will tell you. If you need more data a fuller decode is a click away. I have tried to keep the display as clean as possible and decode as much as possible, but the programme is by no means perfect. While the current NOTAM format may look to be intended for computers, not humans, it contains so many formatting errors and variations in description that decoding it 100% accurately is impossible. For this reason the full notam is also displayed as a double check.

A number of club members have been testing the programme for me and their suggestions have helped me to improve it considerably. We intend installing it on the clubroom PC in time for next season so you will all get a chance to use it and comment.

For a copy of your own check out <http://www.notamview.org.uk>

Oh yes, I forgot to say, it's free.

"Look at it this way Paul, you'll get your Silver in this year", it was just prior to Christmas 2000 and we were standing in a farmyard near Hinton-in-the-Hedges surveying a Skylark 4 named BLW. That was how it all started anyway.

The 2001 season was indeed rather successful for the BLW syndicate following the foot and mouth hiccup at the start. After a couple of false starts Paul got to a field within spitting distance of Gransden Lodge and I actually managed to arrive there and sample the delights of the bar, much to the dismay of my retrieve crew, that shining star Matt Gage to whom I was very grateful. Silver heights already achieved we both needed the duration flights to lay Silver to rest. Into the story enters Tony Hoskins who announced the organisation of a return trip to Sutton Bank in October. Having flown there the previous year I was eager to return as I was reasonably confident that given the right day, five hour durations were a possibility. Paul wasn't so sure but was eventually persuaded that the trip would be worth the while.

Friday 5th October the party assembled at OGC ready for a convoy to Sutton Bank. Simon Walker with his ASW, Paul with the club Astir and me with BLW with Tony in his Moggy joining us about half way. A straight forward trip apart from some extended village familiarisation going up the back of Sutton Bank. It had looked quick and easy on the map, honest!

Saturday saw some check/familiarisation flights with those nice Yorkshire GC folk and the flying commenced. Or would have had the weather been a little better. Simon's hormones got the better of him, and as his girlfriend was staying just a hundred or so miles away, he decided to depart leaving his glider parked at the Bank to return later to fly. We never saw him again.

Paul was the first to attempt his five hours, and with the ridge working in a nice south-westerly he took a customarily low winch launch (anything over 600-800ft at Sutton is frowned upon) into an otherwise grotty looking sky. Well the sky did not improve and poor old Paul wound up getting bigger and bigger muscles in his forearm cranking the "lark up and down the ridge. Of course having not looked at his watch at the time of take-off he was on the radio asking how much longer he had to stay up.

We consulted the flying log and sure enough he had done his five hours so we duly called him back and told him he needed another 30 minutes. This left Tony and I giggling like schoolboys on the airfield whilst we watched Paul getting ever more familiar with that ridge. It was, however, a very happy chappy who landed the 'lark sometime later to get his badge claim signed by Sutton's CFI.

Now of course with my syndicate partner sporting a completed Silver claim form I was going to have to take a bash at it myself. I did not relish the thought of five hours in a glider of any description and I certainly did not want to spend the best part of a day up and down the ridge. The day dawned with a maximum four hundred foot cloud base over the ridge, sometimes lower and a nice breeze. Damn! The ridge was working so I loaded my camel back and wine gums into the beast and prepared for a

again. Fourth time lucky and as I got into the sunshine I was rewarded with a 0.5 knot thermal. Or was it a thermal? It was very smooth and turning in it was a little strange, I was only at 1600 so surely it couldn't be wave. I pointed the glider south, slowed to 45 and sat there very slowly going up. Half a knot became 2 knots and I was over 2500. The radio came to life again, Tony had a question "what are you doing?" "I don't know" I replied quite truthfully "but I think I've found wave". Five minutes later and I saw the OGC Astir taking to the air, a few beats up and down the ridge and Tony was joining me in the wave. Tales of various off the scale and rollercoaster rides to the heavens were not to be the order of the day. Instead the best climb I saw was about 4 knots up but it was very very smooth, so smooth in fact that I trimmed to 50, took my hand off the stick, plopped another wine gum into my mouth and decided to enjoy the view. Tony departed west to explore the wave further down. Two

hours later and I was at 9000. At this point Tony and I met up again and a discussion began about Gold height. Neither of us could remember what we would need so Tony put out a blind call on the radio to ask. A helpful Pilot in the South came back with the answer we needed and it appeared that it was within our grasp. By 10,000 the lift was weak to almost nil and the head wind was so strong that a glance at ASI and GPS told me that although I was now flying at 55kt I was actually going

backwards at 6kt. At 10,252 I decided enough was enough I was freezing cold and was concerned that without oxygen onboard I was getting a bit high. My Altimeter was set for Sutton Bank which itself is over 900 feet up so in real terms I was over 11,000 feet. A brief discussion about Hypoxia saw Tony and me beginning our descents.

At least with a five and three-quarter hour flight I had my Silver. A download and analysis of logger traces showed that both Tony and I had achieved Gold height as well. Tony had managed to get about 150 feet higher than me, I was in by 74 feet. But Gold is Gold.

It was celebrations all round, although we sort of lost the plot over who was buying the beers for which badge. Paul with Silver duration and badge completion, Tony for Gold height or me for Silver duration badge completion and Gold height.

TWO SILVERS AND TWO GOLDS AT SUTTON BANK (NOT A BAD WEEK)

*Steve Trusler, Paul Morrison,
Simon Walker, Tony Hoskins*

long ridge bashing. Pulled off the launch at 450' in cloud, turn and slip whirring away merrily. Wings level increase of speed to 70 and dipped out of cloud onto the ridge at 400'. There followed an hour and a half of the most frustrating flying I have ever done. The ridge was working so well that I was having to fly at about 75 knots just to stay clear of the cloud base. Suttons? DCFI called me up and kindly suggested that I could go back down and try again later, no way, I had already done an hour and it was Silver or bust!. Apparently back at the launch point this left the DCFI in stitches and he managed to watch for a further 30 minutes or so before calling me back and suggesting it again. In the distance I could see a line of sunshine moving painfully slowly North towards Sutton Bank and the cloud was slowly lifting on the Bank too. After about 20 minutes it was at Thirsk and I made my first attempt to reach it. No dice, back to the ridge to get some height and try

NEW PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY

Neil Swinton

The Photograph Gallery is a recent addition to the OGC internet facilities. The existing OGC web site already has a "public facing" gallery, maintained by Barry Taylor that shows OGC in the best light to the general public. The new addition is a user-contributed gallery, hidden from the public, that lets members display their own photographs, and also allows descriptions and comments to be added. Initially this was going to use one of the free commercial public galleries, but on investigation, they often required a single administrator to manage the site, they "collected" users email addresses, and they also were filled with annoying pop-up adverts. Instead a home grown site, with the same "look-and-feel" of the OGC main web-site, has been produced.

The Gallery: In the gallery are several "albums", each showing a different part of OGC activity. For example, there is a "vintage gliding" album that Dave

Weekes is building up that shows his visits to some of the Vintage Gliding Club rallies. The "people" album is showing a rather nice collection of portraits, usually informal, and often embarrassing...

The gallery will allow users to upload photographs that are in "jpg" and "gif" format and also short videos using "avi" format. The images that are sent are resized and are then stored at a maximum resolution of 800x600, which is about the largest that dial-up users will want to download. At this size, I think there should be space for around 600 pictures. Images are uploaded direct from the browser, or by sending an attachment with an email.

You can find the gallery by going to the members-only area of the OGC website (www.oxford-gliding-club.com) and following the link to the members' gallery.

