

# FINAL GLIDE

Issue 21: Christmas 2000

Edited by Phil Hawkins

## WESTON HOSTS JUNIORS COMPETITION

A full scale gliding competition at Weston-on-the-Green? Who would have thought it possible? But for nine whole days this summer it really happened.

The original idea began to grow two years ago, and when Claire Emson discovered that Air Vice Marshal Philip Sturley was keen on the idea, there was no going back. About 60-70 visiting trailers were parked around the northwest corner of the perimeter track, and an entire tent/caravan village sprang up almost overnight. The OGC gliders were parked at Bicester for the week, because a marquee had been suspended inside the OGC hangar, for daily refreshments and nightly bopping.

Competition briefings were held in the northern half of the RAF hangar, where OGC gliders used to be stored in the days before our present hangar was built.

The competition was officially opened on the rain-soaked first day by BGA Chairman David Roberts, AVM Sturley and Lembit Opik MP. The weather during the week was slow to get started, but by day 3 reasonable tasks were possible, with two really good racing days when speeds of over 100kph were achieved. Only 3 days were completely scrubbed.

Fifty competitors, plus a number of two-seaters and other hangers-on were launched on daily tasks by a fleet of tugs headed by Taff Thorne. Justin Wills, who has always supported the Junior Nationals competition, flew all the tasks and gave a daily de-brief. The de-briefings were hugely

entertaining, thanks to some whizzy software by Ken Sparkes which collates GPS logger files from all the competitors. These were displayed on a large screen in the form of a "maggot race." These races, together with video clips, hundreds of photos, every issue of the competition daily newsletter, and the final competition results, are available from Cris Emson on the Weston 2000 CD.

Only one glider was slightly damaged during the competition, a collapsed undercarriage in a field landing. It was repaired in the OGC workshop, but collapsed again the following day during a re-light landing on the airfield. Damage to pilots was restricted to a broken arm sustained whilst playing rounders on the airfield.

For many OGC members it was a fascinating look at the organisation of a major competition. Launching was organised very efficiently by CFI Cris Emson, and most days the entire fleet of 50 competitors was launched in around 45 minutes, assisted by a team of healthy young runners snagging the aerotow ropes.

The start and finish line spotters were led by Joe Hoskins - a job which seems to consist of hours of boredom sitting in remote and deserted corners of the airfield, followed by 10 minutes of frantic activity when meticulous records have to be kept amid the shouting and confusion. It's not easy spotting glider tail numbers when they are finishing at low level, three or four at a time, flying straight at you. Catering was supplied by Club members, with thousands of sandwiches, teas, coffees and beers being sold during

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the week from the hangar marquee. At the BBQ party on the penultimate evening, almost 200 BBQ meals were cooked and served.

Apparently the competition was visited by a number of experienced competition pilots, including former world champions, and all compared our operation favourably with recent major overseas championships. Weston-on-the-Green is certainly an ideal competition site in many respects. There are already mutterings about "doing it again" in a few years' time, but others are saying "never again." We have certainly not lost money on the competition, although better weather would have meant better profits. The bar alone took several thousand pounds.

Probably the most lasting benefit of the competition cannot be quantified, that of raising the profile of WoG within the gliding movement. Who knows, in 10 or 20 years' time, one of the Weston 2000 competitors may be a top civil servant, high-ranking RAF officer, even a government minister, who has the future of WoG land on his desk. *Ah, yes, Weston-on-the-Green. I remember that competition, first one I ever entered. Wonderful site - how can we secure it as a gliding centre?*

**Final results:** 1st: Jay Rebbeck. 2nd: Pete Masson. 3rd: Leigh Wells

**Contest organiser:** Claire Emson.

**Director:** Pete Stratten (former CFI at Bicester, who claimed he wasn't quick enough with the excuses when AVM Sturley phoned to inform him that he was directing the competition).

**Deputy Director:** Cris Emson.

**Task setter:** Ken Sparkes.

**Scoring:** Max Kirschner.

**Control:** Jill Burry.

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## **NEW CABLE PARACHUTES**

**by Neil Swinton**

Since the early summer we have been using a new, much larger size of winch parachute on one drum. This brings us into line with the majority of other clubs who operate from the winch. All the winch drivers seem to appreciate the larger size of 'chute which makes it much easier and more stable on the 'pull on' back to the winch end.

In the operation there are some very important points to be noted however:

There is always going to be a risk of flying into the parachute after release - whatever size 'chutes we have. On a normal launch when the glider releases over the top of the winch then the risk is small. After release the glider is moving forwards and upwards, the parachute is moving downwards. There is no chance of the glider striking the parachute.

However it is when a launch is aborted in the first half of the climb that there can be problems. Remember it is the tension on the winch cable that keeps the parachute closed. If the tension is lost then the parachute will inflate. Consider the case of a glider deciding to abandon a good launch low down for whatever reason (low cloud, or just to 'ping' it back to the hangar). The pilot lowers the nose ('to reduce the tension') then pulls the release. The parachute will immediately inflate - maybe before the release has been pulled - and is then likely to RISE since the winch is still pulling and the parachute is acting just like a kite. The glider is going forwards, the parachute is

going forwards and upwards. The risk of collision is now increased.

This can be avoided in two ways. If on a normal launch you decide to release low down, then do not reduce the cable tension first. In that way the cable will be pulled away from the glider before the parachute can inflate. The winch drivers can also help here. If the winch driver sees the glider drop the cable in the first part of the launch then the winch MUST immediately stop pulling in (by closing the pump the drum will stop dead). This removes the tension from the cable and will deflate the parachute, allowing it to fall to the ground.

Incidentally the more observant may have noticed a much longer 'shock rope' being used on the larger parachute. This is to get the glider as far away as possible from the parachute.

Of course, under normal circumstances when the glider is at the top of the climb, then it remains good practice to reduce the tension somewhat by lowering the nose slightly just before pulling the release. However, when releasing intentionally low down on a normal launch, it is always better to release under tension.

I know that releasing under tension is not going to make you popular with the winch driver who might have to sort out a cable loop on the drum. The alternative is much worse however.

**Cris Emson comment:** If you are taking a low launch, maybe to get the glider back to the hangar, then try giving yourself a cable break by releasing when the glider is in the full climb and the cable under tension. Then you will get all the sensations of a real break - apart from the surprise obviously - and you will get the practice at flying what is a very important manoeuvre.

## **OBSERVERS PLEASE NOTE**

Brian Payne has remarked that the BGA have not published anything on the rules for badges and records since 1992. It could be a wise move for observers to acquaint themselves with the following web site and treat this version as definitive:

[http://www.fai.org/sporting\\_code/sc3.html](http://www.fai.org/sporting_code/sc3.html)

# Tony Gaster (1927 – 2000)

May of this year sadly saw the passing of one of our more colourful members in the form of Tony Gaster.

Tony came to us when the Brackley Gliding Club folded, and regularly made the trek to Oxford from his cottage in Finchley. His passing was sudden and unexpected. He was flying at the club on the Sunday only three days before he was taken into hospital with an inflamed pancreas.

Tony's lively personality and personable nature made him a popular member of the club, a fact that was borne out by the large number of OGC members who attended his funeral, most of whom had travelled more than 60 miles to be there.

From an early age Tony had a passion for all things mechanical. He studied mechanical engineering, and after graduating worked for several companies before becoming an independent design engineer. At Aston Martin he worked on the design of a successful engine, which helped them to win at Le Mans and other races

He was also a keen sailor and owned his own boat, which he frequently took abroad. When maintenance of the boat started to become a chore, he turned to gliding. Like his boat, an old wooden ketch, he preferred to fly only in gliders made of traditional materials. He couldn't abide the use of plastic in either boats or gliders.

At only 72, Tony appeared fit and full of energy, and was looking forward to restoring an old motorbike in his workshop at the bottom of his garden. He was always philosophical and his observations of life were never dull. His motto was 'doing things, not having things'.

*Barry Taylor*

# 5hrs AT SUTTON BANK

We arrived Thursday night, had a few beers and hit the sack.

The morning dawned to an Easterly wind (no working ridge) and thermic potential. Sat it out for a while then took a launch at about 12:30, though at the time I didn't realise what time I had taken off.

After what I thought was about 2 hours I called down to launch point to find it was only 1½ hours. It was a scorching hot day but the thermals were very strange and HARD work. I had thought I would only go up for a hour or so then come down for lunch, so hadn't taken any fluids or dextrose tablets.

