APRIL/MAY 2021

SAILPLANE &GLIDING

VOL. 72 NO.2



SAFETY: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM NASA'S EXPERIENCES

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SCHLEICHER'S AS 33

WHY WE SHOULD TALK MORE OPENLY ON THE AIRFIELD

LIFETIME EXPERIENCE

Why the 'Mecca of gliding' is even better when soaring with a champion

ISSN 0036-7235

RETAIL:
T: +44 (0)20 8207 3749
email: sales@pooleys.com

POOLEY'S
FLIGHT EQUIPMENT

TRADE:
T: +44 (0)20 8953 4870
email: trade@pooleys.com

uAvionix SkyEcho II ADS-B



Price: £415.83 | **£499.00** inc.VAT

BIGATMOS Aviation Sunglasses



Prices from: £165.83 | **£199.00** inc.VAT

Pooleys UK Flight Guide 2021



Only printed UK Flight Guide available

Prices from: £26.99

Garmin D2 Air Smart Watch



Price: £395.00 | **£474.00** inc.VAT

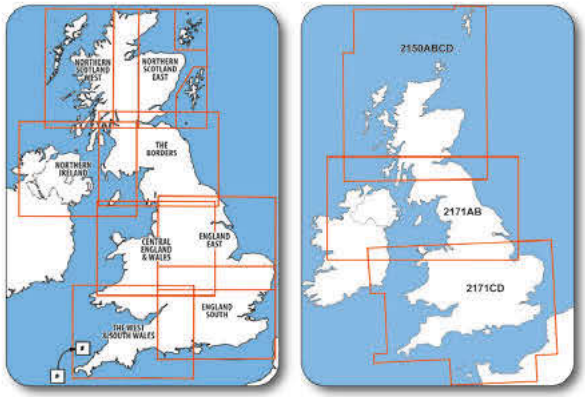
Glider Logbook



Price: £10.42 | **£12.50** inc.VAT

Charts & Subscriptions

We have all the latest UK & European Charts in stock!
NEW ½ Mil Southern England & Wales
released 25th March, Edition 47 Pre-Order Today



Freephone **0800 678 5153**
www.pooleys.com

TLAC Aircraft Cleaning Products



from £8.00 - £14.40

Bronze & Beyond A Glider Pilot's Guide



Price: £15.00

RAM MOUNTS

Huge range available from stock

Soaring Pilot's Manual



Price: £25.00

Trial Flight Guide to Gliding



Price: £5.99

The Glider Pilot's Manual



Price: £20.00 also available as an eBook

Advanced Soaring



Price: £46.00

Subscribe to our emails for all our latest offers
www.pooleys.com







CONTENTS

04 BGA NEWS
08 OPINION
16 PILOT PROFILE: ED DOWNHAM
19 HANS-WERNER GROSSE TRIBUTE
22 LANDOUTS: FROM HEAVEN OR HELL
24 RAF SHAWBURY
26 GLIDING GALLERY
32 OPERATION SIDECAR
36 FLYING WITH GHOSTS
42 TERRIFYING SOLO
46 ADVISORY 18: HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVE

CLUB

49 ATKINSON'S LAW
50 DEVELOPMENT NEWS
51 BGA UPDATE
52 CLUB GALLERY
54 CLUB NEWS
60 CLUB FOCUS: BOWLAND FOREST
61 LEAVING HOME
62 VINTAGE GLIDING
66 ACCIDENT/INCIDENT SUMMARIES
68 OBITUARIES
72 BGA BADGES
72 CLASSIFIEDS
74 INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

FEATURES

10 A LEAP OF FAITH
Jon Gatfield explains why he spent his retirement fund on Schleicher's AS 33, while Zulu Glasstek's **Pete Wells** reveals the trials and tribulations of importing a glider in the midst of Covid and Brexit challenges

28 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
Mental Health First Aider **Joey Beard** dispels myths and advises glider pilots to talk more openly on the airfield

38 EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME
Andrea Venturini explains why Rieti, hailed as 'the Mecca of gliding', is even better if soared with a true champion

64 ERODED MARGINS
What have gliders got in common with NASA? The BGA safety team looks at incidents caused by the normalisation of deviance

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL AERO CLUB AND THE FEDERATION AERONAUTIQUE INTERNATIONALE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION
APRIL/MAY 2021 VOLUME 72 No 2

EDITOR: SUSAN NEWBY
C/O BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION, 8 MERUS COURT, MERIDIAN BUSINESS PARK, LEICESTER LE19 1RJ
EMAIL: EDITOR@SAILPLANEANDGLIDING.CO.UK
EDITORIAL TEL: 01763 246657



COVER STORY
Lago del Salto – heading east towards the Adriatic Sea. Turn to pages 38-41 for a full account of Andrea Venturini's experience of a lifetime flying at Rieti, Italy. (Andrea Venturini)

DEADLINES
June/July 21
Articles, Letters, Club News: 6 April
Display advertisements: 20 April
Classifieds: 6 May

Aug/Sept 21
Articles, Letters, Club News: 4 June
Display advertisements: 22 June
Classifieds: 7 July

© British Gliding Association 2021
All rights reserved. Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Association nor the Editor

PUBLISHER
British Gliding Association, 8 Merus Court, Meridian Business Park, Leicester LE19 1RJ
tel: 0116 289 2956
www.gliding.co.uk
email: office@gliding.co.uk
To advertise in S&G: Debbie Carr
debbie@gliding.co.uk
To subscribe to S&G:
office@gliding.co.uk
Or subscribe at *www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/subscribe*
UK £25.75 Overseas airmail £41.50

› Gliding legend Hans-Werner Grosse passed away on 18 February, aged 98. His 1972 flight of 1,460km from Lübeck to Biarritz in southern France made Hans-Werner a legend of distance gliding. Turn to page 19 for an interview with Bernard Eckey celebrating the life of Hans-Werner, shared with *S&G* by *The Thermal Podcast*'s Herrie ten Cate.

› Triple world champion George Lee was a recent guest of *Soaring The Sky*. This weekly podcast for glider pilots is hosted by Chuck Fulton, from the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States. Look out for the full interview with George in the next issue. *www.soaringthesky.com*

› The DfT-funded CAA-managed scheme to rebate the cost of new electronic conspicuity equipment has been extended to 30 September 2021. *www.caa.co.uk*

› Electronic conspicuity technology provider PilotAware reports that it 'will provide financial assistance for gliding clubs and users that have a suitable existing OGN installation to upgrade them to the full functionality of PilotAware ATOM GRID sites'. *www.pilotaware.com*

› Several online resources and links have been brought together to support pilots' training and interest. These can be found on a new BGA webpage. See: *https://members.gliding.co.uk/pilot-licensing/resources-and-links/*

› The 'Flying with other pilots' section of the BGA publication *Managing Flying Risk* has been updated to describe the CAA's well-established medical 'Safety Pilot' scheme, as well as to describe options for experienced pilots who, for some temporary or permanent reason, need to fly with another pilot.

› AERO Friedrichshafen, planned to take place 21-24 April, is further postponed to 14-17 July.

› STOP PRESS: Women Gliding has announced the official partnership between Avionic Watches and WWGC22. To celebrate this partnership, use the code 'womengliding' to get five per cent off any watch from the Avionics women's and men's ranges, while raising funds for Women Gliding. *www.avionic.online*

SECRETS OF CHAMPIONS

ITALY'S 'gliding club of the north east', Aosta, recently chose 10 top Italian glider pilots to share tales of their achievements in the Alps. The first in a series of webinars featured Alex Busca, who detailed three different ways of approaching Aosta from the east, carrying on to France.

Andrea Venturini said: "With the use of Google Earth, the explanation was at another level. Alex drew a red line on the screen that you could mentally follow and really feel as if you were flying next to the peaks shown in the presentation.

"It was very useful to spot and highlight all the possible landout locations along the route. Other 'experts' joined in the discussion and, at one point, the webinar was watched by almost half of all glider pilots in Italy. Other interesting topics included: how to avoid the huge restricted area of the National Park of Gran Paradiso, close to Aosta, and how to make the best of our local ridges."