DON'T WE ALL MISS TOM?

by Phil Hawkins

Tom Lamb died over a year ago now, on 1st December 2002. He had been in a coma for a month, following complications arising from a bone marrow transplant. His family arranged a funeral service at Salisbury Crematorium, which was far too small to hold all those who wanted to attend, and a buffet supper in Tom's local pub. It was packed out with glider pilots, golfers, Tom's work colleagues, family members and other friends. Although the reasons for the gathering were sad, it was nevertheless a pleasant enough evening rummaging through stacks of old photos retrieved from Tom's house, and swapping stories with other people who remembered him. I'm sure it was the kind of no-nonsense send-off that he would have wanted.

Here are some tributes from other Club members:

"The moment of Tom's nephews and nieces laying roses was almost too much. I felt awful afterwards. However I was glad for the chance in the evening to discuss Tom with his friends and family. It helps keep the memories happy" (Neil Swinton).

"Tom was a great guy, and I was lucky enough to be one of his pupils. His enthusiasm for gliding was infectious and rubbed off on everyone he taught" (Martin Cooper).

"He'll always be in my gallery of memories of those instructors who made learning to fly one of the special events in my life. He was very good with us rookies and I will always remember that" (Mike O'Neill).

"Tom – the gentlest of men. The finest of English men" (Brian Evans).

"Tom didn't deserve this. Why does this seem to happen to the good people while all the monsters get away with being fit and healthy?" (Carole Shepherd).

"All I can think of are very rude words. His briefing to me on how to fly my Skylark remains stuck in my memory: It's done a lot more hours than you and can fly a lot better, so don't interfere with the controls too much" (Dave Weekes).

"Make the most of what you have because you never know what's around the corner. Tom keeps coming to mind now, and it's that smiling, cheeky little boy that's there. What else is there to say? It's heartbreaking" (Anne Crowden).

Tom leaves three brothers (Charlie, John and Jim) and a sister (Kitty). Most of them have been in contact with me over the course of the past year, since they are now joint owners of a half share in a Mini Nimbus. John and Kitty visited the Club in August for the Christmas dinner event, together with members of Charlie's family (he was doing charity work abroad at the time). They seemed to enjoy the fun, and hopefully we will be able to stay in contact with them. Having them around keeps a little bit of Tom alive for us, and maybe it gives them a glimpse into what was the gliding compartment of his life.

Kitty had previously asked me if it would be possible to scatter Tom's ashes from a glider. And so, on the morning of 25th August we took a very special trip in the K-21 from Hinton. It was a calm grey morning, with interesting streaks and patterns in the sky, and little sunbeams peeping through here and there. John Giddins aerotowed us northwards to Chipping Warden, which for many years was the Lamb family home. I flew as slowly as I could while Kitty carried out the solemn deed, releasing Tom on his last and longest flight. He buffeted the elevator a little as he went, but soon all was calm once more. Enjoy the thermals, old friend.

I think Tom was about three years younger than me, and it's very hard to take in the fact that he's gone. We all have our own circle of friends, of which Tom was one, and we expect to grow old with them. It seems grossly unfair that Tom was cheated out of many more years of spare time flying, spare time golfing, spare time woman-evading, all the things that he was good at. Through no fault of his own, he's lost those leisure years that we all look forward to, he was robbed.

But maybe we can all help to make amends for that, each in our own way. We all have hopes for the future, hopes of a better time in our lives when things are less stressful and we can enjoy doing the things we always wanted to do. For some of us those happy days seem a long way off, but Tom's death reminds us that nothing can be taken for granted in this uncertain world. *It's risky to keep putting things off.* Much better to live those dreams sooner rather than later, before you get lost forever in the endless dream where Tom is now.

If you want to remember Tom, think about something you always wanted to do, but never quite got around to. Maybe because you were too busy, because it was too expensive, because the children hadn't grown up yet, because the cat died, whatever. Something you can look back on when you are old and say to yourself, I did that before it was too late. Whether it's potholing, canoeing down the Amazon, visiting Sydney Opera House, driving a Mini across America, writing a sexy novel, learning how to play the flute like Michael McGoldrick, learning how to make a perfect fruit cake, entering a Radio 4 poetry competition, it doesn't matter what it is, as long as it is important to you. Do it for Tom, because he can't do any of those things.

We'll not forget you Tom, thanks for all your friendship, the laughs and the cheeky grins, thanks for the memories.

OGC WEB SITE Barry Taylor

The web site was originally set up by Cris Emson, and contained several pages of information about the club and gliding generally. Cris also registered, and until recently, held the domain name, and maintained the email addresses. The main objective of the web site was as a means of attracting new members to the club, and in this respect it was very successful, as several members who have joined in the last couple of years will testify.

I offered to take on responsibility for the web site after obtaining a copy of Macromedia's Dreamweaver in the autumn of 2002. If any of you have plans to carry out any web design I would thoroughly recommend this package. It is highly intuitive, well structured and full of useful features. A new look was created during the 2002 Christmas break, and many new pages were added, including a history of the club, and a graphic element was added using photographs provided by several club members.

Perhaps the most significant addition was the members' area, which can be entered by answering a simple question on the main page. This contains loads of useful information and forms, including the instructor rota, glider hire request forms, committee details and a list of officers of the club. Pre-solo members can find out who their instructor will be on the forthcoming weekend, and what he or she actually looks like. There is information on the club policy on glider usage, details of how to hire a glider, and what the current hire rates are, descriptions of the different categories of membership and the club ladder results. In fact I have tried to provide answers to most of the questions that members will potentially ask.

In the autumn of 2003 Neil Swinton created a members' gallery, which can be accessed from the members' area, where members may view and post photographs.

For those of you who have not yet visited, the address is www.oxford-gliding-club.co.uk.

If there is anything you think that the site is lacking, or any way you think it can be improved, please let me know and I will try to do something about it. Additional photographs or tales for the 'How-I-Dunnit' section are always welcome.

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Membership list by Ian Shepherd from the Club computer [all corrections to him please].

WHAT'S NEW AT OGC?

- **new hangar extension**
 - The hangar extension is almost finished. Eventually all ground equipment, and possibly also the workbench and oil cans, etc., from the hangar are going to go in there. Thanks to the usual suspects for organising it (committee) and modifying it to fit our purposes (Neil T, Paul R, et al.)
- **glider cleaning cupboard**
 - next to the water hose there's a cupboard containing buckets, sponges and chamois for cleaning our club gliders.
- **canopy covers for all club gliders**
 - all club gliders now have canopy covers (or at least sheets acting as canopy covers). When not on the gliders' canopies, these are stored in a big red and green bucket in the hangar.
- **gas barbecues**
 - two new gas barbecues have been purchased for use by club members and Friday night visitors alike. The barbecues are stored in the hangar, next to the workshop door.
- **club house renovated**
 - Carole Shepherd, who also volunteered to take over the club house cleaning job from Gwen last year, decided that the club house could do with a bit of TLC after having suffered several OGC parties, and renovated it together with a number of volunteers over the past few weekends.
- **new accessible dishwasher**
 - Paul Rogers installed a new dishwasher in the kitchen for members' use. This means that you don't have to have a bar key to be able to solo on the dishwasher.
- **all new website**
 - Barry Taylor took over as the OGC webmaster from Cris Emson last year, updated the layout and added several exciting new features.
Have a look at www.oxford-gliding-club.co.uk and also check out all the new features in the members' area, like the instructor and duty pilot rota, the photo gallery, and much more. If you can't remember the T21's name to enter the members' section, see below.
- **Daisy has a trailer**
 - As reported by Dave Weekes: The mighty T21 trailer (ed.: aka the Forth rail bridge scale model) is well on its way. Following a major attack by Wooks armed with an air-operated pop rivetter the decking is in place and going nowhere. The axle & wheels are on, so if the workshop is required for CofAs etc., the trailer can be wheeled outside (I think it will go through the door!) – Well, we were told it had to be out of the workshop by AGM time! Work is continuing in the alternative workshop on fus dolly and wing fittings. Congrats to Wooks (ed.: and to Dave Weekes) for ace welding and Tuesday painting crew for ace painting.
How about a prize for maximum distance flown next year in Daisy????
- **Daisy is going to have a belly hook**
 - As reported by Dave Weekes: Materials are being accumulated for the Daisy CofG hook mod – hopefully to be completed before next season. (ed: Dave has now – Jan 2004 – started to cut holes in Daisy's fuselage for the CofG hook)
- **anti-birds' nest device fitted to winch**
 - The winch team (Neil Turner, Dave Weekes et al.) fitted two bits of wood around the Tost/Skylaunch winch drums to prevent cable from falling behind the drums in a cable break. Since fitting the wood the amount of time lost to birds' nests, cable salads & cable breaks has dropped noticeably – so congratulations and thanks to Neil and Dave.
- **new gearbox on Tost winch**
 - in 2001 Neil Turner, Dave Weekes and others fitted a new gearbox to our Tost winch, so now it's a Tost/Skylaunch winch. More on the next page.
- **new winch**
 - In 2003 Neil Turner decided that, to put an end to being called to the rescue almost every time there was a problem with the Tost winch, he would get a backup winch. More on how Taffy ended up at OGC on the next pages.