I decided to go for my Five hours. Hmm. After 2 hours all the thermals started dying off and I was convinced that I would have to land. All the gliders that had been flying with me started to fall out of the sky - only a hardy couple managed to hang on.

Very quickly all the thermals died apart from a few weak puffs that were too broken up to use. I considered giving up about then. I was thinking another 15 mins or so and I would be down, but I found a weak thermal which allowed a tortuous climb.

It was crazy - a thermal would appear, 1 to 2 knots broken and flukey. I would grab it, concentrate on centreing quickly and flying as accurately as possible with minimum control input, I would climb as long as I could before it died then, gradually descend convinced that was that for the day.

Just as I started to think about circuits another lone thermal would kick off just within gliding range. It went on like this for about one and a half hours - nightmare. Eventually everybody else had landed and I was on my own. The last

hour or so was just the wildest and made it all worthwhile though. I noticed a line of cloud coming in fast from the coast at about 2000ft. When It got to me I was above cloud!!!!

I spent 45 minutes diving through cloud tops or climbing inside them on the turn & slip. The best was flying along the edge of the sea breeze front climbing up the face of the cloud mountains. You had to get in real close to get the lift (about half to two-thirds of a wing in the clouds) but you could fly along the front edge at about 65kt going up at a steady 2-3 Kt.

I found it scary at first - the clouds were imposing and it took me a while to relax with the turn and slip and to regulate my breathing and tension. When I became accustomed a bit more to such an alien environment it was a real blast. Eventually I ended up underneath the cloud layer - didn't want to lose the site - and back to just about sustaining in 1kt of weak rare lift.

Eventually Haste called me on the radio to say 'come on down - you're over 5 hours.'

Never have I been so happy to get out of a glider and have a fag and drink 2 litres of water in about 1 minute!

So there it was my 5 hours - unexpected, especially in thermals at a ridge site - and also my full Silver assuming the BGA accept it!

What did I learn? Take some water on a hot day even on the shortest trips !!

Apparently Haste et all were a bit worried because they could tell I was suffering from dehydration over the radio - they said I was talking garbage - so what's new I thought.

That was it as regards flying for the rest of the weekend. The ridge never worked and the inversion came down and killed the thermals.

*Simon Walker*

## DAWN TO DUSK DAY STATISTICS

*by Nick Hill*

Launches: 113 (including 3 cable breaks)

Total Minutes flown: 815

For those of you who saw the log sheets the last flight was number 114 but number 69 was missing for some reason.

Longest Flight: 26 minutes for an AM flown by Andy Butterfield.

Longest Member flight: 19 minutes for Karen King + Howard Stone

Number of different front seat pilots: 39

Number of different instructors: 3 - Cris Emson, Howard Stone and Andy Butterfield. Cris had the highest number of launches (17).

The top ten members in terms of total flying duration were:

Steve Trusler (64min, 10 launches)

Carole Shepherd (63min, 10 launches)

Henry Clarke (61min, 7 launches)

Karen King (45min, 6 launches)

John Duvall (45min, 6 launches)

Nick Hill (43min, 5 launches)

Matt Gage (38min, 5 launches)

Stewart Otterburn (29min, 5 launches)

Nicky Beresford (23min, 3 launches)

Patricia Peter (Trish) (22min, 3 launches).



# CFI'S TURN

Cris Emson

As I am sure everyone is aware, the weather this year was not as good as it could have been – some may say it was pretty poor. But it

must be said that there were a couple of days in August that were probably amongst the best for the past several years – more of that later. There are just a couple of points that have arisen during the year that I would like to comment upon.

Firstly, it is widely known that we do not have as many instructors in the club as we would like. We have been losing a few over the past few years, which has put the pressure on those remaining. I am in the process of getting several new instructors trained, to Basic Instructor standard, which can help relieve the pressure for next year. You can help, by helping set up the airfield early in the morning, so that we have as much flying during the day as possible, and hence get as many people flown. This will be particularly important next season.

The DG has been well used during the year, but mainly by luck that the days when there was no instructor, the weather was not up to it anyway. I hope that it gets more use next year, particularly for further cross country training.

The Junior Championship was held at Weston this year, which hopefully proved an interesting experience for

everyone. We knew it would be hard work, but despite that it should also be rewarding. Financially the club did well, as was hoped. But more importantly, I hope people had a chance to see a major competition and how it works, and had a chance to do some flying with the many tugs available for the week. The DG went cross-country every task day, and our younger members seemed to enjoy the experience. Several members flew their own gliders *hors concours*, including on some spectacular days when tasks were completed at well over 100kph! But also we made a good impression to people that count – the BGA, the RAF from the CO up to an AVM, and the local community. Thanks to everyone who helped, either for the whole week, or just for a few hours. It all helps!

### **Just a couple of dates for your diary.**

I will be running a Bronze Tutorial day on Sunday 11 March 2001, starting 10am. You will also have the chance to sit the Bronze paper on the same day. So get revising!

There will be an Instructor Meeting, to take place on Saturday 10 March 2001, from 7:30pm to 9pm. Please will all instructors put this date in your diary, and I hope you will be able to come along.

## **SOARING IN NEVADA**

**by Stuart Otterburn**

Got 2.5 days off so went to Yosemite on Wednesday (gorgeous - piccies to show if anyone interested), to Reno (mini LA) that night.....won \$25 from a quarter - got to buy breakfast following day!

Went to FAA office Thursday AM, got US license and went to Minden Airport. Their CFI is Finnish and NUTS! Flying an ACRO for the check, took a tow to 2K and pottered around...he wanted to see a stall....fine.....do I like aerobatics? Yes.....he cries 'My Plane!' and throws it round a loop, a quarter clover and then gives it to me at the top of a Chandelle without enough rudder.....got out of it OK, but never had that one before.....come in to the Tarmac strip with the wheel DOWN and land....no problem. Get into the LS4....tow to 2K

then wallop!!!! Off the stops lift! Climb to 10,500ft ( Altimeter reads 4720 on the ground) and belt off to the ridge to have a look at lake Tahoe on other side. It's stunning....hope photos OK! Conditions R-O-U-G-H!!! Lift is lumpy as hell! Can see the Casinos in Reno 50 miles upwind, but no chance of getting there!

Fast beginning to realise what Alex Jenkins achieved in getting home from Chilbolton on a blue day.... bluest I've ever seen here! Frantically looking for haze caps, but can't see a thing....head for the local landmarks I've been briefed on.....8 knots....good climb, but finding it hard to get into cores, see someone else thermalling.....decide to give it some welly and belt off at 100knts....what a machine! Haul up and get back to 10,500ft in no time. From then on I had serious trouble finding lift....the guy above me had obviously had enough and ran for home.....kept looking, didn't find a thing....committed to land and radioed the tower saying I was starting RH circuit....strongest lift yet and I've told the tower I'm on my way in, GREAT!....temptation to abort is huge, but

land anyway after 65 mins (claimed silver height in the US)

Asked for another tow, but it will now be 1.5 hours as some fool from the other club has mangled something (couldn't understand agitated Finnish CFI - didn't seem appropriate to ask for a recap) on his landing.....have to clear the runway! Decide to call it a day!

Lessons learned? At WOG we're lucky to have trees, etc to help us judge height relative to the field on landing....judging 300ft when there's just desert and not so much as a gatepost at the end of the runway is another...don't panic Cris....didn't do a low final turn, had to have 3/4 brake all the way.

Rest of my short break went like this: went for a swim in Lake Tahoe, drove to Sacramento, had dinner and explored...late night run to SFO....to Muir Woods National Forest in the AM.....shocked to find that none other than George Lucas lives a couple of valleys up in 'Skywalker Ranch' in Lucas Valley Road....oh, and saw the second tallest tree in the world!

## Club Ladder Results 1999-2000

The Ladder year which ended on 30th September has not been a good one – and yet we managed more this year than last. But only just. As before, I am showing the statistics for cross country distance and time, and height gains, compared to previous years – going back to 1987 (when records began). It is always difficult to draw conclusions – I can leave that up to you.

As for the results, I have taken the information available in the Cross-Country book – if you think you had more flights than I record below, then you probably did not register the flight! The ladder is split into three parts – Open Ladder and Weekend Ladder and Junior Ladder. I give the three tables below.