Alex flies a helicopter in his day job, and his OLC (Online contest) flights include many over 1,000-1,300km.

Andrea said: "Alex is part of the mountains in Italy. He climbed Mount Everest, even setting up an antenna on top, plus several other 8,000m peaks. Alex knows the Alps like no other and has climbed for rescue and as a guide. He can forecast the wind's direction, the weather and, more than anything, has a sense of security on where to land out."



Gliding from Aosta (Alex Busca)

Look out for an interview with Alex in a future issue.

Italian speakers, or those planning a trip to Aosta, can see the first webinar at: *www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RBd3uJugmo*

■ ***www.aecaosta.it/en***

DATES

NATIONALS, REGIONALS AND OTHERS

Standard Class Nationals	Lasham	26/6-4/7/21
15m Class Nationals	Lasham	26/6-4/7/21
Open Class Nationals	Lasham	26/6-4/7/21
Competition Enterprise	Milfield	3-9/7/21
Club Class Nationals	Hus Bos	17-27/7/21
Worlds	Germany	18-31/7/21
Open, 18m and 20m multi-seat Classes (Stendal-Borstel)		
Worlds	France	7-22/8/21
15m, Standard and Club Classes (Montluçon)		
Junior Nationals	Aston Down	21-29/8/21
18m Nationals	Lasham	21-29/8/21
20m multi-seat Nationals	Lasham	21-29/8/21
Two-seater championship	Pocklington	22-29/8/21
UK Mountain Soaring Champs	Aboyne	5-11/9/21
10th SGP World Final	St Auban, France	1-30/9/21
Glider aerobatic competitions		
Dan Smith	Dunstable	POSTPONED
Saltby Open	Saltby	POSTPONED
Nationals	TBC	15-19/9/21

BIDFORD REGIONALS
26/6-4/7/21

SHENINGTON REGIONALS
26/6-4/7/21

BOOKER REGIONALS
10-18/7/21

INTER-SERVICES REGIONALS
24-31/7/21

NORTHERN REGIONALS
1-7/8/21

HUS BOS CHALLENGE CUP
7-15/8/21

GRANSDEN REGIONALS
7-15/8/21

COTSWOLD REGIONALS
21-29/8/21

DUNSTABLE REGIONALS
21-29/8/21

** Dates correct as we go to press. Please check club websites.*

■ The BGA is reviewing options for the 2021 Sporting Conference and awards dinner.



LZ Design's Luka Znidarsic in front of the prototype of the Duo Discus FES in Schempp-Hirth's Final Assembly building, Friday 26 February (photos courtesy of Schempp-Hirth)

INTRODUCING THE DUO DISCUS FES

THE prototype of the Duo Discus FES arrived in Schempp-Hirth's Final Assembly on 26 February.

Information on technical data, propeller and engine is not yet released, but *S&G* is told that Luka's team has worked hard to make the whole system more efficient for the two-seater, notably through the converter which makes the voltage of the batteries adapt to the engine's voltage needs.

As we went to press, the glider is almost finished and a maiden flight anticipated very soon. Production is not expected before next year, but an official list of 'interest' to secure positions is open.

■ ***www.schempp-hirth.com***
■ ***www.southernsailplanes.com***



Above: The battery bay is situated where normally gliders store a thermic engine sustainer. A hatch door allows the batteries to be removed for a charge during the night. Usually between three to eight hours will be needed, depending on the level of charge of the batteries after the flight.



Left: Front seat panel instruments with FCU (engine management) far left. LXNAV instrument (GPS moving map in central position) can be plugged in to the FCU to gather data and display engine and batteries data in typical gauges.

Online AGM for the BGA

THE BGA's AGM was this year held via Zoom on 2 March, chaired by Company Secretary, Anthony Smith. Sixty-four clubs were represented. The Minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved; the Annual Report was adopted; the Revenue Account and Balance sheet for the year ending 30 September 2020 was adopted; the budget for the year ending 30 September 2022 and annual subscription rates were adopted, amendments to Operational Regulations were adopted, and Auditors Fortus were reappointed. In accordance with the Articles of Association, the following members of the Executive Committee stood down by rotation and agreed to put themselves forward for another three-year term in the same role: Andrew Perkins, chairman; George Metcalfe, vice chairman; Bill Brittain and Richard Brickwood.

RAeC awards

CONGRATULATIONS to the glider pilots recognised in the Royal Aero Club Awards for 2020. Gary Pullen (Lasham GS and the Gliding Heritage Centre) is awarded a Bronze medal for outstanding achievement in aviation. Certificates of Merit are awarded to Peter Hibbard (Anglia GC and UK Junior Gliding), Craig Lowrie (Southdown GC), Matt Page (Cotswold GC and UK Junior Gliding), and Roy Wilson (Deeside GC). The Old and Bold Trophy is awarded to Sid Gilmore (The Gliding Centre).

BWPA scholarships

THE deadline to apply for the British Women Pilots' Association (BWPA) 2021 aviation scholarships is 7 April. This year 13 scholarships are available, offering support for women to achieve their flying dreams. Glider pilots previously awarded scholarships include Lucy Wootton (Shenington GC) and Steph Smith (The Gliding Centre). You must be a BWPA member to be eligible. For more information visit: ***www./bwpa.co.uk/scholarships***

SAILPLANE &GLIDING



Andy Davis
Competition flying



Paul Whitehead
SLMG



Howard Torode
Airworthiness



Derren Francis
Tugging



Mike Fox
Instructing



Dr Frank Voeten
Medical



Andy Holmes
Winch operating



Steve Noujaim
Airspace



Alison Randle
Development



Bruce Stephenson
Vintage gliding

S&G is privileged to be able to call on the advice of some of gliding's leading experts. If you have a question for our experts on any of the subjects listed above, contact the editor (details p3).

EXPERT ADVISERS



Emily Tillet (front) and Lucy Wootton enjoying gliding

Preparing for the Worlds

WOMEN Gliding celebrated International Women's Day in style by launching the Women's World Gliding Championship 2022 website, ***writes Liz Sparrow***.

Our big vision is for the Women's Worlds at The Gliding Centre in 2022 to raise the profile of gliding, particularly women gliding. While we need first and foremost to run a brilliant competition, we are also aiming to make it a great event that will tell the public about gliding and inspire non-pilots to give gliding a go.

Team WWGC2022 'rebooted' the project around INSPIRE, GROW and COMMUNITY – for us, this sums up what gliding's about. Echoing the website, here are some project highlights:

INSPIRE – We've made our 'outward face' appealing to non-pilots and also to potential partners and sponsors (no longer just a site for nerdy comp pilots!)... the STEM group have developed great fun, video-based school STEM activities.

GROW – Competition delivery team experts are running 'apprenticeships' for competition roles where women haven't historically been involved; our apprentices are having fun and learning lots. We're looking to grow the social media reach within gliding and in target audience areas outside.

COMMUNITY – The marketing team is engaging with the local community and businesses. We're working on giving the public a great day out alongside the racing.

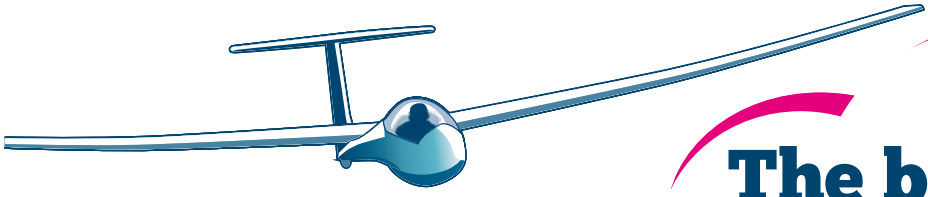
Team WWGC2022 will test everything out this summer so that we know we can deliver in August 2022.

So – if you haven't done so already, have a look at ***www.wwgc2022.co.uk*** and see what you think. Give us your feedback on the website, or tell us via Facebook or Twitter.