NEW OGC EMAIL LIST SERVER

Neil Swinton

This has been running for more than 5 years now, and it has proved a useful mechanism for reaching a large number of club members quickly. The list server works by centrally storing e-mail addresses for club members, and then it 'broadcasts' a message to all the members. Anybody can add themselves to the list, and then post messages in this way.

While it is not really an official OGC channel, it is often used for notification of Rotas, Friday Night groups, airfield shutdowns etc. It is also used for duty pilot swaps, 'how-I-dunnits', trip reports and general chatter. It is also possible to send small files as attachments with messages. Unfortunately, the ISP that hosts the list server for us have recently decided to withdraw the service. In fact, by the time you read this, the service may have already gone!

This has left us with a small problem of how to provide the same service, for free, that everybody could access. A quick trial with Yahoo Groups did not fill anybody with enthusiasm, comments included 'Yuk', 'I hate the adverts' and 'My company will not let me access Yahoo'.

At the time of writing the situation is still unclear. We can certainly pay to use a list server facility from a number of ISP's, there are also a variety of free List Servers that may be on offer from a number of sources. Another option is to use a 'message board' that many ISP's offer.

Whichever route we are forced to use, you should simply follow the link from the 'members-only' pages on the main web site. These will always be updated to reflect the current method.

THE WINCH UPGRADE IN 2001

Neil Turner

Start date late November 2001, Chairperson Peter Brooks having a day off from clearing the hangar out and was driving the winch.

I was in the hangar sticking bits of metal together for some reason or other. It was getting dark and the DG had just landed back at the hangar. With everything packed away Peter walks over to me and said the winch had lost power on the DG launch and only just pulled in the rest of the cable. He then asked 1) Can I have a look at it? 2) Can I fix it?

1) A quick look at the winch told me that it was a major failure in the hydraulics.

2) No I could not fix it there and then.

Spent the next few days on the phone to Gerry O'Sullivan (The man who built the hydraulics and ex club member), who confirmed the problem. The hydraulics were worn out and required a full overhaul.

I asked Gerry for a price of repairing the pump only and the estimate was around £2500, but the motor (the bit on the drum axle) could be in the same state. What will that cost, Gerry? £1500 – ouch!!!

£4000.00 + vat. 4 – 6 weeks out of action. This is bad news. I met up with Gerry later that week (it's easier to meet the Pope!) and talked about how much pull, cable speed, engine rpm etc etc etc.

The outcome was that just repairing what we have would only give us 1100 lbs (white weak link) pull on the cable at 50 knots. Now you may have noticed that we had trouble launching the DG at the time, slow speed and could not pull. The DG takes a black weak link, which is 2200 lbs. So next question was: could we upgrade the hydraulics to 2200 lbs and 60 knots? The simple answer was NO! The maximum we could get was 1700 lbs at 56 knots. The cost? £8000 + vat!!!! That is a lot of money, which the club does not have.

Now let's just put things into perspective.

The plus points, the hydraulics had been in the winch for 12 years, never serviced, oil never changed, only hoses and O rings replaced, oh and 42,000 launches!!!!!! That works out to be 22 pence per launch if we pay the £8000. It's easy to drive as the glider controls the speed.

The negative points. The engine is revving its nuts off, uses more LPG, can not use the full engine power as it is restricted by the hydraulics. Very expensive to repair. Can get very messy if pipe bursts and has caught fire because of the oil leak.

At this point I decided to phone Skylaunch, and spoke to Mike Groves. (He had been to the club when they took the Skylaunch demonstrator round the clubs) I told him of the problem we had and asked what it would cost to put an auto box in.

Well if you've ever talked to Mike you will know that it is not a quick chat; two hours later..... he's still going..... one hour later (3 hours all together!) my ears are burning, but I have all the info I need.

I phoned Peter B and explained the out come. Yes, the auto box would fit our engine. Yes, he can supply all the bits required. Yes, we can have the bits next weekend! But they have never fitted their

box into a Tost chassis before; it should work, though, so they say.

Our Tost winch was designed back in the 60's for a small petrol V8 engine of around 100 bhp installed with an automatic gearbox, but when it was built by OGC back then they fitted a Leyland 6 cylinder 5.7 litre diesel engine of just 75 bhp with a manual 5 speed gearbox! For many years the winch has always been underpowered, not any more! With the engine we have now, which is a big block Chevy 8.2 litre 425 bhp V8 we have plenty of power. The Skylaunch winch has the same engine/auto box set up as ours but has a higher ratio axle and larger cable drum diameter than ours. So engine rpm might be a problem.

I then sat down and worked out the more boring things like: cable speed,

68–70 knots, good, that will do. Cable pull, we need 2200 lbs to launch the DG.

With our set-up it worked out to 2700 lbs – plenty there then. Maximum engine rpm around 4000 to give the required 70 knots, dropping to 2000 rpm mid launch, it's looking good.

I got the go-ahead from the committee and a blank cheque from the new treasurer, Ian Shepherd. Peter has told the club that the winch will be out of service for 5–6 weeks. I phoned Mike at Skylaunch to order the parts – 1½ hours later I put the phone down! Next thing is – where is Wem? That is where Skylaunch is based, 30 miles the other side of Telford.

I put out an S.O.S for someone to pick up the auto box etc. from Skylaunch, what happened? Nothing, bummer all, zero. Nothing new there then, hang on, what's this? An email from Carole Shepherd volunteering, thanks Carole.

Saturday morning we leave Weston heading north to Wem, we find the Skylaunch workshop in an old tin shed and were greeted by Mike (does he never stop talking?)

He shows all the bits and tells us how to fit them, how they work, how he made them, why he made them, why he painted them that colour. Don't get me wrong, this man knows what he is talking about and is more than happy to pass it on. We were more than happy to listen. What's this? A voice saying "Hello mate" It's Paul and Roz!! Paul said they were in the area and dropped in (like 60 miles away on a romantic weekend!) We load up the bits into the car. The bits being one General Motors heavy-duty 3-speed automatic gearbox, gearbox oil cooler, gearbox to rear axle drive shaft, a few levers, pipes, gearbox mounting and a drum of transmission oil. Handed Mike a cheque for £3,700 and it was off to the site café for a bacon butty and a mug of tea.