Open Ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Total
M Hastings	1704	1270	1228	1156	5358
P Hawkins	1875	1593	930	866	5264
M Gage	1450	1340	1098	1046	4935
M Makari	1374	1367	1231	585	4556
A Hoskins	1005	730	492	370	2597
C Emson	1306	493	403	377	2579
C Buengen	810	701	285	119	1916
G Barrett	869				869
I Cooper	761				761
A Butterfield	387				387
C Shepherd	199				199

Weekend Ladder

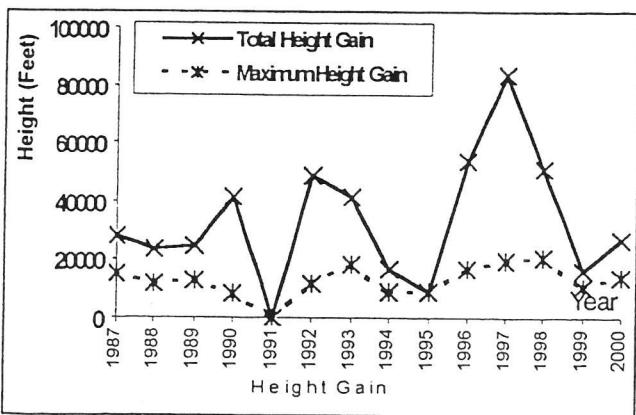
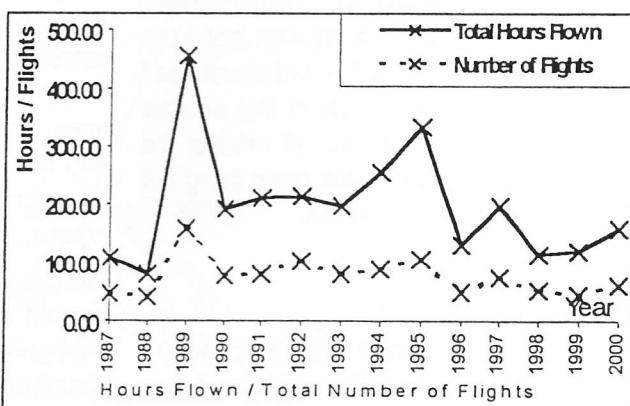
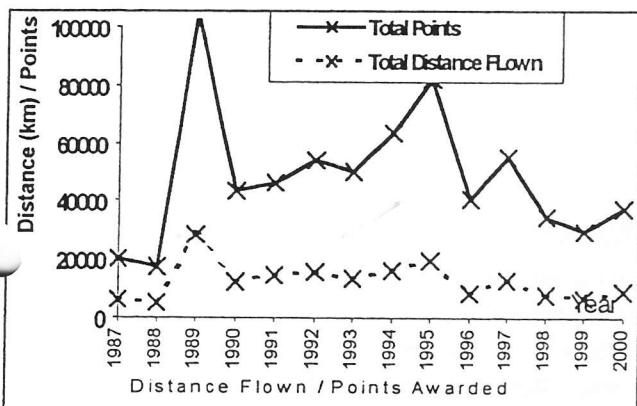
Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Total
M Gage	1340	1046	573	441	3399
M Makari	1367	585	571	397	2920
P Hawkins	866	680	668	614	2828
C Emson	493	403	377	341	1614
A Hoskins	730	492	239	54	1514
M Hastings	1270				1270
C Buengen	701	119	96		917
A Butterfield	387				387

Junior Ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Total
A Hoskins	1005	730	492	370	2597

In case anyone is interested, the scoring algorithm is different this year, introducing a few new features to try to make the scoring system as fair as possible. Two new factors are introduced: a Shape Factor (value is normally 1, but if there are more than 2 TPs, the factor is reduced to 0.8); Achievement Factor (this is normally 1.1, but if a task is undeclared, the factor is 0.5, or if declared but not completed, it is the ratio of the completed portion of the task to the original declared task). Speed points are therefore awarded even for incomplete tasks, so make a note of landing time!

Cris Emson



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# Soaring Dreams

Basically I am a thermal soaring pilot. There's nothing I like better than flying long distances over flat country. I love expeditions to the mountains for a change of scenery, and for the remote chance of a Diamond height, but I don't expect to do any serious cross-country flying on these visits.

Fiona and I have made two springtime expeditions to Feshiebridge, and on both occasions the weather has been blue and hot for at least part of the week. Last year I flew in blue thermals up to 5,500ft. This year I flew on four separate days and exceeded several personal records, accumulating more hours than on all previous expeditions to Feshie added together. On Monday 8th May, for example, I flew in heaving 8kt thermals up to a cloudbase that varied between 7,200ft and 7,800ft. Although cross-country tasks were set, clouds were limited to the area north of the site, and I merely ambled up to Inverness and came back. I'll just go through that again in case you missed it. On a day with a 7 grand cloudbase I managed only 85km. It simply hadn't sunk in that weather like this should be used properly, regardless of whether the terrain below is flat or lumpy. It was a nice day's flying but nevertheless I felt that I had somehow lost out.

## A Highland 300

The following day also began blue, and I was convinced the weather could not possibly be as good, which just shows how wrong I can be. At least I was taking a lot more interest in the set tasks for the day. The biggest was a 307km quadrilateral, all of whose turning points appeared to be on the other side of very dark brown bits on the Scottish half million map. However there were two familiar faces at Feshie who were also enthusiastic, so I felt encouraged to mark up the task and think positively. My companions were Bob Sharman (ASW-20) and Jonathan Kingerlee (LS-7).

With juicy looking clouds forming over the local peaks, I drew pole position and was launched off first. The aerotow was a rollercoaster ride, and I pulled off at about 1,500ft in a steady 6 knot thermal. Over the radio we agreed that the safest start height was cloudbase, considering the unlandable Moon country *en route* to the first turning point. Like the day before,

"If you take your glider to Scotland often enough you will eventually strike lucky"

## PART 1

*Phil Hawkins*

it seemed a long way up to cloudbase even after passing 5,000ft. I think I started the task at around 6,800ft.

The view heading south from Feshie was absolutely breathtaking. Your wildest soaring dreams cannot be better than this. Snow-capped mountains thousands of feet below stretching to a glowing horizon, with mysterious glimpses of the lochs between them here and there. A beautiful pure blue sky, paler and greener around the edges, and small flat bottomed clouds spaced conveniently into the distance. I didn't have GPS but this didn't matter. I cruised by compass over this awe-inspiring terrain, tracing the hook shape of the top of the river Feshie, continuing southwards until the A9 and Loch Tummel came into view. I had an acute attack of "stay-up-itis" which caused me to hug the cloudbase at every opportunity, but I guess you would do the same, looking down on crisp snowfields, bare rocks and barren moorland, mile after mile of trackless heather and boulders. Imagine flying from Weston to Northampton without seeing a single road or railway line, or any other signs of human habitation.

The first turning point was at Kenmore, just under 60km from Feshie, where I had to find a bridge at the eastern end of Loch Tay. Near Kenmore there were fields available, but at my height this was scarcely of interest. The clouds had slightly lower bases here, but I was still able to maintain about 5,500ft before heading north once more. The area around Loch Tay and Loch Tummel is very green, with steeply sloping forests seemingly frozen in the act of sliding gracefully into the blue water. What an incredible soaring experience this was.

Navigation on the second leg was no problem. In the distance, the biggest area of snow on the highest peaks just had to be the Cairngorm group, and this was right on track for the next TP. Cloudbases were steadily higher as I flew north, and over Glen Einich I passed 7,000ft for the first time that day. Loch Einich is only visible when close by, since it nestles below daunting cliffs at the back of the Feshie bowl. There was a much smaller loch high in a corrie to the east of Einich which was still frozen, with huge sweeping drifts of snow leading down to its icy shores.

Conscious of my two companions snapping at my heels I pushed on at high speed towards Aviemore and Grantown-on-Spey, where it was evident that sea air was beginning to affect cloud development. Although good clouds persisted over the high ground south of the Spey, everything was blue ahead. The last cloud was over the 2330 spot height to the east of Grantown, which was at least 5 miles short of the turning point at Bridge of Avon. This cloud was fairly slow, but it lifted me to about 6,500ft where there were odd curtain clouds dangling from its ragged base. I flew along

them a few times, hoping for lift from the sea breeze front, but this was a waste of time and height.

I set off into the misty blue, in ominously still air. I could see the turning point after a while, but I could also see very low cloud over the sea with motionless ripples in its upper surface. Sea fog! It was licking its way across the coast in eerie fingers, groping towards me up the Spey valley a few miles beyond the TP, flowing between woods and hedges. As I turned over Bridge of Avon, the radio indicated that Bob and Jonathan were catching up, but cannily they were detouring to stay over the higher ground to the south, apparently planning to approach the TP from the south-east. By the look of the clouds in that direction I wished I had done the same.