Want to be part of this amazing, different competition? Contact us direct or via the website.

■ See also ***www.womengliding.co.uk***

Please send letters (marked 'for publication') to the editor at *editor@ sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or the address on p3, including your full contact details. The deadline for the next issue is 6 April



The best glider insurance will cover you at every level

Comprehensive Gliding Hull and Liability Insurance

Superior security rating Excellent policy T&Cs Competitive rates

Submit a quote online at: **sydneycharlesaviation.co.uk**
or Call today for a great value quote +44 (0)1420 88664

Proud sponsors of the British Junior Gliding Team Sydney Charles Aviation SCAviation1

SC SYDNEY CHARLES AVIATION INSURANCE BROKERS

Sydney Charles Aviation Insurance Brokers is a trading name of Sydney Charles UK LLP Sydney Charles UK LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. FCA Firm Reference No. 471046. Sydney Charles UK LLP is a Limited Liability Partnership registered in England and Wales Registration No.: OC320079 Registered Office: 7 Old Aylesfield Buildings, Froyle Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 4BY.

FLY Lasham GLIDING



- Trial Flight Voucher - package includes one month membership and a flight (choice of morning or afternoon) £100
- Please call or check our website regarding availability of our restaurant and bar areas to the public during periods of Covid-19 restrictions
- Learn to fly from £925 for a week's course including 6 months full membership

www.lashamgliding.com | 01256 384900 Find us on Facebook



6 THINGS ARE LOOKING UP FOR GLIDING

Andy Perkins eagerly anticipates a spring of vigour and sunshine, and highlights some excellent refresher clips and training materials to get us all ready to get back in the air safely as soon as possible

ANTICIPATION... I don't think I can remember when the approaching spring was so highly anticipated by all of society. All the UK glider pilots I speak to (apart from the lucky few that escaped to New Zealand in late 2020 – we aren't jealous at all...) cannot wait to get back in the air. The clocks have just gone forward, a significant proportion of the over 50s have been vaccinated, or are in the process, and the longer days are drying the ground sufficiently to make it possible to get the glider out without sinking to your waist in mud! So, in short, things are looking up.

This spring will hopefully be one of vigour and sunshine. Having had our most sacrosanct freedom, that of movement, so greatly restricted over the past 12 months, everyone is keen to get out and enjoy the world around us. There will, of course, be restrictions but we anticipate that going gliding in most forms will be possible, so all will hopefully have the opportunity to get flying again in short order. Clubs will rightly focus on getting all members flying as safely and expeditiously as possible. Getting current will be required by even the most experienced. There are online resources from the gliding world, as well some great refresher clips and training materials produced by the CAA. *http://skywise.caa.co.uk/* and *https://airspacesafety.com/* are two really good resources that have some good info to help you get back into the skies safely. I mention airspace as it continues to be an area of huge focus, so make sure you are aware of the changes and any temporary danger areas/drone corridors that will be turned on/off at short notice; worth some bedtime reading.



Will we soon find gliding at the end of a rainbow? This double rainbow was seen over Seahawk's Junior last time the club flew

All gliding club officials have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months to ensure that our clubs still exist. As mentioned before, but definitely worth stating again, thank you to everyone for the energy and time that has been invested to ensure we can all still go gliding. I appreciate that survival is not a given and, together, all glider pilots will need to do what they can to support their clubs and fly, fly, fly in 2021 to keep gliding alive and kicking across the UK.

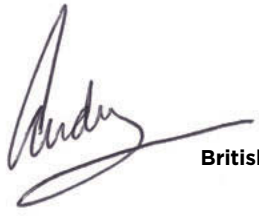
ALL WILL HOPEFULLY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET FLYING AGAIN IN SHORT ORDER

In addition to getting existing glider pilots back in the air, the renewed focus across society with regard to outdoor activities and the increased probability that staycations will be more attractive in 2021, does present us with an opportunity to help strengthen our clubs. You will have seen the national survey launched at the beginning of the year and shortly we will come back asking for more detail in certain areas. Thank you to everyone who has participated; having your opinions and thoughts about how you want the sport of gliding evolve is essential in my mind to help clubs shape themselves and for the BGA to ensure that we support clubs and the sport to reflect the desires of today's glider pilots.

If you would like to do more and have never been an instructor, then please do consider it. Growth in this part of the sport has a direct correlation to our ability to train more people to become glider pilots. Instructing has been a huge pleasure in my gliding career, as well as improving my personal skill level. The new IFP (Introductory Flight Pilot) is a great way to get started and will take very little of your free time to attain. The new course format for instructor ratings will also make it quicker for people to become instructors. All this means that now is a great time to improve your flying skills and also help ensure your club and the sport is able to encourage the newly interested to get involved, as well as offering existing pilots new faces to learn from.

Finally, in December, SFCL (Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing) rules come into force. All glider pilots will need to make this conversion. If you haven't converted your licence, then please be assured that the process is now a well-trodden path. If you have time to spare, it could be handy to get ahead of the rush.

Safe flying.



Andy Perkins
Chairman
British Gliding Association
March 2021

The BGA Shop

BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION

www.bgashop.co.uk

YAESU



FTA-250L

The perfect low cost handheld or panel fit ultra compact (2.1"W x 4.1"H x 1.2"D) radio. Comes packaged with our largest capacity battery yet, at 1950mAh Li-ion battery it'ssufficient for the heaviest radio users. Along with AC and DC charger and cradle, Antenna, Clip, Headset adaptor and bundled Speaker Microphone.



Bundle Price £265

"Confor" Impact Absorbing Cushions Recomended by the BGA for everyone from £27.95 (inc postage)



Bronze & Beyond

This is the definitive book to get you through the BGA Bronze Written papers and on your way to your SPL or LAPL(S)

All sections of the Bronze written papers are covered in detail.

Only £15.00

In Flight Plumbing
Eco Friendly "*Plastic Polution Free*"
(Your Comfort is Guaranteed!)



"Starter Pack" Only £13 inc P&P



BGA Instructor Manual

This new, fourth edition of the definitive gliding instructors manual includes a number of new chapters as well as revised text and additional diagrams for both learning and teaching.

Only £12.00

The BGA Shop - our goal

Our commitment is to supply a diverse range of items to meet the needs of clubs and pilots along with an excellent level of service. Watch our website for the newest gliding essentials!

Visit us on-line at **www.bgashop.co.uk**

Call us on **044 (0)1869 571814**

Image © Ron Smith Photography

http://www.flickr.com/photos/ronsmithphotography



A LEAP OF FAITH

Ready for the factory test flight, parked outside Schleicher's hangar. The new wing looks superb (Manfred Münch/Schleicher)

Jon Gatfield explains why he chose to spend his retirement funds on Schleicher's AS 33



Retractable tail wheel (Manfred Münch)

THOSE of us that are cursed with a passion for racing sailplanes, but blessed with being in the fortunate position of being able to afford it, can think about buying a new glider. I know that is a very rare situation and I feel very fortunate to be in such a situation as retirement beckons and funds become available. It has presented a significant decision: which one?

In some ways that has been easy for me as I am a slave to brand loyalty. My glider ownership history, as detailed below, has been ruled by Poppenhausen's master craftsmen: Alexander Schleicher (AS).

1992 – ASW 20a: Beautifully harmonised controls, soft bendy wings, awesome approach control with the "Jesus" landing flap setting and a nice big, comfortable cockpit.

2001 – ASW 27b: Easy to rig, easy to fly, easy to ballast and great performance. I spent several years resisting the temptation to spend a lot of money for just three extra metres on an ASG 29.

2015 – ASG 29Es: I finally took the plunge and realised the 18m made a huge difference. I loved the handling on the 29 and it transformed my flying. If, or rather when, I was ham-fisted the trusty 29 tolerated the hopeless pilot and stayed safe. It was a ship that low-hour pilots could easily fly. The electric start turbo was mandatory and way cheaper than the divorce threatened by a long-suffering wife after the retrieve too far: a landout in the mountains in a field next to a bar. I wasn't much help by the time the crew arrived.