We leave Wem behind and make our way back to Weston – but Carole turns off the motorway, why? We end up at Cosford Museum, and it's free so in we go. Back at Weston we unload the bits and head for home.

The next day (Sunday) Dave Weekes and I strip out the old hydraulics from the winch and have a good clean up.

Tuesday night Dave W and I fit the drive plate and auto box. Haste got his leg over (the winch) helping to lift the box in and hasn't been near the winch since! Into the bar at 9.30.

Thursday/Friday 9.30am: Rear gearbox mount, gear selector fabricated and fitted, oil cooler fitted.

Saturday: throttle linkage designed and fitted with help from Paul R.

Sunday: The club is quiet today, some members have turned up to fly. They did not know the winch was out of action! Built the throttle stop unit, simple but it works. (Skylaunch unit cost £340!)

Tuesday night: fitted prop shaft and the adaptor made by Garry Cuthill

Friday 21st: Final check over and finishing touches.

Saturday 22nd December 2001: the first launch!

Oh dear, the winch engine oil is all white!! The inlet manifold gasket is leaking, filling the engine up with water. Dave changes the oil and filter before I turn up.

We set-up farm to bomb dumps, 10 knots wind, carried out some dummy test runs (no dummies were hurt during the tests) while we wait for Neil Swinton to fly the 13 back from Bicester. He's taking a very long time. John Hanlon turns up and volunteers to be the test pilot in the K8 – fool! How many people can you get in the winch cab? Five is the answer, all for the first launch – don't ask me why! So off we go, K8 off the ground, in the climb, pulls off at 300'. Why? Too fast, 70 knots I think, I had opened the throttle to 15! As you now know we launch the DG on less than that! The next two launches are spot on, my calculations were right, 2000 rpm mid launch! Oh look, Neil has landed, funny that. Rest of day I launch K13, DG, K8 and some mad private owners to 1800'+.

The best thing about Saturday? It only took 2 weeks and not 6 weeks to get up and running again. We can safely launch the DG. And the winch is easy to drive.

Sunday 23rd. 10-15 knots wind. Winch engine still poorly, change the oil again. We launched the DG to 2000'+ I think it works!

I have since launched the DG with 8–10 knot tail wind, it took off and had 65 knots flying speed, but...the pilot forgot to pull!

Over this weekend and the following weekend I launched over 120 gliders and sat in on many more, setting things up and working on a safe operational procedure.

Friday 28th. Bloody cold in the hangar, it is -2°C! And it's early for me – 9.30. Stripped down the winch engine to replace the manifold gaskets and change engine oil and filter again. All is going well until I go to fill it up with water, all the pipes in the hangar and clubroom are frozen! Just had enough antifreeze to finish the job. It's now -3°C in the hangar, time 19.30, time to go home.

big thanks to all those mentioned above for the work they put in.

Here are some safety items concerning the Tost/Skylaunch winch operation:

- Place the yellow cone 30m from front of winch. Do not pull stops past this point. Don't try to be a hero and get it as close as you can. You cannot stop the cable quickly. This is a safety zone to stop you pulling the stop into the rollers, as the transmission will still pull in cable when in neutral! Care taken in doing this will save an hour pulling the cable out of the rollers. The winch head and rollers cost over £1000 each so please be careful.
- Select throttle setting for glider (1– 20). When up slack is given and only then select the drum required. If you select the drum before that there is a possibility of the cable moving at the launch point end.
- Now release hand brake, then select gear and open throttle to throttle stop, pull past the spring loading and hold until glider is safely in the climb.
- Back off the throttle off the spring, then assess the launch speed, adjust as required. The winch driver is now responsible for the whole of the launch. **The pilot cannot slow the speed down by pulling** as before, if they do they will break the weak link. So pilots, do you remember how to give the too fast signal? If not see the CFI! To release glider at top, if they have not pulled off, shut throttle to tick over and the cable will back-release.
- If any work is to be carried out on the cables, drums or rollers, please switch off the engine before doing so. If the cable has jammed and you free it, the drum could spin round when not in gear due to the oil drag in the auto box.

TAFFY THE WINCH

Neil Turner

On the 26th June 2003 I purchased Taffy winch from Stratford Gliding Club for the sum of £1200.00.

One small problem, I had paid the money and now needed to raise the money from the club members in the way of donations as we did with daisy years ago.

Not only did I need the £1200 but also money for delivery of £140, tyre repairs £40, new batteries £153, new chutes £423, for paint, repairs and covers etc. Emails were sent and posters put up and members bullied!! First two donations made were from ex club members! The money had started rolling in.

Within two weeks the donations had reached £1200.00, the gamble had paid off. Oxford Gliding Club had a second winch. Just have to see if it works now!

One fine Saturday Rob and myself set up Taffy, now the tricky bit, I had never seen a launch by Taffy and only have talked to two of Stratford Gliding Club members on how to do a launch!!

Right K13 two up, up slack, so far so good, all out, lots of smoke and noise and the 13 is airbourne!! Looks okay to me, the 13 back released! Pulled the cable in, that was good! Once the pilot had landed Rob asked for comments, 55 knots ground run, 55 knots in the climb, 1500' and can we do it again please!!

Over the next few weeks Rob and I trained more winch drivers, everyone made the comment that it was very easy to drive. So much

so that Garry Cuthill on only his 3rd launch gave me 2000' in the 13!!

That day we also launched a motor Janus to 1500' in a 5 knot wind!

Since that day Taffy has been out a few more times giving the 13 and other gliders launches to 1800'. But we still have to launch the DG 505, I think it will!

The donations are still coming in and we still require more if possible.

Total donations to date 22 November 2003 is £2605 made by 38 people, not all the donations were made by club members some were made by friends of members with an interest in the club!

Taffy is now officially the property of Oxford Gliding Club but I (Neil Turner) will still manage the donations until all the work on Taffy has been completed.

I would like to thank everyone who made a donation (you know who you are). Also a big thank you to Ian and Carole for the use of their car in getting the spare bits back from Stratford, to Rob for teaching members to drive the winch and to the few who have helped on working on Taffy.

Here's to good launches.

Ed.: Taffy has been used a few times now and proves to produce similar launch heights as the Tost/Skylaunch winch. I had a launch in JSX to 1800 ft, so it seems to work fine...

WATCHING CONCORDE'S LAST FLIGHT

Tony Hoskins, an ex-cadet who flies at Parham (see separate article "Soaring the South Downs"), sent us this:

Ok then, who went to see Concorde's last flight?

I thought about it but was put off by the traffic, which I hear was horrendous. Was just about to leave to study in college (didn't have to, slack lecture day), when one of the BA chaps here at Parham suggested flying the north downs (the small bumps inside the M25). Took the Grob 109 and motored up to Sevenoaks via Eastbourne. Then flew to Challock then Lasham and just so happened to end up overhead Wisley and orbiting just south of Brooklands

when the three Concorde landed. The nice thing was waiting for them all to arrive, we were at 2,500ft, Concorde was orbiting at 6,000ft right above us. Landed back at Parham just 20mins after leaving Heathrow.

4Hrs flying, about 300km, saw all three Concorde, and now have enough hours to keep the SLMG rating for another year. :-)



John Williams

With only ten days available in 1999, including a tour of the west coast, gliding opportunities were few, but I met some super people and quickly developed a taste for mountain soaring. A big bonus was a memorable afternoon with the Canterbury GC at Wigram airfield, soaring the extinct volcanic ridges of the Banks peninsula.