Arriving back over the 2330 spot height at 3,000ft QFE (about 1,500ft clearance) I began to scratch around for more lift, but there wasn't much to be had. On the direct track towards home the sky appeared blue and lifeless for many miles. Feeling a bit miserable, I diverted to the SSE over Tomintoul towards the nearest of the good-looking clouds, acutely aware that as my height slowly decreased, the altitude of the ground below was increasing at a much faster rate. There were landable fields in the valley bottoms near Tomintoul, but I was scratching over snowdrifts, heather, rocky slopes and little water streams.

After an anxious search under a large dark canopy of cloud, I found weak lift which gradually improved. I longed to get back to the sunshine

on the other side of the ridge towards Loch Morlich. At the edge of the sunshine, more or less overhead the car park at the foot of the Cairn Gorm chairlift, there was a good strong thermal once more which gave me about 5,500ft. From here booming clouds could be seen on the last leg west of Feshie, and I set off on a long calm glide through the blue to reach them. Passing over Loch Morlich, Loch an Eilean and Loch Insh, I eventually contacted the lift over the hills just north of Kingussie. This was the best thermal of the day, hitting 10 knots at times and just brushing 8,000ft at cloudbase (8,850ft above sea level). It allowed me to cruise at 90 knots with full negative flap southwest towards Loch Laggan, ducking and weaving around other bits of cloud on the way. Again I was struck by the wildness of the terrain below, ancient forests of straggling pines, sharp ridges and few signs of human intervention.

On our previous visits the Laggan valley has acquired something of a spooky reputation. For example, one dark night we were followed along the Laggan road by a Land Rover with a large searchlight mounted on its roof, which was scanning the fields on either side of the road. Another day we saw a small plane which had landed in a remote field, then we were stopped at a Police checkpoint further along the road. They asked me if I had seen anything unusual, and barely had time to say thanks when I told them about the plane. They were gone in a cloud of dust. Strange things happen in Glen Laggan.

The specified turning point was the dam at the far end of the loch. I had been expecting a concrete structure, but on closer examination it appeared to be an earthen bank covered with gaunt old trees. Further towards Fort William the sea lochs sparkled in the afternoon sun, and the clouds showed signs of being fragmented by stable air from the west coast.

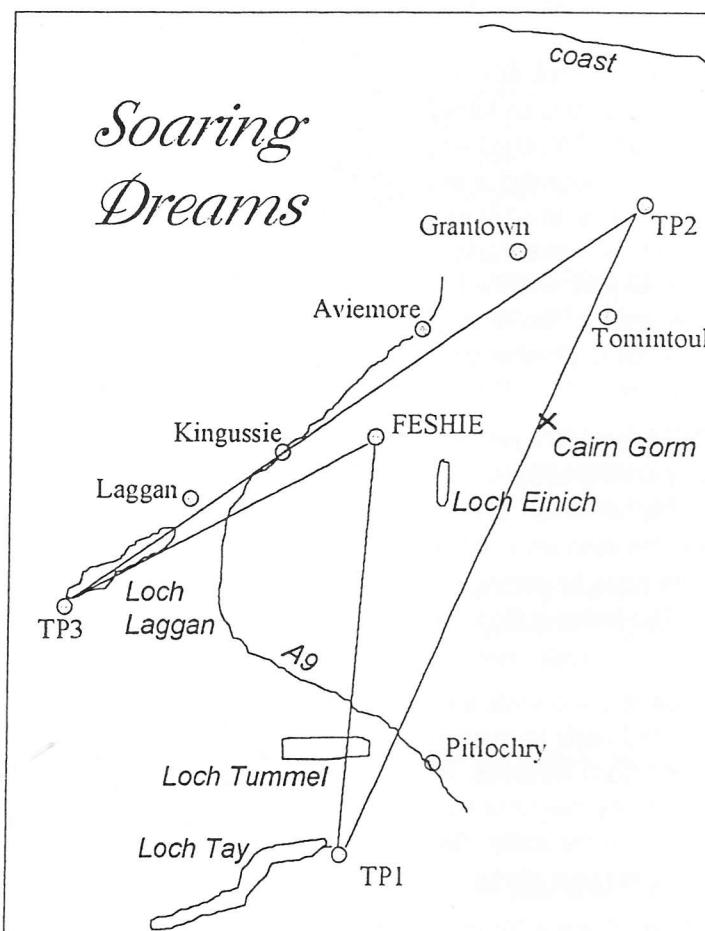
Over the TP, however, there was another magnificent strong thermal, and I relaxed throughout the half-hour glide home.

This was easily my most spectacular 300km flight, and at 3½hrs also one of the fastest. Bob and Jonathan recorded similar times, finishing a few minutes after me. Oddly enough they both found the Laggan area much more difficult than I did. Two other gliders completed the task, the Scottish Gliding Union's ASH-25 and one of the local club members.

Feshie in the spring is different. At present I support the October visits but it can be so dark and damp at that time of year. In May the days are long and Scotland seems to be bursting

with life. There are carpets of wood anemones, wild garlic and other flowers, symphonies of bird song in the mornings and wonderful views of the snow on the mountains. Autumn wave isn't necessarily better either - I had two wave flights that same week under azure skies, reaching 14,400ft and 16,100ft above the site on successive days. From that height the views of Skye and the other western Isles in a shimmering golden sea were absolutely stunning. If you are becoming disenchanted with the moist autumn weather, consider a spring expedition instead.

**STOP PRESS:** Feshie dates next year: practice week 19th-25th May, task week 26th May-2nd June. Autumn wave camp will be 3 weeks from 29th September to 20th October. Barry and Mo Meeks are going to Lleweni Parc instead next year, but Feshie will have tug, tug pilot and instructor on duty for each of these weeks.



"If you take your glider to Scotland often enough you will eventually strike lucky."

## PART 2

# 21,000ft in Wardrobe!

Dave Weekes

a

Aboyne, Wednesday, October 4th 2000

"It might be worth rigging early" Rick commented after we watched the Tuesday night weather forecast at the Loch Kinord bar. We missed the hotel's massive Scottish breakfast and were rigging in the half light soon after 7am. Following a wet night it was a lovely morning with a moderate west/southwesterly wind and very little cloud. No wave markers at all. Rick launched first at 8.25 and the Skylark was third in the queue, with the barograph carefully sealed and ticking, oxygen checked, me with furry boots on, ready to plummet from the top of the aerotow yet again.

"It's rough on tow between 1 500 and 2 000 feet," Rick radioed. He wasn't kidding, a tumble drier was operating between the airfield and the lakes - woops, they're lochs, not lakes - but the tow smoothed out at about 2 300 feet and the vario went off the clock. I'd been caught (twice) earlier in the week by coming off tow too early, so this time I waited until 2 700 before pulling the bung.

Even without the tug we were still going up at 5 – 6 knots and at 3 400' I remembered to pull full brake and circle to mark a low point on the barograph trace. However I didn't remember to check the altimeter to see whether I lost any height in the process and the result was only a tiny nick on the trace. Be warned! That kind of thing can be costly on marginal climbs.

Rick and the other aircraft were well above, flying a North – South beat. Follow them, I thought, and as a cunning plan it worked pretty well for a while, but by 7 500' the lift had slowed and I lost them. However, this was fun. Would I break my previous best height in the Skylark of 11 500 feet? The answer seemed to be no, as I dropped into sink at about 10 500.

I pushed west up the Dee valley. That improved things and we crept up to 11 500 feet before I lost it again and dropped about 800 feet. They're strange things, oxygen masks, whenever I put one near my face, it seems to suck the whole glider towards the ground. Someone should do a PhD on the phenomenon of "heavy oxygen".

No gliders could be seen above, but those below seemed to be more to the north. Taking the hint, I shifted a mile or so towards Morven, the local mountain, now looking a lot smaller. That got

us out of the sink – maybe it was switching off the oxygen that did it and we climbed in 2 – 3 knots past 12 grand. Not even the effect of going back onto oxygen could overcome that lift. An RAF Hercules crossed at the same level and about half a mile ahead. Had they seen me? – probably not. Would they have believed it if they had? "Wooden UFO in Air France colours spotted over Scotland".

14 000 feet – definitely a new personal high. The best results seemed to be obtained by flying directly into the wind, which at the higher levels was about SW. Best climb airspeed had dropped to 35 knots, groundspeed on the GPS was 12 knots. After a while the lift seemed to be slowing so I turned & went downwind on the assumption that I'd moved out of the front of the wave, remembering this time to put a GPS mark on the point where the lift improved. However I must have gone too far downwind, out of the rising wave and into the sink because a couple of hundred feet vanished fast off the altimeter before I could turn and get back to the self-raising stuff.