I wanted another 15/18m machine for flying SGPs (Sailplane Grand Prix) where even a small performance difference can matter on the final glide. A long, 100km final glide in Cerdanya alongside a Ventus 3 and several JS3s reinforced for me that it was time to change. There was a rumour of an ASG 29b with just a new wing, but that mutated into a number of changes and a designation of a new type – the AS 33.

I knew the Ventus and JS3 both went well and were proven types whereas the AS 33 was brand new and a bit of a gamble. I had a good look at, and flew, the Ventus 3



Jon's 15m tips begin manufacture. These are the first ones made and await final certification



Proud owner Jon Gatfield stands behind his new fuselage and, below, the new wings are remarkably thin and feature a very different wing root fairing

which really did "feel the sky", but I wasn't wholly comfortable with the stick position. I investigated the JS3, which again had big attractions, but ultimately I stuck with Schleicher. They haven't made a poor flapped glider yet, I really rate the engineering quality of their work and an addiction to pies, peanuts and Pilsner means the roomy Schleicher cockpit suits me best.

I had the chance to visit the AS factory in Poppenhausen twice – once to see the prototype 33, and once to see my machine, serial number 4, mid manufacture.

There's much to like about the detail changes from the 29, including the fuel system (no more removing the fuel tank from behind the headrest for rigging), more storage space behind the seat, no more taping vents before launch as these are now at the top of the winglets, and hopefully improved FLARM coverage now the antenna is in the tail.

I'll admit two things make me a little nervous: will that smaller 10 square metre wing climb well, and how robust will the electrically-activated water valve system be, though the new design seems proven on the ASH 30? My expectation though is that these won't be a problem, and that the high-speed performance in strong conditions, which is common in mountains where I like to fly, will be good and the leap of faith will be rewarded.

■ TURN TO NEXT PAGE FOR JON'S AS 33 CERTIFICATION JOURNEY



BRINGING HOME A NEW GLIDER

Zulu Glasstek's Pete Wells, UK distributor for Schleicher, reveals the trials and tribulations of importing a glider in the midst of Covid and Brexit challenges



YO in the foyer of Zulu Glasstek's workshops (Pete Wells)

THE ASG 29 had reigned supreme for over a decade. I was at AERO Friedrichshafen a few years ago and walked past the newly-announced Ventus 3 hanging from the ceiling. I was with Schleicher's Martin Heide.

I looked up and said: "Martin, does this worry you?" "No, it's a G29 again" was his reply.

Alexander Schleicher's ASG 29 was still a top contender and probably still the best all-rounder, even if its edge had been eroded to nothing.

The problem is, even if it is as good as anything else, glider pilots tend to go for new and shiny rather than older and established. Given a new aircraft or a 10-year-old design, even I would tend towards a new one (my obvious bias removed).

At about this time, Schleicher's design team was going through changes. Gerhard Waibel had left long ago, handing over his position to Paul Anklam, but Martin Heide was now retiring and Ulrich Simon was employed to take his place, working with Martin for a period to hand over the reins.

During this period, a meeting was held and Ulrich Simon's first big project was announced – to facelift the ASG 29, modify and improve.

He was well aware of the difficulties involved with this as he had been involved in performance testing the three main contenders to the 18m crown: ASG 29, Ventus 3 and JS1. Ulrich knew that they were measurably similar in performance. He suggested that tweaking what was in its current form, ie weight, wing area, etc, for an almost perfect 18m glider, was likely to make it worse rather than better. Instead, a different tactic was suggested – to redesign a wing and fit it to the existing, very successful, fuselage.

Although initially sceptical as the management team still knew its glider was as good as anyone else's, permission was given to design a new wing and to prove that the smaller wing area would have the same, if not better, lift coefficient as that of the ASG 29. So, with computer aided design and wind tunnel testing, this was done. The results were extremely positive.

Schleicher's management gave the go ahead and talked to me, giving the good news. Announcing a new model has two effects; it says to your customers that the last model will soon be surpassed and in doing this kills its sales, but it was felt that the ASG 29 was still up there, as proved by the current 15m world champion and the UK 18m national champion.

Advanced

The AS 33 was announced, with an aim to actually increase performance that had been pretty stagnant since the ASG 29's creation. The hope is for minor improvements in L/D performance, but with the best glide speeds to be increased and to have a greater wing loading with a much more advanced technology aerofoil/wings.

It would be important to produce this machine as soon as possible to capitalise on Schleicher's success with the ASG 29 (and all previous flapped gliders; they have never built a bad one). The new design team was boosted with addition of a third designer, Tobias Mörsel.

Molds were built and the design development work progressed well initially, as building a new wing for an existing glider would appear to be straightforward. But Schleicher had asked customers for feedback on the ASG 29 directly, and through me, and many of the requests would also mean changes to the fuselage design.

This combined with Schleicher's desire to improve quality of product with better molds and more accurate jigging, meaning a wing could be transferred from one aircraft to

another, etc, with no work required. Obvious changes include wing root fairing, change of incidence of wing and tail plane, and the incorporation of a retracting tail wheel.

Basically, as had happened in the past, Schleicher would essentially design a whole new aircraft. Schempp-Hirth has always reused a large percentage of previous gliders, so most single-seaters are not incredibly different to the very successful Standard Cirrus, and all its two-seaters are largely based on the Janus.

With Schleicher – compare an ASW 15 with an AS 33. There is nothing in common. Although I cannot deny that everything changed on an AS 33 has improved the product, it is by far the most sophisticated machine Schleicher has ever built. I sometimes wonder if somewhere between the philosophy of the two factories would be a good compromise.

Permit

AS 33 '33001' was completed in early January 2020. Then it went through initial testing, was issued a permit and had its first flight on 23 January 2020.

Although behind initial time estimates, considering it was basically a new airframe, all looked on target for the 2020 World Gliding Championships (WGC), where it was expected the AS 33 would take part, with about five to seven gliders.

No one could have anticipated what followed; that everything would go into turmoil with the outbreak of Covid-19.

Germany handled this better than we did in the UK and initial lockdowns did not affect the factory directly. However, indirectly, suppliers were affected and so crucial materials/parts were delayed. EASA, crucial for certification, became very difficult to predict/deal with.

To add alarmingly to problems, abuses of the permit system by some manufacturers stating they were going to certify machines, but getting permits and then leaving them there, led EASA to remove this privilege.

Now we need a fully-certified glider before it can be used by customers; totally different from in the past when we had about 15 UK ASW 28s on permits.

The nightmare of this really came to light when Uli Kremer offered Gary Stingemore an AS 33 demo for the UK Nationals only to discover this was illegal as it's only allowed to be flown by the design team in Germany. Enormous amounts of time were spent trying to resolve this for WGC gliders but, just as it looked that loopholes might allow it, Covid-19 meant that virtually all competitions were cancelled in 2020.



Jon Gatfield (right), brandishing a hammer, asks Schleicher's Uli Kremer when his glider will be finished during a visit to the factory in early 2020

A lot of AS 33s were in production, but were now on hold until full certification was received. This was because any modifications required would have to be embodied, so it would be risky to continue. Also they would not be delivered even if finished without it!

Other models, ASG 32 Mis and K-21Bs, were brought forward to keep production going and, eventually, the AS 33 was certified in October 2020 just after it had flown in its 15m form.

Deliveries

Now we knew where we were and would recalculate deliveries – five gliders would be delivered to the UK prior to Brexit. Brexit was an unknown worry to me and all of my customers; five were happy, but this would be short-lived!

Then Coronavirus hit. Uli Kremer and his entire family were quarantined for 14 days. Fortunately, asymptomatic and as a result of track and trace, which seemed to work in Germany.

Staff in the factory were afflicted with the same scenario, but in smaller numbers. Annoyingly they were largely in finish/final assembly where we needed them for the AS 33, so yet again there were further delays.