In September 2001, my wife suggested that for my 70th birthday present in December 2002 I might like to go ALONE to NZ again JUST TO GLIDE! After some fast talking (e.g. "I might not be fit by then") I was booked to depart on 27 November 2001 for three weeks. Alpine Soaring had an LS3a or LS4 lined up for me, and in my middle week I was booked onto a Level 2 mountain-and-wave soaring course with Gavin Wills.

I flew via Los Angeles, losing a day by crossing the International Date Line, then hired a car in Christchurch. Three hours on the road and I was there, this time with 18 gliding days ahead of me. Next day a 20 minute check ride with Alpine Soaring, a solo flying approval sticker in my log book, then off in the LS4 for a local area re-familiarisation, and before long I was climbing at 10 knots through 11,000ft in wave! NO MORE TAKEOFFS WITHOUT BAROGRAPH AND OXYGEN! But on day 2 the westerly winds delivered a recorded Gold height. Then came four wet days reminiscent of UK summer.

In the second week I flew an LS3a with "Glide Omarama." Group cross-countries were supervised by Gavin Wills in his Duo Discus. There were some wet days, but one day produced some local convergence lift soaring. I also took the opportunity of a back seat ride in the "Duo" with Gavin Wills. We took a 15km tow south-west to the "Magic Mountain" (5000ft) and used ridge, convergence and wave lift for three hours, peaking at 11,000ft. We covered 250km, rounding Mt Earnslaw (9,250ft) and Mt Aspiring (9,940ft) en route. No-one else at Omarama soared that day!

On day 14 I returned to Doug Hamilton and his team at Alpine Soaring for a task week. I declared a 300km triangle but was foiled by a belt of rain en route to the first turning point. Day 15 was similar, but on day 16 I achieved my Gold/Diamond goal in five hours and twenty minutes.

On my last day at Omarama, the 8am weather map hinted at westerly winds late in the day – could this

be the big one? Doug Hamilton advised "Don't be in a hurry to get airborne," which proved exactly right. We gridded the gliders at 1.30pm and I was number eight in line for an easterly aerotow. Glider number four groundlooped gently off a failed launch, then I felt a westerly surface wind pull my open canopy forward as I steadied it. A WESTERLY – this could indeed be the big one!

We changed ends and I took off at 2.35, with some embryonic wave bars visible to windward. Off tow at 2,900ft (1500ft AGL) and straight on to the lower slopes of Mount St Cuthbert (colloquially Mount Horrible), the nursery ridge of Omarama. After establishing a low point, I worked the rough, craggy western side of "Horrible," now facing sun and a freshening wind. Above the peak (5,127ft) I soared to 6,500ft, then ventured out fast into wind across the Ahuriri river flood plain looking for rotor lift, but found only rotor sink.

Down to 4,000ft, heading fast for the nursery ridge again, I stumbled on an inexplicable powerful updraught in mid-valley and soared it like a UK thermal. At 8,000ft as if by magic, everything went smooth, quiet and even more UP! The wave bar leading edge was pointing straight at Mt Cook (12,315ft) 50km to the north, so off I went to soar the southwest face. I arrived at about 10,000ft, called on the Mt Cook Traffic frequency and discovered that the helicopters several thousand feet below me were on a genuine mountain rescue mission.

I retreated in sink, but soon connected again and started looking for serious altitude. Clear of controlled airspace over Lake Ohau, I lost the wave at 19,100ft, about 350ft short of Diamond height.

I decided this was probably all the day had to offer, and began a descent back towards Omarama, visible between wave bars. However, soon the VSI started making happy sounds again and I settled into a steady 2 knot climb to 21,000ft. Low on oxygen I took a final photo of the Alps, mostly in cloud, with my altimeter in the frame, then headed for home.

After a few more photographs below cloud of the "lennies" I'd been amongst, I landed at 8.05pm. World distance record holder Terry Delore presented me with a congratulatory can of Speights – the delicious local amber nectar. What a finale!

Omarama is a very small North Otago town (much smaller than Bicester) inhabited by friendly folk, on the junction of routes 8 & 83, and it takes just over a day, either way, to get there. Their longest day is just before Christmas, and the sun goes round the sky the wrong way (as do depressions and anticyclones). Westerly winds over the Southern Alps guarantee rain on the west coast and wave over Omarama, and if they fail in summer there are always thermals (big ones) if the sky is clear.

Because New Zealanders all keep Wellington time, and the axis of South Island is NE/SW, and little if any basic flying instruction is needed at Omarama, first launch is rarely before noon. The grass runway is aligned E/W with the Route 83 valley wind, and by the afternoon the sun is generating slope lift on the eastern side of the basin well within normal aerotow range, amplified by any westerly wind.

The rock-strewn Omarama basin on the Ahuriri river is surrounded by 5-6,000ft mountains but is short on safe outlanding sites. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that overseas visitors can recognise agricultural airstrips, which are all marked on local gliding maps. Only then is a local solo approval sticker issued for your logbook.

Doug Hamilton runs the airfield (1380ft AMSL), soaring courses and task weeks, provides aerotows and pleasure flights, hires out gliders and supplies oxygen and barographs. He uses an ASH-25 to supervise group cross-countries. Gavin Wills runs courses from the hotel beside the airfield, and "High Country Gliding" run by Richard Halstead also has gliders for hire.

There is plenty of accommodation locally including smart chalets and a hotel on the airfield. NZ bed & breakfast establishments are excellent. Local eateries stay open late, which suits the soaring fraternity, but there is no cash machine, and the near-

est bank is in Twizel, 25km to the north. Motor cycles can be hired but are much more expensive than small cars. Alternatively, Omarama can be reached by long distance coach from Christchurch.

The NZ dollar was worth about 33 pence while I was in Omarama. In the UK winter the time difference is 13 hours.

Contact Alpine Soaring (Doug Hamilton) at
alpsoar@xtra.co.nz

Contact Glide Omarama (Gavin Wills) at
gavin@glideomarama.com

(John Williams is Fiona's father and flies an SHK from Upavon or Old Sarum.)



GERMANY 2003 *Neil Swinton*

Just over two years ago now, a small number of OGC members made an 'exploratory' trip to Claudia's 'home' gliding club in central Germany. That first trip was really just an extended weekend visit, but it was such fun that we decided to re-visit, only this time with our own gliders. So, this year, at the peak of high summer, in that really really hot, blue week at the start of August, we did just that. Two groups were formed – the 'A' team comprising Carole and Ian Shepherd, Claudia Bungen and Nick Hill who took DG-100 251, and the 'B' team comprising Steve McCurdy, Peter Brooks, and myself, who took Cirrus 579. Here is my notebook:

Friday:

Booked on the 1am Ferry from Dover. A-team leave extra early from Oxford in case the traffic is bad. It isn't. They arrive at Dover with about 8 hours to spare. B-team start the Friday night flying off, have tea, and still arrive at the port with about two hours to spare.

Saturday:

Straight off the ferry, start the driving across France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. A-team leads, closely followed (very closely) by the B-team – since B-teams map shows all Europe on a single page. The pre-arranged use of the hand-helds fails, since A-team leave theirs turned off. 2 ciggie stops for Steve, a breakfast stop for everybody else, and good progress is made. Arrive at the airfield around 11-ish, get out of the car and nearly faint in the heat. Park the trailers up under the trees, and get a warm welcome from the club officials and members. Tea and cake all round, while sitting on the patio by the clubhouse in the shade.

No club flying on the Saturday, since they are preparing for a club open-day on the Sunday. Bernd – the club chairman – apologetic, but said maybe we could fly later in the afternoon when all the setting up had been done. But it was now baking hot, we hadn't seen a bed for 30 hours or so, so flying wasn't too appealing. The A-team are staying in caravans on the airfield. The oldies in the B-team are slumming it at the local Hotel, with soft beds, hot showers and cooked breakfasts. All go to bed for the rest of the afternoon. Return in the evening to the gliding club where food had been prepared for us. In fact, hot food was prepared especially for us every night.