Using the GPS "mark" facility and ground references helped keep us in the lift and we climbed steadily at 2 - 3 knots. 15 000, 16 000 came and went, with me watching the altimeter with fascinated disbelief. Then it was time to do something about the oxygen. The 2 litres/minute setting on Haste's 230 litre bottle hadn't been working too well and it had been on 4 litres/min for 50 minutes, with me keeping a paranoid eye on the inflation of the accumulator bag and checking that the fingernails were keeping pink. I had RD's portable set on the other side of the cockpit, (with its gauge equally hard to see) and figured it was time to swap sets as we passed 17 000'. Paranoia also extended to occasional checks on airbrake free movement.

Arrgh! My vision has gone blurred. Oxygen deficiency? No, just the sunglasses misting up. Take them off.

At 18 000 the lift slowed to 1 – 2 knots but still steady. To the east the sun was reflecting brightly off the North Sea, which had got a lot bigger. The only clouds at that level were to the west – over Feshie? The whole of the Moray Firth and the NE Scottish coast was visible. Loch Muick, Balmoral and the Dee valley all the way to Aberdeen were clear. What a view! The Skylark was climbing in wave – I was soaring on pure euphoria. And diamond height was beginning to look possible.

Uncertainty struck again and I made a quick call "Rick, what is diamond height?" Someone answered "16 500 feet gain." It's close! 20 000 feet should be just in, but at 19 500 we didn't

seem to be climbing at all despite the vario still showing  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 1 knot. This went on for several minutes and then miraculously the needle unstuck and swung to 20 000.

20 000 feet! I couldn't believe it. The toes were a bit chilly but I'd made sure that I'd started off with dry boots. The sun was still shining, the rest of me was warm and I was using the gloves and woolly hat solely to scrub ice off the inside of the canopy. There wasn't another glider in sight and the feeling of detachment from the earth and reality was intense. The quiet roar of the air coming through the ventilator and the view of the ground was about the same as a 747 in the cruise but the cabin service was rotten and I was sure that the barograph wasn't ticking. Had I really wound it up and switched it on? Self confidence goes out of the window at times like that.

Then 20 000 vanished again as I hit sink. Was it downhill from now on? That'll teach you to count chickens. Would 20 grand be enough? Maybe not. A quick turn got us out of the sink and on the run downwind we hit + 3 knots. It was still there on the upwind leg and there we were, 21 200 feet! More might have been possible but I'd been on RD's oxygen for 30 minutes and it was time to get back down to 10 000 feet with a reasonable safety margin.

I was ecstatic and the need to tell someone was overwhelming. "Aboyne base, Bravo November Kilo 21 000 feet, descending." There was a brief chorus "Well done Dave" – either from Rick or the Feshie mob. "What's Bravo November Kilo?" "It's a wooden ship" a slightly morose voice said. I took a couple of photos through the icy canopy. I would have loved a picture of that unbelievable altimeter reading, with the third hand pointing at 2 but couldn't get the camera unscrewed from the mount.

We spiralled down on half brake. Gel coat cracking is not too much of a worry in gliders built of natural carbon-based fibre. In front of the Morven lenticular at 6 000 feet, even full brake couldn't stop a brief climb and the descent took nearly 40 minutes. The fun stopped as we entered the circuit which was very rough. For a while on finals it was debatable whether I was going to hit the narrow tarmac strip or the grass alongside it. The grass is now much more glider-friendly, and eventually plenty of height, speed and

the Skylark's wonderful brakes got me down safely on the tarmac.

And when we stopped, I could hear the barograph ticking. Yes! What a lovely sound and there was a trace too, going impressively far up the drum.

Someone in a Phoebus (CJJ) did 23 500', so it was a great day for old gliders. Rick did 23 000 having lost about 7 grand in an adventurous foray to another wave bar. One of the locals did over 500k but then he had an engine in the back.

Right BNK, a 500k now please! Any volunteers for a really long downwind retrieve?

**One of the older Booker gentlemen remarked "It's lovely to see all those expensive plastic ships outclimbed by a bloody wardrobe."** One of the other Booker pilots, who failed to get above 12 grand in his ASW 27 seemed to disagree.

PS. Aboyne was virtually deserted this year. It definitely gives better wave and has less rain than Feshie and it isn't nearly as scary as some people like to make out. If I can fly there, anybody can.

With grateful thanks to the following sponsors, without whom this flight would not have been possible:-

Booking the Aboyne slot, getting me out of bed, helping rig the Skylark and providing the match to smoke the barograph - Rick

Oxygen set by Haste

Oxygen in Haste's bottle by Howie (so he says)

Smart paintwork on BNK by Mike

Barograph calibration & trace assessment by Hawkeye

"New" electric vario by Graham (I'll pay you for it soon, honest!)

Seat back and cushions by Fiona

Multi coloured but warm flying suit by BT and B&Q paint

Barograph paper by OGC (no I'm not giving it back)

See-through canopy by the bastard who smashed the old one

New compass by Autopoint (£2.35)

Abuse by Judith (the Aboyne launch point dragon) – provided free, but I got her back – see the photo on the Deeside GC website

**Editorial:** I have to agree that Aboyne is, on the whole, drier than Feshie. I have visited Feshie on at least two occasions when I didn't bother to get the glider out of its trailer for the whole week, due to persistent low cloud-base and damp weather. Aboyne may have slightly better wave but the difference is small - Simon Walker did a birthday Gold height at Feshie on the same day as Dave's flight, and I heard other pilots at 18,000 - 19,000ft. In easterly winds there may be good wave at Feshie whilst conditions are unflyable at Aboyne.

For inexperienced pilots I think the Feshie site is less demanding than Aboyne. The tarmac runways at Aboyne are not difficult to use, but they do look needle-slim from the air and require accurate approach control sometimes in rough air. Taxying off the edges of the runways was definitely not recommended when I last visited Aboyne, although that was some years ago and I expect the Deeside Club have continued to improve the surface where possible. By contrast, the Feshie strip is friendly grass with only a few bumpy bits near the edges, and several wing-spans wide.

The fact is, I love Glen Feshie as a holiday destination and not simply as a Gliding Club with a B&B nearby. Unflyable days at Feshie are never wasted - there is always something else interesting to do. So the great debate will doubtless continue, and each of these two wonderful Highland sites will have its own group of supporters.

Auntie BGA has a new full time, salaried Chief Technical Officer (CTO) Jim Hammerton who has succeeded the part time Dick Stratton. Dick had a quite laid-back approach to the job, but I have the impression that the new broom will reach into many corners not previously visited.

All clubs can expect a visit from him, which is "to ensure their suitability for repair and maintenance." It is clearly in our club's interest that we keep our present repair and maintenance facilities. Therefore please note that the glider

workshop should be considered just that. It should be a clean and tidy workshop only for glider work and not a general store or dumpsite. I wish!

Jim Hammerton has introduced a news sheet entitled BGA Engineering News. It will appear on the notice board and subsequently filed with Technical News Sheets (TNS) in the clubroom. It includes general items for all pilots so is recommended reading.

Most TNSs have included edicts affecting us this year but fortunately neither too seriously nor too expensively. The contents page appears on the notice board and the whole TNS is filed in the clubroom. Here are a few examples.

Ka6E. Airbrake aperture cracks. Lynne's was OK, sigh of relief!

Astir. Warning - release problems on launches with yaw ???

Ka7/Ka13. Airbrake pivot bolts. Both of ours passed.

Winch Guillotines. Reminder that 2000 is year for Mandatory BGA guillotine requirements. Kabelpullendingsbummeister?

Ka13. Rudder pedal failures. Once again both of ours passed.

LS4. Mandatory Airworthiness Directive (A/D) Action to prevent airbrake jam. Strawberry or Blackcurrant Gordon?

DG500. Flight manual revision. Nothing very exciting

Std Cirrus. Optional retro fit nose tow release mechanism. Claudia says now mandatory in Germany. Ralph's till open for business?

Ka6/Ka8. Mandatory Inspection elevator drive. One of ours failed this check !!

Ka13. Mandatory Inspection elevator drive. Both ours passed again.

10

Safety harness installation. Safety harness buckle assembly drawing on workshop notice board.

Electrical discharge in cloud, bonding, esp oxygen systems. Haste's speciality?

There is a Compendium of all TNS's which is issued annually and is filed in the TNS folder. It's also on the BGA web site under Mandatory Mods.