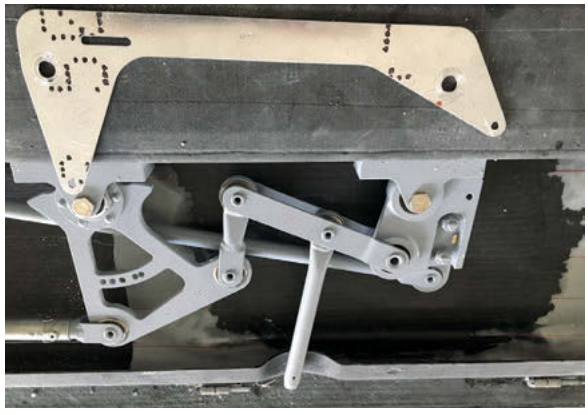
Against all odds, Schleicher got the first UK glider finished, but its flight test was delayed by some small parts and, as no one

WITH THE BEST GLIDE SPEEDS TO BE INCREASED AND TO HAVE A GREATER WING LOADING WITH A MUCH MORE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AEROFOIL/ WINGS



Above: glider number three's wing has systems fitted prior to closing

Below: the complexity of aileron/ flap control system in an extremely limited space



■ *www.zulu-glasstek.co.uk*

■ *www.alexander-schleicher.de*

■ STOP PRESS: The AS 33 has now received full certification, largely due to help from BGA CTO Gordon MacDonald and the UK CAA's Neil Peacock

I WAS READY, NOTHING COULD STOP ME NOW. THE THIRD AS 33 WAS ALSO FINISHED AND GEORGE HUNTER AND I WOULD DO A QUICK SAS-STYLE RECOVERY

was collecting anything, it was stockpiled ready for mass test flights when it made sense to do so.

Jon Gatfield's YO flew on 22 November and so could be collected. Jon at this point had suffered a back injury requiring surgery so could not collect.

I desperately wanted an AS 33 here and realised things were changing very quickly, so I collected it from the German border at Aachen. The MD of the factory delivered it; like a scene from the Cold War, the handover was in a lorry park in a service area.

I raced back to the UK and, with Brexit looming, customers were becoming increasingly worried about delivery times as was I.

I knew Schleicher had already built and certified a glider in record time and unprecedented circumstances and did not want to add to their pressure (but probably did). YO was put in our foyer and greatly admired, not surprisingly as it is beautiful.

YO's UK paperwork started whilst I was travelling, feeling quietly confident nothing else could possibly go wrong. The BGA CTO rang whilst I was homeward-bound and said get it certified as quick as you can before Brexit, as the UK CAA would no longer recognise EASA manufacturers. This would mean that before UK certification was possible, Schleicher would need to be audited, accepted as supplier and checked by the UK CAA, as would other manufacturers.

If true, this could literally take years. We did everything in our power, but fast track was unavailable due to high workloads. Every permit aircraft in use in UK had its renewal brought forward to be as far away from Brexit as possible. Not surprisingly, paperwork was complete on 18 December, but forwarded to the surveyors department, which started Christmas break the next day. Covid put paid to the visit anyway, glider still awaiting survey!

Two more would be delivered before Brexit. One of my customers actually sent me a spot the glider trace of our second AS 33's test flight: Mike Foreman's AS 33. I received this with mixed emotions as it would mean collecting on 22 December, which I arranged instantly. I had to do it due to lockdown restrictions. I was ready, nothing could stop me now. The third AS 33 was also finished and George Hunter and I would do a quick SAS-style recovery – BOOM!

Then France closed its border completely for two days. Thousands of trucks blocked the M26, Manston airfield was a lorry park and every lay-by in Southern England was full. Looking on the bright side, I would be home at Christmas, not sleeping in my Discovery Commercial!

I watched the situation regarding the border and queues and it became a requirement to be Covid-tested to cross. On 27 December, George and I were tested and awaited results (the fat lady had not sung quite yet). Tests must happen 72 hours prior to travel. I was keen to travel as early as possible prior to Brexit; even though a deal was provisionally done I had learnt from recent experience to be wary.

A day after my Covid test nothing was heard, but George was contacted – negative for Covid. We decided to start the ball rolling on one of the two collections, with him going alone, and booked the Eurotunnel. Next morning, two things happened: the third customer elected not to have his glider collected, and I was pronounced negative for Covid. So, never asking anyone to do what I wouldn't, I went and collected the second machine, arriving back less than 24 hours before Brexit.

As a 19-year-old, I worked at the LS factory and lived with Carl Heinz Schneider, son of Walter Schneider – owner of LS. He once said to me: "If I die and come back, I hope it's not as the son of a glider manufacturer." With time, I fully understand what he meant.

There are only eight more to get into the country this year. I'm really hoping that things calm down enough for customers to collect soon!



Uli Kremer hands over the second AS 33 at Aachen

Glider Insurance specialists



Contact Hayward Aviation to find out how we can help you.

Our competitive rates and policy covers offer excellent value for money and peace of mind, in increasingly turbulent market conditions.

Call Nigel, Tim or Jack on **+ 44 207 902 7800** or e-mail **info@haywards.net**
Please quote F1603

Aviation insurance people, working for you

HAYWARD AVIATION IS A TRADING NAME OF ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER (UK) LIMITED

THE ST BOTOLPH BUILDING • 138 HOUNDSDITCH • LONDON EC3A 7AW
TELEPHONE: 020 7902 7800

Gallagher

HAYWARD AVIATION IS A TRADING NAME OF ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER (UK) LIMITED WHICH IS AUTHORISED AND REGULATED BY THE FINANCIAL CONDUCT AUTHORITY
REGISTERED OFFICE: THE WALBROOK BUILDING, 25 WALBROOK, LONDON, EC4N 8AW. REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES. COMPANY NUMBER: 1193 013

HAY/0220/1003

Launchpoint
Supporting the next generation of instructors

The Ted Lys awards, from "Launchpoint" trust, will in 2021 support the next generation of BGA instructors. Ted Lys awards are given to qualified glider pilots to further develop their skills. Past Ted Lys awards have helped pilots in cross country flying, competitions, aerobatics and instructing.

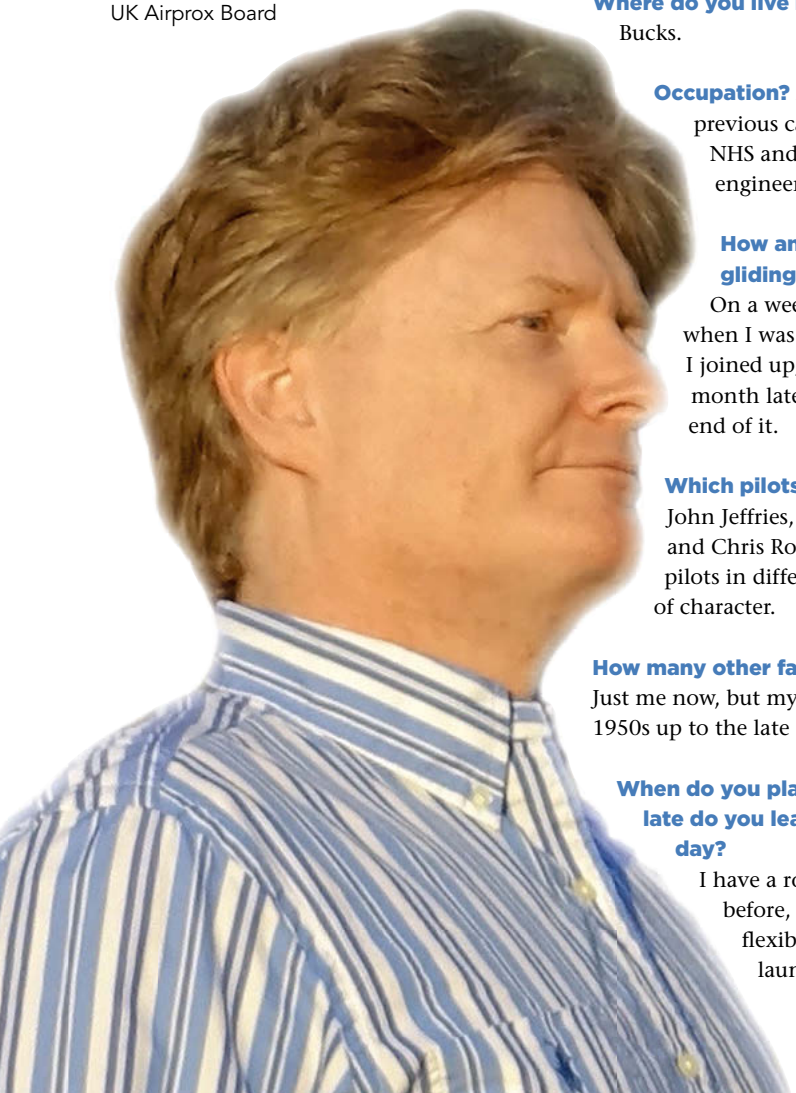
The focus on instructor training in 2021 is in recognition of the effects of Covid-19 on our sport, particularly the reduction seen at many clubs in the availability of instructors for 2-seat training. We need to encourage and support a new intake. By helping pilots to embark on instructor training in 2021, we will also make a difference more widely in our clubs and our sport in 2021 and beyond.