Sunday:

The B-Team are woken at 6.00am in their hotel by the church bells. They are then woken up at 7.00am by the church bells, and couldn't get back to sleep in time to be woken up by the 8.00am bells. The church clock tower is right outside my room...

It's the club open-day today; we arrive at 10.00am, in time for a church service in the hangar, complete with a brass band. Claudia gives up trying to translate, but apparently the sermon was "If Jesus were here today he would be a glider pilot". Collection proves a good way of getting rid of all my English change...

The chairman announces an attraction, 'the English assembling their gliders – please go and watch'. In front of crowd of only slightly interested watchers, we rig the gliders. 251 goes together 'clickity-click'. 579 doesn't. The tailplane won't go on. Everybody has a go. It still won't fit. The crowd drift away, unimpressed. After 40 minutes, the German ex-CFI comes over, picks up the tailplane and fits it with a 'click'. Steve promptly removes it 'to see how he did it'. It won't go back on of course, and the CFI has now gone home. We go off for lunch, a cold drink, and a de-stress. I start being nice to Nick and Claudia to see if I can swap into the 251 syndicate. A few more attempts, using twigs, chewing gum, and prayers, suddenly, 'clunk' and it goes on. Prevent Steve from taking it off again to 'see how he did it'.

Guests have all flown, so now get the chance of a check-flight. Site is very different from Weston. It is narrow, just about 2 gliders wide, and about half the length of Weston, and situated on top of a low hill. One end of the field is on a sort of promontory, about 150' above the valley floor, the other end and half one side is surrounded by a tall glider-claiming forest, with a slope towards the forest. In fact, since our last visit, the forest has claimed a complete K21 and a large lump of a K13. So we either winch launch towards the forest, or we land over it. On our check flights we are launching towards the forest, landing over the promontory.

As the check flights progressed I can see people cramping their circuits, possibly being put-off by the sloping airfield and unusual angles. I decide not make the same mistake, and instead very nearly overcook it the other way, ending up with a zero-brake approach, and some funny German squeaks from

the back seat. Poor Nick has a cable break on his check flight, and then had a long 'discussion' as to who is going to sort out the rest of the flight. Claudia soared 251, but it was getting hotter, and there is still a beer tent available, so the rest of us retire back to the clubhouse.

Monday:

It's blue and hot. At 6.00am the bells go off, then 7.00, then 8.00. We look around town, write postcards, and eat cake in the café. Go up to the airfield at about 11.00am. It is getting hotter. We get the kit out at about 1pm and started some serious flying. Short field, no wind means we normally only reach 900'. Carole and Ian soar 251, I get away in 579. I discover vario is stuck in 'cruise' mode. I land 579 'long' at the hanger so we can sort out vario, then discover as it rolling downhill towards the trees that the wheel brake doesn't work either.....

Tuesday:

Blue and hot. Get woken the by Bells, and have coffee and cake. Girls decided that too hot, so we spent day at the local open-air swimming pool. Claudia wins the 'swimming-length underwater' race. Peter plays the 'senior member' and treats us all to ice-creams. Later we return to the airfield where the CFI has offered goes in his microlight. The thing looks like it is made from Tupperware, balsa and deck-chair canvas, but over the week Ian, Steve, Nick and Peter are heroes and all have goes in it.

Wednesday:

Bells - Blooming - Bells. Hotter again today. Fix the vario in 579, but unknowingly break the radio in the process. Some good soaring in the blue. No-one apart from Claudia goes too far away since we forgot our 'crib cards' that read 'please look after this glider pilot and return to Dehausen – postage paid'. Excitement - Carole gets bitten in the side by a tick. The tick realises its mistake immediately, and commits suicide by breaking off its own head. Carole can't get the head out, she tries with a needle. Ian tries to help with tweezers, Claudia has a go with some pliers, Steve is standing by hopefully with a large monkey wrench....579 flies with a handheld. I spend the whole of my flight carefully rehearsing the 'downvind' radio call in German, only to get to the 'downvind' position and discover the batteries had gone flat...Gutted.

And so the week goes on, getting hotter and hotter, each morning the B-Team is woken by those blasted bells, then coffee and cake in the café, then flying in the afternoon. Carole goes to the local doctor and returns with an impressive bandage. One evening we visit the local fairground where we go on an enormous and awfully spindly big wheel. If I had kept my eyes open I would have seen the magnificent views from the top. Tea that night is a big and very tender steak and cabbage meal from the bar at the fair.

On Thursday night an ex Schempp-Hirth employee sees the wing-tips on 579 rocking forwards and backwards. He thinks the amount they move is excessive, and he suggests that it shouldn't be flown any more. If we did insist on flying it, he would rather we didn't fly it over his house, or indeed over anything else breakable. We take the hint, he orders us some parts from Schempp-Hirth, and we de-rig.

On the Friday, the 579 crew get 'shared out' in the other aircraft. Steve flies 251, I fly in the K13, and Peter flies in the K21. Best day of the week, with 3-4 kts climbs in the blue up to 4000'. Both Peter and I got rather low, but as we were flying as passengers, it wasn't our problem....Tommi (German Howard equivalent) packs toothbrush and flies the club DG-300 to other end of country. His girlfriend arrives later and isn't much impressed. He might fly it back on Saturday, he might not. I don't think he did...

On Saturday, the 'shims' arrive for 579, and they are applied by an enthusiastic helper with a very large hammer and brute force. Steve says he feels sick and wanders away. We all line up to take turns with the hammer...

The trip back was uneventful, right up to the point where Steve told the ferry security guards that he had 'locked my mother-in-law' in the trailer....

The highlights?

Well, watching a circling buzzard leave its thermal and go to join Steve climbing in 579 was remarkable, as was watching Ian and Carole go on an especially violent and large fairground ride. The local scenery is beautiful and is great to fly over. The club let us leave our aircraft rigged in their small hanger, but that's because they can't face another tailplane rigging session. But really, it was the hospitality of the host club. They cooked for us, launched us, entertained us, and even sorted out some spare parts for 579. As a thank you gift Peter gave them a magnificent gift of a glass model of their DG-300. It was a super trip.

DAILY INSPECTIONS (HOW GOOD ARE YOURS?)

This article was sent to me by Jim Doyle, who in turn received it from an inspector of another BGA club. Graham Barrett, one of the OGC inspectors, recommended to publish it in Final Glide:

Despite Daily Inspections by experienced pilots, the BGA accident statistics put technical failure as the third most common cause of accidents.

This has led me to keep an eye on daily inspections over the last year. What I have noticed is that most pilots tackle the job conscientiously, but not necessarily with all the knowledge needed to carry out a satisfactory DI.

One or more of the following points were missed by a majority of pilots.

1 Aileron and airbrake control brackets in the centre fuselage (K13)

Check for cracks

This can be carried out by placing a finger against the foot of the bracket where it attaches to the wing root rib to check for movement while an assistant locks and unlocks the airbrakes.

Also carry out a visual check for any cracking in the area.

Repeat for each attachment foot (4 per side)

2 Lower rudder hinge bracket on fin (Ka8 and K13)

This bracket is also the rudder stop and can be damaged by over zealous operation of the rudder or allowing the rudder to slam into the stops in high wind conditions.

Examine the attachment feet where they bend to take the attachment bolts.

3 Main skid attachments (K8 and K13)

(Ed.'s special OGC tip: As our Ka8s and K13s have leatherette skid fairings you might not be able to check these points in the same detail as described below.)