Inspections aren't necessarily just daily (D1) or

annually (C of A). Some incidents on the airfield can and should (must) be followed by in-depth inspections.

The ground loop is particularly insidious as damage is all too often not readily visible. To quote from the Technical Procedure Manual, "If a ground loop has occurred it is essential to examine for possible damage.". A heavy landing can also fall into this category. There have been many instances of gliders sustaining undetected damage from such incidents which are potentially lethal on following flights. Remember, the next pilot could be YOU! If you have or witness one of these manoeuvres the advice is to have an inspector make an inspection before the next flight.

Damage to gliders happens occasionally, often during ground handling, hangar packing etc. Usually it is trivial and doesn't render the glider unserviceable. The absolute exceptions are wing or tailplane 'D' box damage. Assessment of such damage must be made by an inspector and will almost certainly require repair before the next flight.

Trailer tyres: In many instances the regular 155x13 car tyre is operating at its maximum weight limit on a single axle trailer weighing close to a tonne. There are safer alternatives which cost just a little more. Give it a thought when you're next rushing to or from somewhere at 70mph plus. Sorry, we all keep to 60 don't we?

Parachutes and batteries left in gliders. These are found all too often when we do a bit of maintenance on Tuesday evenings. In K8's and K13's the parachute operates the bum switch, leaving the power on which flattens the battery, to say nothing of the fire risk. Batteries so treated have a very limited life, and they cost £20 each. Ill treated 'chutes may not open to save your life. Then you'll have to invoke the "grab the grass" rule.\*

DG505 launch: If the glider sits on its nose wheel when ready to launch, the manual

states that the tail should be held down to reduce rear fuselage stress at the start of the ground run. This makes good sense and it's easy to do with a hand on top of the rudder. Please do it and protect our £50,000 investment. There's a copy of the manual in a red folder in the club room.

Weak link carriers: These valuable items can be lost with the strop in the event of a weak link failure if the carrier is assembled with the slot facing the wrong way. If it's assembled correctly with the slot facing the strop it will remain attached to the 'chute.

Hard waxing: This is the means by which the gel coat (paint) of plastic gliders is protected from the elements, particularly sunlight and water. The usual recommendation is to hard wax gliders annually in the UK. This advice is also given in the DG505 manual. As club aircraft belong to "you" then I'd like to suggest that "you" hard wax them. This applies to two Astirs and the DG505. All should be washed, polished and waxed over the winter months. Tuition can be given free and many hands can make light work. Remember, they're all "your" gliders even if you don't fly them just yet, you surely will someday.

Washing at D1: It is not obligatory to avoid washing the dust, mud, grime and flies off gliders at the start of the day. They are "your" gliders and deserve a bit of TLC a couple of times a week surely?

Canopies at D1: Same again. If the canopy is dirty you can't see where you're going especially in misting conditions and low sun. There is a bucket and sponge especially for this as well as polish. But please use the right one - Mirror Glaze10 in the blue bottle is the one. An aerosol of Sparkle also works well.

Tyre Pressures at D1: This check should be more than a glance at the flat bottom on the black thing. If the tyre is under-inflated it will rotate on the wheel and rip out the valve. Cost is £30 for a tube and up to a day's flying revenue lost. Of course you need a valve extender and a pressure gauge. Cheap from a motorists shop. The ones Paul bought went walkabout in no time flat so this is a DIY thing.

D1 Books: It is obligatory to sign up the yellow D1 book before flight every day. Do all you private owners use one? We are also recommended to have control check's signed off by a second person. Do you?

\**Grab the grass rule:* since 50% of the damage caused upon reaching the ground at Vne with a failed 'chute is caused by the second impact after the bounce it is clear that the bounce should be avoided - by grabbing the grass tightly!

Brian Payne

## RANDOM JOTTINGS FROM YOUR TECHNICAL OFFICER



# Letter from the CHAIRMAN

## ACHIEVEMENT BOOK

A few regular members among you will have noticed the arrival of an A5 sized small blue book. It can be found hanging alongside the calendar in the Clubroom. The purpose of this book is to give myself and any future committee the information we need to assess who deserves what award when it comes to presenting trophies at the AGM. It doesn't matter how

far you think your achievement has been, we need to know who has soloed, gained Bronze, Silver, Gold, 5hrs, height climbs etc. The book has been in the Clubroom since early this year. I look forward to receiving more information in it next year!

## SAFETY

We are all very conscious of safety when flying, yet when we walk around the hangar and workshop there are a large number of potential risks of minor injury to anyone who is unfortunate enough to be doing the wrong thing at the wrong time.

The Safety Officer and I are responsible for the overall wellbeing of Club members whilst on OGC property. On the safety

board, to the right as you enter the Clubroom, there is a report that has been carefully put together by Joe Hoskins on behalf of Club members.

I urge everyone to read this report. It will improve and maintain our good safety record if each and every one of us does our bit to keep a TIDY and SAFE environment for both members and visitors especially young children.

There is no good reason why young children should be left unsupervised in the workshop or hangar. We can put up notices, make recommendations and so on, but it is up to the parents in the end, to make sure their children are properly looked after.

Over the course of the winter I would like some volunteers to help tidy up Club premises in general. Even if you only spend a few minutes coiling up leads, removing obstacles from doorways etc, every bit helps. If you need advice on where to put things away, just ask.

I know you have probably heard all this before but our main concern as a Club is to make sure that no-one is put at risk while enjoying their time here. Thanks in anticipation of your help.

*Peter Brooks*

## EVEN LESS EXCUSE FOR GETTING LOST!

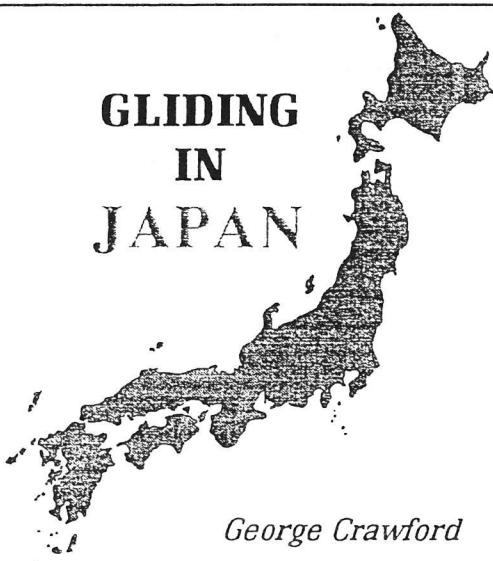
Given that most of us now use GPS to a greater or lesser extent it is heartening to know that, as of 1st May 2000, the US government have turned off the Selective Availability feature of the service.

This is the feature that stopped the 'enemy' from knowing where they were to the same accuracy as the 'good guys' by introducing an unpredictable and periodically changing error in the reported time from each satellite.

The military had access to an encoded correction signal to get the accuracy back. However, with the removal of this error, the accuracy of the position reported by even the most humble of GPS units has increased by a factor of about ten (about 10m instead of 100m). So there goes another excuse for missing that turn point!

Of course knowing your position does not translate to knowing where you are... and the batteries on maps never run out!

*David Nisbet*



I have recently made contact with a couple of clubs in Japan and had a flight last week with Tokyo Glider Club at the Oyama site about 100km north of Yokohama as the crow flies (about 2h 45m by trains).

There are mountains 20km east of the site to max 2900ft with good ridge and thermal. To the NW there are mountains to 4000ft at 30km from Oyama and 8000ft at about 60km. The downside is that we are in the wet season at the moment [June] and the rice fields are flooded giving weak thermals, moist air and hopeless visibility.

In the mountains I can imagine that one will always need a plan to get out as they are generally very steep, remote and unlandable. The best seasons are Autumn and Spring with good flying through the winter with wave in the strong dry northwesterlies of the China/Russia landmass.

There are generally very, very few places suitable for landing out so you tend to fly within gliding range of known sites, but there are a reasonable number of airfields and glider sites plus the flood plain areas along the larger rivers. Many of the glider sites are within the dykes on these flood plains. The aircraft, vehicles etc cannot be kept on the field during the rainy season!!

Hangars and clubhouses are outside the dykes and the gliders, tow planes and trailers have to be towed over the top - a somewhat precarious operation with the towplanes on flat bed trailers at precarious angles behind cars!

I have applied for a student pilot licence, passed the medical and expect to be flying solo within a few weeks. I don't think I need a full Japanese licence with the attendant language problems, it seems that with an understanding CFI I can do most things on the student licence.

# GLIDING FUN QUIZ

compiled by  
Willie Weaklink

OK, exactly how much Do you know about gliding? Try this fun quiz and find out. Answers on page 14.