The trust is currently finalising the details of the awards and will notify clubs and pilots of the nature of the Ted Lys awards for 2021, and the application process, through the usual channels.

›ED DOWNHAM

Those who know Ed Downham have tremendous respect for his tenacity and ability to wheedle the best out of a day. Ed loves exploring and pushing his personal boundaries, which has resulted in an impressive list of UK records, flown in EB28 '13' and, previously, an ASW 27

A member of London Gliding Club, Ed Downham flies an EB28 in the UK and other parts of Europe and funds that by flying people round the world in a Boeing 777. Ed is also a gliding member of the UK Airprox Board



Age? 55.

Marital status? Married.

Where were you born? London, and I qualify as a genuine Cockney!

Where do you live now? Near Thame in Bucks.

Occupation? Airline pilot. Many previous careers, including the NHS and being an electronic engineer.

How and when did you start gliding?
On a week's course at London GC when I was 16. Enjoyed it so much I joined up, did another course a month later and went solo at the end of it.

Which pilots most influenced you?
John Jeffries, Robin May, Mike Bird and Chris Rollings. All very skilful pilots in different ways and not short of character.

How many other family members glide?
Just me now, but my father flew from the 1950s up to the late 1980s.

When do you plan your flights and how late do you leave it to firm up on the day?
I have a rough idea a day or two before, but like to leave things flexible until not long before launching, especially in the UK where the weather changes by the minute. I'll probably have A/B/C options loaded up to choose from just before I go.

Are you always optimistic about the outcome?
Until it becomes impossible, yes. I have had so many escapes from what seemed like hopeless situations, that I press on unless it is completely dire or it would be unsafe to continue. Much of the time going back is more difficult than carrying on, so why not?

Are you often looking for an opportunity to get a record?
Given the amount of potential days where records are possible, not that often. It's always in the back of my mind, though. The bar is creeping up all the time, but then I suppose gliders and their pilots are getting better too.

Do you like to look for available sea breezes and convergences?
Very much so. Convergences, especially minor ones, happen much more regularly than many people think. The forecasting tools available are getting better all the time at showing where they might form, although they are not infallible.

Are you bothered by airspace constraints?
Is anyone not? I'm pretty fluent on the radio, for obvious reasons, and have a transponder, but even with those advantages it can be very trying. Every season that goes by there seems to be more airspace, so I hope that trend reverses soon.

What are you looking to get out of a good day?
Enjoyment, challenges; fast, far or a mix of both.

What are you looking to get out of a mediocre day?
The same as a good day minus the fast and far, but there are always surprises.

How do you define getting the most out of a day?
That I'm satisfied when I put the canopy

cover on. I have a bit of a reputation for long flights, dawn-til-dusk kind of thing, but the sense of achievement when you've spent a lot of energy planning and executing something that has fitted well into the day is probably the main reason many people continue with the sport. Doesn't have to be epic, just nicely formed.

You did a lot of flying in the Alps in 13 with Robin May. Why did that work so well?

I think because we both "get" the Alps. They are an amazing playground, that rewards effort like no other, but you do have to be constantly aware of the environment. Flying with another experienced alpine pilot means that you get more opportunity to drink in the incredible scenery, and to generate options. We have shared some amazing moments that probably wouldn't have been possible in a single-seater, because of the workload that led up to them. You also have an audience of at least one in the bar that evening, plus we both love beer and Wiener Schnitzel!

Is there something special about the ASH25 EB28 ('13'), or even the syndicate's relationship with the manufacturer, Binder, that has helped you achieve your gliding ambitions?

I get asked this a lot and I would have to say yes, but it's a combination of many attributes that make the whole experience so rewarding. The glider is comfortable, completely viceless, can take off and land in surprisingly small distances, plus is easy to handle for such a big machine. Being able to operate out of almost any airport as well as gliding sites gives enormous flexibility. Binder are all about personal service, so if you need/want something, they can provide it almost without exception. They also fly their own gliders a lot, so are constantly developing every aspect, as they are designers, test pilots and keen cross-country and competition pilots all rolled into one.

Where and what was your most memorable flying experience?

So much to choose from. It's tempting to pull out really long flights, records, day wins and that kind of thing but they generally go past in a bit of a blur, and almost by definition they were probably without too much in the way of difficulty. An experience that exemplifies what I find fulfilling would be when Robin and I set off in a generally



Self-launch in EB28 '13'
(all photographs by Steve Lynn)

northerly direction from Dunstable in late May 2016, having packed some spare clothes and toiletries into the glider, destination unknown. Day 1 took us up to Yorkshire in showery conditions, then we just squeaked over the Pennines through the rain into the Lake District, checked it out, landed at Carlisle, then bedded down at a local pub. Day 2 started a bit low but the cloud rose as we went over the Borders, eventually reaching just under 7,000ft near Feshiebridge in the Grampians. As it was starting to shower, we came back south, explored out to Stranraer, then back across the Solway Firth to Kirkbride and another pub night. Day 3 saw a 5,000ft base over the Lakes at 11am, then a sea breeze run down the Lancashire coast. Liverpool was too busy to cross, so we had a 30km glide over the sea round the airspace, to contact again near Lleweni Parc. We ran down to Hay, then back to Dunstable in slowly fading thermals. Three countries, three days and 1,500km+ in incredibly varied conditions. Magic.

What are your favourite gliding sites in Britain?

Another difficult one. In my formative years I did a lot of flying at Talgarth, which

ED IS CURRENT HOLDER OF THE FOLLOWING RECORDS:

UK OPEN
- Free Out and Return Distance
- Free Triangle Distance
- Triangle Distance
- 750km Triangle
- 750km Out and Return
- 200km Goal
- 400km Goal

UK 20M CLASS
- Free Triangle Distance
- Triangle Distance

UK 15M CLASS
- Free Triangle Distance
- Triangle Distance
- 600km Triangle
- 750km Triangle

NATIONAL 15M CLASS
- Free O/R Distance
- 500km O/R
- 3TP Distance
- 750km Triangle
- 1,000km Triangle

I'D LOVE TO DO A GREAT AMERICAN AIR TRIP BY GLIDER AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, TAKING IN AS MANY STATES AS POSSIBLE



Ed with favourite ASW 27 at New Tempe, South Africa

■ Is there someone you would like to nominate to appear in *S&G*'s pilot profile? Send your nominations to *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* detailing why you have nominated them.

was very social as well as giving lots of soaring opportunities. In recent times, I've been going up to Portmoak in the autumn for the wave season and have had some super days. In general, I suppose it's the one I'm launching from at the time!