There are two that take all the shock load plus wear and tear.

- Front skid pivot point

Immediately below the nose (approx 250mm aft of nose) the skid is allowed to pivot about this point and the welds holding the pivot tube to the fuselage structure can crack from time to time.

- Centre attachment point

This is located approx 1 metre aft of nose under the front seat. The cross tube carrying the skid rubber housing cracks on one or both sides of the housing. The tube can be examined by looking under the front seat. Cracks appear as flaking paint or a dark line in the cross tube adjacent to the housing.

4 Lower fuselage structure (Aft of main wheel) (Ka8 and K13)

Just aft of the main wheel the lower fuselage structure becomes a single tube.

There are two areas that should be checked for damage:

- Forward end

At the junction of the Skid fairing and where the bottom of the rear fuselage becomes a single

tube (Roughly below the wing trailing edge)

check for paint cracking, fabric damage, rust stains or blistering of the tube underneath the fabric.

- Aft end

At the point where the front of the tailskid attached to the lower fuselage carry out a similar inspection to that described for the forward end

- Tail skid forward attachment pin

Check that the attachment pin is not loose in its fuselage housing. If it is then further investigation is required and an inspector needs to check the integrity of the forward attachment before the glider flies again.

Note: The skid front point is allowed some flexing on the pin and should have a rubber washer to permit such movement. If this has fallen off it should be replaced before the aircraft flies.

Any suspicion of cracking in the areas covered in 1-3 above must result in the glider being grounded until an inspector has cleared the suspected area

- Cable deflector plate

Ed.'s special OGC tip: the OGC K13s have been fitted with a cable-deflecting device, a little bent metal plate at the forward attachment of the tail skid. This was fitted to prevent the cable getting caught in the tail skid if the glider overruns the cable. Make sure this plate is pointing forward; it tends to come loose over time and then point sideways.

5 Dual-control stick interconnecting tube (K13)

Grasp both sticks and check for play between them by moving one to port whilst attempting to move the other to starboard. Over the weeks the interconnection tends to loosen and become sloppy. Not a grounding issue but should be noted in the DI book.

If the play becomes greater than 3-4 mm may indicate potential bearing failure and should be investigated before the glider flies again.

6 Control Cables (all gliders)

These comprise many very thin strands of wire that have been wound into a skein. In turn the skeins are twisted to form the finished cable.

Any cable that has more than 2 single strands of wire broken when inspected is likely to fail fairly soon and the glider must be grounded until the cable is replaced.

Ground the aircraft if more than 2 single strands have failed

For information:

The fact that only 2 strands failed may seem over cautious.

When subject to a detailed examination it is quite common to find that upwards of 25% of the cable has already failed.

Wherever possible all cables should be checked where they go around pulleys, through fairleads and where they attach to control knobs, pedals etc.

The most common cable to fail is the release cable where it is attached to the release knob.

7 Rudder pedal attachments

Make sure the rudder pedals don't pivot around the bar they are attached to. Over time the attachments tend to come loose, resulting in the pedal(s) pivoting around the bar and getting caught on the cockpit floor.

8 Dirty Canopy (all aircraft)

It should be standard practice to clean canopies as part of the DI.

Do not sign the DI book until someone has cleaned the canopy at the start of each flying day.

Canopies pick up cement grit from the hangar floor. This is highly abrasive and over a period of time results in many small scratches. These result in the canopy becoming opaque in bright sunlight, particularly in late afternoon and evening.

Washing this off at the start of the flying day significantly improves the canopy life and flight safety.

A dirty or scratched canopy is a serious safety issue

9 Main and tail wheel tyres

Always check that the tyres are correctly inflated. K13s in particular tend to soften over a couple of weeks. Other aircraft take a bit longer but all will suffer damage if left soft for any length of time.

A soft tyre is more inclined to slip on the rim. This results in the valve being pulled out of the inner tube. This usually happens on landing, the glider then rolls some distance on a flat tyre.

Result is a typical bill of £100 for a new tyre and tube plus the loss to the club of at least £50 in lost flying fees. All for 10 minutes saved during the pre-flight preparations.

Not a good way of spending club members' money!

10 Airbrake Caps (Ka8 and K13)

These are generally bonded to the airbrake blade structure. The bond has been known to fail. With the consequent loss of the airbrake cap.

Check the quality of the bond by pulling up on the cap and check that there is no flexing of the airbrake cap relative to the main part of the blade.

And finally.

DIs tend to become routine and repetitive so why not check that you are still maintaining the right level of observation by inviting an inspector to walk around with you on a DI.

This article concentrates on Ka8s and K13s. If you have questions on any of the points mentioned, or are not sure how to carry out a DI on another glider type, please talk to one of our inspectors.

OGC inspectors are currently:

Graham Barrett

Martin Hastings

Gordon Craig

Brian Payne

A FEW MORE WORDS ABOUT GLIDER SAFETY...

Claudia Bungen

You might be aware that the DG-505 JSX, our glass cross-country trainer, was taken out of service.

This is due to major trestle damage under one wing, which apparently led to delamination and made the glider unserviceable. Nobody knows where and when and how exactly this damage occurred. This led me to writing this little plea:

The club gliders are all our responsibility and deserve to be looked after in the same way as privately-owned gliders.

If you find any damage on a glider or if you accidentally damage a glider, please make sure to talk to an inspector to get the damage

I don't think any of us (apart from inspectors) are really able to judge whether any damage they find makes the glider unserviceable or not.

If you don't say anything, maybe because you think "oh, it won't be anything major", you might be putting your life and the lives of fellow pilots at risk, who might fly an unserviceable glider as a consequence.

Please do look after them, and more importantly, don't keep quiet about any damage you find or accidentally cause.

If in doubt: ask an inspector, don't sign the glider off as being serviceable unless you are 100% sure that it is.

Day One (Sunday)

After brief confusion by the Burger Van when it was established that 50% of the expedition was still running on Swedish time, we set off for the long trail north

Arriving at Sutton Bank we found the airfield liberally festooned with trailers and gliders. Hmm, what do they know about the forthcoming weather that we don't...?? After (briefly!) bedding down the trailers, we retired to the bar in search of northern hospitality and the inevitable "you should have been here last week..." stories. Slightly disheartened by the lack of beer ("a barrel will be arriving on Tuesday") we went to the pub where we found Jack Miller & Ian Young recounting their tales of 'daring-do' from Saturday.

Day Two (Monday)

The day dawned bright and sunny but with a very light wind from the north east.

After re-acquainting ourselves with Liz's excellent cooked breakfasts and a brief discussion about whether I'd brought any ear plugs with me that Steve could borrow, we thought it would be prudent to check whether any of the fields at the bottom of the ridge had moved! Reassured that they hadn't, we retired to the clubhouse and spent the day 'fettling' GPS & radios in preparation for the tasks we planned for the week ahead.

After all, what's the point in taking an aerotow just to float down again with no ridge or thermal lift when the rest of the week will be better?? What do you mean that Junior has been up for over an hour....oh bugger!!

Left the bank in search of food and alcohol and discussed whether it is possible to coast down the hill in a car and make it into the pub!

Day Three (Tuesday)

Weather crap – low visibility and light winds from the wrong direction but at least it's not cold!

Out and return to Helmsley in search of pork pies, buns and alcohol followed by another leg to Thirsk where a large stack of cheap DVDs was purchased by yours truly. Steve's Volvo almost made it all the way into Sutton Under Whitestone Cliff by gravity alone but thwarted by following traffic!

Decided to check out Bagby airfield as a possible diversion – wish we hadn't bothered, why anyone would put an airfield there beats me!