**Q1** What is the diameter of the launch cable that we use ?

- (a) 1/8" (b) 3/16" (c) Half a sixpence
- (d) 4.5 mm (e) .005 metre (f) 4.2 mm

**Q2** Which of these is NOT a valid list of Schleicher gliders ?

- (a) ASK13, ASK14, ASW15
- (b) ASK21, ASW22, ASW23
- (c) ASK6, ASK7, ASK8
- (d) ASH24, ASH25, ASH26
- (e) ASK7, ASK14, ASK21

**Q3** Which of these is the approx. glide angle of a K13, airbrakes closed then open ?

- (a) 35 (closed) and 10 (Open)
- (b) 20 and 12 (c) 25 and 10
- (d) 28 and 8 (e) huh ?

**Q4** Graham's glider is a Slingsby Capstan. This aircraft was named after a popular brand of cigarettes. True or False?

**Q5** Put these Tost weak links into order, strongest first

Blue, Black, White, Red, Green

**Q6** You are climbing at 3kt indicated, flying circles at 50kts, with a 40 degree angle of bank. You know from studying the glider polar that at this angle of bank the sink rate is 2kt.

What is your TRUE climb rate ?

- (a) 5kt (b) 1kt (c) 3kt (d) 0kt
- (e) You don't care - you're climbing - so why worry?

**Q7** What is the maximum legal winch launch height from Weston?

- (a) No limit as long as clear of cloud
- (b) 3000ft above sea level
- (c) 3000ft over the airfield
- (d) 2000ft with altimeter set on 1013
- (e) Whatever it is - CGQ will get 150ft lower than CCE !

**Q8** What was the UHMRA?

- (a) Universal Helicopter / Microlight Rendevouz Altitude
- (b) Upper Heyford Mandatory Reporting Area
- (c) Upper Heyford Mandatory radio Area

**Q9** The frequency 130.1 is restricted to gliding purposes only.

True or false?

**Q10** How many gliders have been sunk by the Royal Navy?

- (a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 4 (d) 0
- (e) the Pilatus just looks like it !

**Q11** With two pilots the K13 weighs about 900 lbs. What is the approximate pull on the aerotow rope when the combination is climbing gently ?

- (a) 900 lbs (b) 68 lbs (c) 32 lbs
- (d) 1000 lbs (e) 9 lbs (f) You cannot tell.

**Q12** And what would be the maximum pull on our winch cable during a winch launch on the same glider ?

- (a) 900 lbs (b) 100 lbs (c) 32 lbs
- (d) 1000 lbs (e) 9 lbs (f) You cannot tell

**Q13** Daisy (our T21) is obviously many years older than our two K13's. But how many years older?

- (a) 13 (b) 17 (c) 25 (d) 33 (e) 41

**Q14.** The ASK23 is manufactured by Schweizer, but designed by R. Kaiser

True or False?

**Q15** Arrange our gliders in order of glide angle, lowest first

K13, T21, K8, ASTIR, DG505

## 50th AGM REPORT

The Oxford Gliding Club re-started in 1951 after the war, and so the 2000 AGM was our 50th (maybe John Gibbons can tell us the exact date next Spring when we should celebrate our Golden Jubilee).

Chairman Peter Brooks noted that there have been 40 new members this year. We flew on 8 more days but achieved 900 fewer launches, which represents a large drop in revenue for the Club. Nevertheless we flew more cross-country kilometres, there were at least six first solos, two Bronze badges, two completed Silver badges, one first 300km (Matt Gage), one Gold height (Simon Walker) and one Diamond height (Dave Weekes).

CFI Cris Emson commented upon the Junior Nationals competition, which had been a unique event in the history of the Club. He said that the RAF from the CO up to the Air Vice Marshal were impressed at our organisation, as were the BGA, members of the British team and visitors from other Clubs. Our president John Bridgeman flew in the DG-505 during the competition week.

Treasurer Nick Hill reported that the competition had made a profit of over £7,000 which was addition to the Club's operating profit of £6,000. The total cost of the DG-505 including instrumentation had been £53,745 which was less than originally forecast. The hangar site rent is being increased next year from £4,000 to £7,000 - however this will be fixed for the next 5 years.

Graham Barrett outlined a proposed change in the Club constitution - basically it will state that the Club can only be wound up by a 75% majority vote from the members, and that any cash left over after disposal of assets would be held in trust for 10 years. If the Club had not been revived within that time, the money will go to the Philip Wills fund for the benefit of gliding. This removes the former ambiguity whereby the Club's directors could have disposed of its assets - this had proved a block to obtaining grants from the Lottery and elsewhere.

### AWARD OF TROPHIES

CFI Cris Emson presented the Dennis Farmer trophy for the first 5hrs of the season to Simon Walker, the Simpson Cup for the best flight from Weston to Matt Gage, the Malcolm Laurie trophy for the best flight in a Club glider jointly to himself and Steve Trusler for a 300km flight in the DG-505. The Ladder Trophy went to Martin Hastings who narrowly beat Phil Hawkins after a hastily re-scored flight which he had made in Phil's glider. The Two-Up award for instructing went to Andy Butterfield and the Deep Breath Cup went jointly to Andy Butterfield and Brian Payne. The honour of the Flying Brick was received by Neil Swinton for a perfect post-CofA check flight - in the wrong glider.

Our chairman, well known for his skill with glass-making, presented the CFI a "Dolly" trophy to commemorate the occasion when he flew the DG-505 with the tail dolly on. It was in the shape of a perfect miniature tail dolly embedded in the bottom of a pint mug. He also presented Steve McCurdy with a beautiful glass trophy depicting a village cricket match in progress, complete with the scoreboard message "DMH stopped play." You guessed it - he had landed the Club Astir on a cricket pitch while a match was in progress!

# A BELATED SOLO

oooo by Phil Overy

Everybody will have seen from S and G that I soloed at the beginning of the year. Most will probably understand the cryptic comment that I soloed despite many obstacles, mainly my flying, however one other obstacle to my soloing was that I had been part way through the process at three different clubs in three different decades! The other obstacles were my age and my health - and a tree, but we won't go into that again.

My introduction to gliding was in the Leeds Polytechnic Gliding Club about '71. Had this club stayed where it started off, things would have been very different. I really liked the cheap and cheerful gliding club at Pocklington. It still exists, but it's a lot smarter nowadays - I hope.

Although I'd been driving for three years when I started at Leeds, I couldn't afford a car - I did occasionally use the Student's Union van. I had a "virgin" license - I was apparently the only endorsement-free driver who ever drove it. However I was usually stuck on the bus. Buses and gliding (being first on the flying list, or indeed ANYWHERE on the flying list) are incompatible, but at Pocklington they started late and broke off for fish and chips at 2pm.

Pocklington is on the Leeds-Scarborough road, if it's on a road to anywhere. At the time it was owned by "a farmer" and had a runway which was half concrete and half had been - the gliders took off from the ruts, occasionally being grit-blasted by the farmer's private plane as it took off from the concrete, divided off by a central white line the gliding club was forbidden to cross.

Their T31 was car-towed up by a Mark Nine Jaguar - the local garage provided the many well-worn tyres the club trashed in a summer. The one instructor I remember bore a marked resemblance to Alistair Sim, especially in his laconic attitude to cable breaks and the pupils who broke them. The Metropolitan University of Leeds Gliding Club was run for the

benefit of a student who lived at Rufforth, so surprise surprise we changed clubs. At the time Rufforth was flying T21s and Capstans.

Rufforth was far easier to get to for those with a car. Pocklington had been a stop on the Leeds-Scarborough bus route whereas Rufforth involved three changes of bus from Leeds so I never arrived early and only flew every second week - the club secretary however soon had a Bronze certificate. I remember how happy I was to graduate from Leeds to work in Wantage - by then I'd had my nose broken twice working in the Poly bar and by a neighbour trying to get past me "to kill his wife", and had pneumonia twice. Others had a worse time at Leeds, thanks to the Yorkshire Ripper and Leeds United FC fans.

From Wantage I used to go into Oxford for guitar lessons and later for judo, and in the Mendips and Wales I did some caving and climbing, then I resumed gliding, in 1981 I think.

I used to return to Weston-s-mare to visit my parents at the weekends, so I joined the Woodspring Club at Weston Airport, now part of the Westlands site. They had a home-made winch and a K4 - the "high performance" glider was a Bocian. By the end of my time in that club I was driving the winch and nearly solo but I was working in Bristol on a job "guaranteed for seven years" which folded in two and a bit in 1982 - that's why I was driving the winch, for free flights. I was extremely grateful that they let me do that but I had to get a job. It wasn't easy to find a computing job in Bristol at the time so I gave up gliding to look for one.