What is your favourite site in Europe?
After a lot of thought, I will go with Schanis and Mollis in Switzerland, being close to each other in a beautiful area; Fuentemilanos in Spain for the convergences and scenery; Sondrio in Italy because you have the airfield to yourself and access to all the Alps; and last, but not least, Agathazell in Bavaria, where an EB28 can clear the power cables by at least 30ft when launching (as the gap in the trees at the other end is only good up to 18m span), and it is not unusual to find half the club drunk and lying on the runway at the end of a flying day. I've never been anywhere more friendly and welcoming.

What is your favourite site in the world?
I would have to plump for Kiripotib in Namibia for some of the most pampered high-octane gliding you can do, and Bloemfontein in South Africa as I've had so much in the way of good times there, both in the air and on the ground.

What is your favourite glider?
Well, I'm obviously biased as an EB owner, but after that I have a real soft spot for the ASW 27, having had one of the early models. I still think it's a wonderful machine, designed without compromise as a pure 15m glider, and I get back into one whenever I get the chance.

Who do you admire most in the sport?
I think I would have to go with many of the National Coaches we have had over the years in the BGA. They have given a significant portion of their lives towards helping and training many, many people, for very little recognition or reward, despite often being exceptional pilots in their own right. There's a difference between gliding as a commitment and only doing it when you want to.



Preparing 13 as the day is starting

When not gliding, what do you do for recreation?
Sorry, I don't understand the question? Oh, you mean things like cycling, sailing, hiking, trying to drink my wine collection and messing about with computers? Yes, a lot of that, especially right now.

What book are you reading at the moment?
Our airline Ops Manual, as I've got a sim check next week. Outside of that I like a broad selection of fact and fiction, especially hard science fiction. I learnt to read very young, so have always had a voracious appetite for books. I will generally finish a new one in one sitting, so it can be expensive!

What is your favourite film?
Difficult. If I had to select something that passes the test of time I would go with *2001: A Space Odyssey* as a) it's still one of the most realistic depictions of space travel, b) gratifyingly inscrutable in parts, and c) my auntie was in it.

What is your favourite piece of music?
Depends entirely what mood I'm in. As long as it has some level of artistry to it, I'm good. Classical to Tech-House via way of Metal, it doesn't matter.

What would your motto be?
It's Not A Dress Rehearsal.

What's your next challenge?
As of February 2021, to go gliding this year at some point! I would like to do some more rallying, hopefully in the company of like-minded pilots, as that is super fun. I'd love to do a Great American Air Trip by glider at some point in the future, taking in as many states as possible. The Alps are beckoning too…

HANS-WERNER GROSSE

Herrie ten Cate talks to Bernard Eckey following the death of gliding legend Hans-Werner Grosse in February

HANS-WERNER Grosse was a gliding legend… the closest thing to a gliding deity. He recently died in Germany at the ripe old age of 98. During his gliding career, he set at least 50 gliding records. In 1972, he made a remarkable free distance world record flight of 1,460.80km, from his home city of Lübeck (West Germany) to Biarritz (France). This distance was and continues to be awe inspiring. Gliding author and coach Bernard Eckey knew Hans-Werner Grosse and also flew with him. I reached Bernard at his home in Adelaide, South Australia.

HtC: ***Hans-Werner Grosse – what made him such an amazing pilot?***
BE: Well, I think it comes down to his unrelenting drive to explore the frontiers of our sport. He was never satisfied with any of his achievements and always looked for the opportunity to improve on past performances. In the end, this made him go to Central Australia, and I think that was in the in the early 80s. That's where he set the bulk of his 50 or so world records, but later he flew out of Newman and that's a relatively small mining town in the north-west of Australia. And if I'm not very much mistaken, he never won a world championship. But he came close…

HtC: ***I think he placed second… I read somewhere.***
BE: Yes, I think you're right, he came second once. But later he abandoned competition flying in order to focus on long-distance flying and on setting records.

HtC: ***You flew with him in Australia?***
BE: I didn't fly with him in Australia, I flew with him in Germany. Long-distance flying was Hans-Werner's real passion. And that is where he undoubtedly excelled the most.

HtC: ***Well, there's that famous story of the record I think still stands to this day. The flight that he made from Germany to Biarritz in France.***
BE: Yes, that really shook the gliding world. We mustn't forget that the record was established in a Schleicher ASW 12, a very early glass fibre aircraft. And when you compare it with today's ships, it has a rather modest performance. Still, he flew from the far north of Germany via Holland and Belgium into France and actually landed close to the Spanish border. I think it was somewhere near the town of Biarritz.

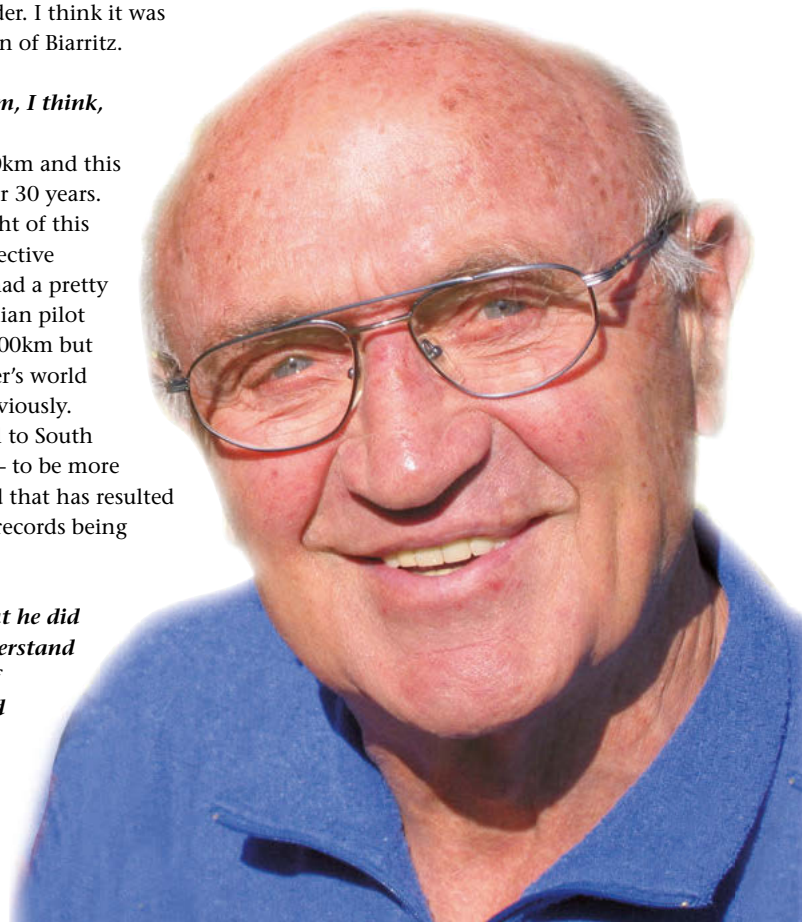
HtC: ***And it was 1,500km, I think, in the end?***
BE: Yes, just under 1,500km and this record stood for well over 30 years. It's also still the only flight of this distance in normal convective conditions. I mean, we had a pretty good flight by an Australian pilot in an ASG 29; he did 1,400km but didn't break Hans-Werner's world record from 30 years previously. These days, people travel to South Australia and Patagonia – to be more precise, to fly wave – and that has resulted in Hans-Werner's world records being broken.