Spent the afternoon trying to get inverted on aerotow and flying ILS approaches into various

Swedish airfields in bad weather (on the PC in the clubroom!).

Went to the pub!

Day Four (Wednesday)

Weather equally crap and just a little bit colder too now!

Ian and Jack decided to call it a day – Steve & I hung on in the hope of better weather later in the day / week,

After lunch, airfield was buzzing with a rumour of possible aviation about to take place, despite the NE wind. Decided it was time for a futile gesture and rigged the 'Lark'. Feeling suitably inspired we watched the Pawnee drag a Twin Acro into the air.

Shortly afterwards we watched the Pawnee struggling to get safely down onto the ridge and a decidedly interesting approach by the Acro. By mutual consent it was agreed by all parties that flying is best left for the birds!

launch point under leaden grey skies. A few minutes later and £21 lighter I was at 3,000ft on the edge of the clouds having completed my first aerotow on the 304. Gosh that must be York Minster down there! Don't know how or in what, but somehow we both managed to scratch around for just under half an hour.

After another flight each just to prove it wasn't a fluke, we left the gliders at Rufforth and headed back up the Bank ready to recount to anyone who would listen our tales of 'daring-do'....!!

Went to a different pub and later, concerned at the apparent rate of evaporation, decided that the kindest thing to do would be to finish the last of the bottles of spirits!

Day Six (Friday)

Light at end of tunnel now officially turned out (at least for today) so decided to head back down to Rufforth.

After a brief search for a tug pilot and a few curious stares by others at the nutters rigging in weather like this, we again both found ourselves at 3,000ft but in cloud this time! Just under half an hour later, we were both back on the ground wondering – if it's like this today, it must be good here on a 'good' day!

The normal 'tuggie' being away playing in a motor glider, our next launches were courtesy of Bob MacLean (of MacLean Aviation fame!)

who decided not to let a strong easterly cross wind stop him in his quest to drop us off above a different part of York. Thank god for GPS!

After putting the toys away (and a casual remark by the original 'tuggie' that he was IMC at the top of the aerotow!) we toured Bob's workshop and contemplated just how that K21 & DG800 got broken quite like that...??

In a suitably contemplative mood, we retired to the bank and in turn the pub where we proved that it is possible to put a Renault Laguna in neutral at the top of the hill and still make it into a car park space at the rear of the Sutton Under Whitestone Cliff Pub! Just how many types of animal do they put into one of their mixed grills was the next subject for consideration?

Day Seven (Saturday)

Heavy rain and low cloud precluded a true assessment of just how crap the weather was!

SUTTON BANK EXPEDITION DIARY 2002 - THE WEEK THAT WASN'T!

By Paul Morrison, aged 35 1/4

After bedding down the Lark on the airfield and putting the Poodle fuselage back in the box, thoughts turned to the evening and which pub to grace with our custom that night! Decided that as it was mid week it would have to be a curry house!

Day Five (Thursday)

Weather still crap – light at end of tunnel getting that bit dimmer and despite last night's Curry, no appreciable change in the wind direction that mattered!

Realised with some trepidation that the bottles of spirits we bought on Tuesday were seriously depleted now (decided this must be attributable to evaporation due to the extra 1,000ft altitude!).

After breakfast & briefing, decided it was time for a decisive action so de-rigged the Lark and decided to temporarily re-locate both the Lark and the Poodle to Rufforth. What a nice airfield, flat green fields reminiscent of bowling greens – this will never catch on!

After a brief bout of paperwork and being made very welcome we found ourselves rigged and at the

SUTTON BANK EXPEDITION DIARY 2002 (CONTD.)

Steve decided that the lure of the flight to Sweden the following morning was too much so packed his bags and headed back down south via Rufforth to collect the Lark. I followed suit having planned a Rufforth – Elvington-Sutton Bank task for the day!

Shortly after midday, my museum musings were interrupted by a phone call from Steve informing me that his car had died rather spectacularly I gather, just past halfway point. After much head scratching, map measuring, swearing, pleading and contribution to various mobile phone companies profits, our knight in shining armour revealed himself to be better known as Haste as he set off on the journey north to retrieve the Lark.

Relieved that the plan seemed to be coming together, I completed my task and having collected the Poodle from Rufforth, I decided to try a short cut with the trailer up the bank. Unfortunately I managed to find a worse way than the main road and both myself and my car were suitably relieved when the lights of the club house came into view.

Went out for a curry and alcohol with the lads from Gransden Lodge who had been there all week suffering too!

Day Eight (Sunday)

If the forecasts were to be believed and the pilots who had come up to Sutton Bank on Friday on the strength of them were right, this was to be a very good

day!

Realising after breakfast that the strange glow in the sky was the sun, a flurry of activity saw gliders rigged and dragged into line – ready for a bank of low cloud to roll in from the East!

Unfortunately a combination of an inexperienced Tuggie, low cloud and other factors meant that the ASW20 before me in the queue got dumped in cloud to the east of the field. Being unable to find his way back with sufficient height he was last seen disappearing into the Vale of York. With much muttering and anxious pacing up and down by the duty instructor, flying was suspended until the cloud lifted – just before the rain started! It was with some relief that by mutual agreement the birds had again won and we called it a day. In fact come to think of it, even the birds were walking by then!

After struggling to help de-rig an ASH25 (hint – next time hide, it makes a Skylark look light and easy!) my plans for a departure back South were derailed by the plaintive pleas of the Cambridge boys. Apparently they were having some problems getting the ASW20 out of the field and were looking for

volunteers. Never having been intelligent enough to turn down a 'dangerous mission' I found myself several hours later up past my ankles in mud, carrying the ASW20 across a couple of fields to the trailer. (lesson no. two –run away!).

Arriving back at WOTG just before midnight with the grateful thanks and promises of Cambridge still ringing in my ears, I put the Lark to bed and started on my journey home which finished in the wee small hours of Monday – just in time to go to work!

Conclusion

It wasn't the week I hoped for, but I think we all had fun (even if you had to remind yourself at times!), the food and alcohol was good and we got some flying done – unlike others there! If I can offer some lessons from this: 1) Be flexible – with 20/20 hindsight we should have gone to Rufforth earlier in the week. 2) Hide when people even think of de-rigging an ASH25. 3) Don't volunteer for anything! 4) It can be a good idea to let someone else have the launch before you 5) Buy plenty of cheap booze and DVDs early in the week. 6) Judicious use of gravity can save you petrol!

RULES OF THE AIR

collected by Neil Turner

Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.

If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. But if you keep pulling the stick all the way back it all goes quiet and they get bigger again.

Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.

It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there, than up there wishing you were down here.

The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can see the pilot start to sweat.

When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has yet collided with the sky.

A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. A 'great' landing is one after which they can use the plane again.

Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.

If the ground seems very close and there's a strong smell of burning fibreglass you know you've landed with the wheels up.

The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival = small probability of survival, and vice versa.

Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.

Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another aircraft coming the other way. There have also been reports of mountains hiding in clouds.

Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of take offs you've made.

There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one has yet discovered them.

It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.

You start with a full bucket of luck and an empty bucket of experience. The trick is to fill the bucket of experience before you empty the bucket of luck.

Helicopters can't fly; they're just so ugly the earth repels them.

If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and the controls aren't working properly, things are not at all as they should be.

In the ongoing battle between objects made of fibreglass going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.

Good judgement comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgement.

Keeep looking around and thinking. There's always something you've missed.

Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to repeal.

The three most useless things to a pilot are the altitude above you, runway behind you and a tenth of a second ago.

There are old pilots and there are bold pilots but there are no old bold pilots.

Always aim to fly in the middle of the air. Avoid the edges.

And of course, as the big cat says, "always expect the unexpected".