I did an HNC at Brighton, where there isn't much gliding. An HNC is far more use than a BSc if you're looking for a job. I then went to work for the Rutherford-Appleton Lab but also married and we had children. About that time the Mendip Club in any case moved to a hill site at Halesland and I lost touch with them - the name change probably didn't help. I didn't hear from them again until 1996.

Claudia my wife always wanted to resume riding and I suppose I always wanted to resume flying, which we were able to do when we'd done all the other things - bought a house, reliable car, kids off to school.

I left RAL on unpaid leave to work in Vienna (Claudia's home town) but we came back when the collapse of the USSR pushed the price of a flat well beyond our means. Although work and gliding figure in all this, when for instance you're in Vienna and a colleague from work is sitting in a tank in Graz waiting for the "Yugoslav Army" to invade, your perspective on life changes. Austria has a universal call-up, like Israel and Switzerland.

About four years ago, when I'd just come out of hospital after a near-fatal asthma attack brought on by a chest infection, the Mendip GC staged a reunion at Halesland. I found that Angelos Yorkas, who had shared a car with me when I worked in Bristol, had become a CFI and been killed instructing, or rather instructor-testing. And one of the cadets I knew had died under a bus in London. Shortly after that, I joined the Oxford Gliding Club thanks to an introduction by Nick Hill.

Gliding veers between the semi-military ATC and the King's Road Alan De Cadenet mentality. I don't think I've met a broader spectrum of people in any other activity. I wonder if the Yugoslavs would have postponed their war if more of them had met on airfields, rather than in karate clubs? In the Woodspring Gliding Club one of the members was a Spitfire pilot who had known Hanna Reitsch. They didn't get on, but in many other walks of life they'd probably never have stayed in the same place long enough to find out. There is a mystique to flying, Antoine de St Exupery wasn't entirely wrong, albeit French.

Thanks to you all for that solo certificate - it took a long time, but it's been well worth getting it. I apologise unreservedly to the many instructors I've frightened.

# GLIDING: A LOVE HATE RELATIONSHIP

## In The Morning

Love: Sunshine, fluffy clouds, blue sky, heat  
Hate: I'm still in bed, it's 9:30, and for sure, my syndie's hatching an evil plot to deprive me of my soaring fix, and it's my fault for being a lazy git. Gotta rush, no time for breakfast, cash machine or personal hygiene – get in the car and go!

Love: Thinking that I might just get into the Astir instead

Hate: The Friday night campers have already reserved the Astir for Saturday morning

Love: The Friday nighters need to do 5 hours, and have to fly the K8 instead!

Hate: Forgotten the map, GPS batteries flat.

## On The Airfield

Love: Met's looking good, the air's clean and clear, sunlight glinting off perspex and aluminium. Let's go!

Hate: Hydraulic line's gone on the winch, launch queue's getting longer...para's have just done a shut-down

Love: A hero departs, returning 20 minutes later with a triumphant expression and hydraulic fluid on his face

Hate: Para's start up again.

## In The Glider

Love: All ready, finally at the front of the launch queue, canopy down and locked, airbrakes locked. Eager anticipation.

Hate: It's getting hot and steamy under Perspex; "Negative launch", Tango-Golf is dropping students, one per circuit!

Love: "Ping," wheel up, 6kts on the vario

Hate: Wind's drifting this thermal straight into the DZ!!! Got to leave it. Down to 900ft now, hope M40 J9's working. No! USTAL, bounce on landing, big audience, sarcastic applause, back of the queue, one hour to next launch.

Love: Tango-Golf's got a mechanical problem. Only a K13 in front, then I fly!

Hate: Some idiot on cable-break practice has landed straight ahead. The tractor drives back straight, despite frantic gesticulations from all

directions to clear to the side! Close eyes, deep breaths, think 'blue', count to ten.

## In The Air

Love: Airborne, at last, and in lift. Cloudbase 4500ft. Head south over Abingdon, quick look at my house, then dolphin, shark and manta-ray my way down to Chieveley.

Hate: Need a pee. Need 25 degree nose down attitude to ensure stain free completion of task. Keep an eye on Vne. Other gliders keep a mindful distance from my random meanderings. Job done. Steer right 120 degrees to regain track to TP.

Love: Chasing seagulls round a thermal. Feel the bubble push you higher. Through 3000 feet, the temperature's dropped to 18 centigrade. By four, it's refreshingly chilly. Nose down, don't pull up in the scrappy lift round the edge of the cloud, get through the ruff stuff and into sunshine and blue skies.

Hate: Half way round task, remember to pull the wheel up. I'm tired, I'm thermalling badly, with 55kts, only 15 degrees of bank, and the yaw string anywhere but in the middle. A Blanik outclimbs me in the real thermal core to one side. Go to join it, but it found cloudbase a long time ago and has gone. Faff about for another 5 minutes in a 0.8kt average, before giving up and continuing. Probably need some more fluids. Shouldn't have missed breakfast.

Love: I see good clouds ahead, and work out my path. If I do this right, I won't need to thermal again on this flight. Pull up under cloud 1, 15 seconds here and 100 feet gained. Left 30 degrees and onto cloud 2. Only reduced sink here, right 10 degrees to cloud 3. This one's bigger, the cloud is a puppet-master, the glider the puppet. The puppet-master pulls a string, and the puppet rolls one way. I gently counter this and the puppet rolls the other way. The puppet climbs higher.

Hate: A highly polished long-winged thing, looking like the gliding equivalent of a souped-up and body-kitted Astra-max van minus the fury dice, goes sailing past me on a glide angle that makes me feel as though I'm falling out of the sky. The pilot's probably half my age, with twice the number of hours, and his daddy is a stockbroker.

Love: Final glide, I can see WOG. A little bit of reduced sink should get me on the glide-slope. 60kts, looking good! 70kts – still good! Check circuit, nose down, 80, 90, 100 knots! Point the nose at the piece of ground directly below base leg turn. Aiming for 120kt. That's low enough. Pull up, wheel down, base leg turn. Check windsock, set approach speed, trim. Adjust base leg for approach to trailer.

## Afterwards

Love: Landing.

Hate: Someone's parked a glider right on my approach. Just remembered I forgot to start the barograph! Sun's in my eyes. Round out, flare, bounce, applause. Wait 5 minutes, no tractor, walk back. "Can you relieve Bloggs on the winch?" "Help us toe me glyda ower forst man woman." "Sorry, not enough people left for that, they've all gone to mill about the clubhouse."

Love: After 752km, and 4 hours 31 minutes in the air, I scrounge a Marly off Paul, and a Silky off McReady. The reward for their generosity, is that I allow them to help derig the glider, and a buy them a bottle o' Becks in the bar, where they feign interest in a story that's now of superheroic proportions.

by Maz

- 1-6: Little theoretical and historical knowledge. You're a full cat or CFI.  
7-8: Weak on your basic facts. You must be a half-cat.  
9-14: Normal, average, par for the course.  
15: Either that, or you are Willie Weekink!  
16: You cheated.  
Scores:

- Q15 T21 (21), K8 (27), K13 (28), Astir (38), DG505 (44).  
Q14 FALSE, it was designed by Kaiser, but manufactured by Schleicher. Schweizer are answers is (b) 17 years.  
Q13 Daisy was built in 1950 (50 years old this year!) and K13 CCE is 1967 so the ratio that the red weak link will break.  
Q12 (d) Maximum pull would be 1000 lbs - (3) or about 32 lbs.  
Q11 (c) 32 lbs. In steady aerofoil flight the ratio of drag is 1/28th of the lift (900 well).  
Q7 (c) 3000ft over the field - and (e) as Q8 (c) Upper Heyford Mandatory Radio Area.  
Q9 (b) FALSE, it is legally shared by balloonsists.  
Q10 (a) 1 - A Slingsby T20 which was rammed by a destroyer after crashing during a aircraft carrier trials.  
Q6 (c) True climb rate is 3kts, just like the vari says.  
Q5 Black, Red, Blue, White, Green.  
Q4 TRUE, it was named after the Willis Capstan, a popular giggle at the time, (and still smoked by Maz?)  
Q3 (d) 28/1 airbrakes closed, 8/1 Open.  
Q2 (b) and (d) are not valid (the ASW23 and ASH24 don't exist)  
Q1 (d) 4.5 mm QUIZ ANSWERS