HtC: ***Now this flight that he did 30 plus years ago, I understand that on the continent of Europe that flight record still stands.***
BE: Oh yes, very much so. And I believe

AVIATING HIGHLIGHTS

› Hans-Werner Grosse was born 1922, crashed primary glider 1939, C badge 1940
› Joined Luftwaffe November 1940
› Renewed 1955 PPL at Southend-on-Sea, bought first German Tiger Moth from Ladi Marmol* to ferry it to Lübeck – almost ended up in jail, but that's another story
› Of his 50 World Records Hans-Werner ranks highest:
- First 1,000km goal flight, 1,032km in 1970
- Free distance Lübeck-Biarritz 1,460km 25 April, 1972
- First 1,000km FAI triangle, 1975 Finland
- 1379km FAI triangle at 144km/h from Alice Springs, Australia, 1987, with Hans Kohlmeier
- 500km FAI triangle at 171km/h from Newman, Western Australia, 1989 with Joerg Hacker

**Czech gliding and power aerobatic ace 1920-1998*



■ Scan this QR code to read two *S&G* interviews previously conducted with Hans-Werner Grosse by Mike Bird (Platypus), in 2010 and 2013, or visit visit : *www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/current-issue*



Eta was originally designed for an all-up weight of 950kg, but to be allowed to fly in major contests was required to shed 100kg, which penalises Eta in strong conditions

that what this flight did is still largely underestimated to this day. It has inspired a whole generation of pilots, including myself, and it has also served to attract more people to our sport, there's no question about that.

HtC: ***I read somewhere about that flight that he landed near Biarritz in southern France and would have kept going, but was a bit apprehensive because Franco was still in power in Spain. He could have made it further, but was worried about crossing into an unknown country.***
BE: Yes, not only that, I believe he also was concerned that he would run out of maps. And he feared that the flight wouldn't be recognised if he landed in Spain for some reason, but I'm not entirely sure of that.

HtC: ***Now, earlier you mentioned you'd flown with him in Germany. What was that like?***
BE: Oh, I tell you, that was a real eye-opener. I still remember it to this day. We kept in touch over the phone and I left at about four o'clock in the morning to get to his place in Lübeck. All the way there it was drizzling, and we had a very, very low cloudbase. But when I got to him, he showed me his private weather station with all the satellite receivers, rain radar and all these other gadgets, totally unique in those days. Then he said: "Don't worry, Bernard. We can fly later in the afternoon." I had my doubts because the sky remained totally overcast and grey. In the end we went to the airport, got the Eta ready and launched at Lübeck Airport, between airport traffic taking off and landing.

HtC: ***Now, let me interrupt for just a second… this glider, the Eta… this was a unique one-off 31-metre glider that he was involved with and helped build. Tell me about that.***
BE: Well it wasn't really a one-off, I think that the builds total is five or six. Hans-Werner was certainly the initiator of this programme. It was 31-metre glider, self-launcher and a two-seater. And, yes, I flew it. It wasn't the most agile of gliders, but in a straight glide at relatively low speed it was just remarkable in performance.

HtC: ***And this is the glider that you went up in with Hans-Werner… what was the flight like?***
BE: It was phenomenal because I didn't think we could do more than just a bit of local flying. We took off when it was still totally overcast and when we climbed through about 2-3,000ft Hans-Werner spotted the sunlit spot on the ground and went for it, finding the thermal there. We then had enough height to glide into a sandy patch of the country. We spent the whole afternoon there. Fantastic.

HtC: ***What was Hans-Werner like as a man? Was he a talkative kind of guy, friendly… how would you describe him?***
BE: He was just one of those people that makes friends easily. He was a great mentor, and was happy to share his knowledge and expertise with anyone who showed interest. When I flew with him, I just couldn't believe that he passed up one weak climb after another; sometimes we got down to 800ft or even lower. I got a bit nervous and was suggesting that we get the engine out, but he always found the lift again and we eventually went all the way, near Bremen airport. Then when we went home, I got to fly this this truly remarkable ship.

HtC: ***Let's go back in history a little bit. I understand he learned to fly in the 1930s as a teenager, like so many German pilots did at the time. What can you tell me about that?***
BE: He was certainly one of those young men that learned to fly in the Hitler Youth. And, yes, that shaped him, of course. He even crashed a glider when he was only 15, or 16, years of age, but he recovered. In his teens he was converted into a bomber pilot by the German Air Force.

HtC: ***I did read about that. I mean, that's how Germany was training its air force at the time; all German glider pilots got shuffled into the Luftwaffe.***
BE: Yes, well that was the idea by the Nazi regime. They trained them up in gliders and then turned them into fighter pilots and bomber pilots.

HtC: ***You mentioned Hans-Werner crashed a glider, but I understand he was also shot down at one point – I think flying a bomber somewhere in the Mediterranean?***



Hans-Werner Grosse enjoyed many flights in the Eta with wife Karin

BE: Yes, that was during the war years. I think you're right, he was shot down over the Mediterranean and again got injured, so I understand. When he recovered, he was then sent off to Scandinavia and finished the war as a pilot in Norway, I believe.

HtC: ***So the war finishes and I guess he has to make a living, providing for his family. Then he gets back into gliding and that is when his real gliding career started. Is that right?***
BE: I think he was one of these remarkable men who was not only a top pilot, but also a very smart businessman. So when the war ended, he saw an opportunity to set up a business mainly dealing in more casual and less formal clothing. Together with his wife, Karin, they set up a retail shop right in the historic centre of Lübeck, a medium-sized town in the far north of Germany. Both of them worked hard to turn that into a successful business, which in the end allowed him to glide in places like Australia.

HtC: ***He seems to be one of these almost super glider pilots. In the German gliding/soaring world, where would you put him… is he right at the very top?***
BE: Oh, undoubtedly, And, I mean, he was a true pioneer in those days. There are other people who have made a name for themselves. For instance, Klaus Ohlmann, who is involved with the Perlan Project – he has now broken records in Patagonia. But Hans-Werner Grosse was definitely the person that everyone looked up to in Germany.

HtC: ***You have considerable flying experience all over the world, and you learned to fly in Germany. How will you remember Hans-Werner Grosse?***
BE: How do I remember him? He has inspired so many people, not only in Germany, but around the world. Everyone has looked up to him and he was not only a good pilot, but also a very modest man who never sought the limelight. He was doing a lot of work behind the scenes, and one of the examples is that he was helping a lot with the OLC (Online Contest). At the age of 75, Hans-Werner was made an honourable member of the German national team. He was also an honourable member of the German Aero Club. He received so many accolades, I've lost track of them all.

HtC: ***Well, Bernard, thank you so much for telling us all about Hans-Werner Grosse. I feel like I've really got a bit more insight into this amazing pilot.***
BE: My pleasure. Anytime, Herrie.



Bernard Eckey is a record pilot, instructor, former head coach for South Australia, and the current president of the South Australian Gliding Association. He flies an ASH 30 Mi and has around 4,500 gliding hours in his logbook (including 11 1,000km flights and one 1,116km FAI triangle)

■ Edition 4.1 of Bernard's best-seller, *Advanced Soaring Made Easy,* is now available for €54.90 plus P&P. Contact: *eckey@internode.on.net*

■ This interview was part of The Thermal's March podcast. This monthly podcast is devoted to gliding. You'll hear about the latest cutting-edge sailplanes and technology. Plus gliding safety, instructing, gliding history, pilot interviews, towing, winching and a whole lot more. New podcasts will be released the first Saturday of every month. You can listen to past and upcoming podcasts at: *http://thethermalpodcast.libsyn.com*

IT WAS A LONG, LONG RETRIEVE

Nigel Pringle recounts a tale from the eighties and explains why you should ensure you are the least competent pilot in your syndicate

IF YOU'RE a half decent cross-country pilot, and your syndicate partner isn't, you're going to spend more time on the road retrieving him than he is you.

So it's a good plan, when you form a syndicate and buy a glider, to make sure that you're the least competent pilot in the syndicate.

Back in the mid-eighties, landing out was expected. We all did it fairly often. It was part of gliding and nobody minded.

Jack and I were fairly evenly matched. We used to land out on a regular basis and we soon became adept at hitching up the trailer and departing to whichever field the other had finished up in.

Jack isn't his real name, but as he was, and still is, a good friend I'm concealing his identity. And provided he doesn't recognise himself in this story, I'm also protecting myself from litigation. So we both win.

It was a Friday afternoon when I took a call from his wife, Danielle.

"Nigel, Jack's landed out and I wonder if you can help with the retrieve?"

I was puzzled. "Why's he ringing you and not me?"

"Well, I don't know but he wants me to help. Maybe he's in an awkward field? And perhaps you'd better ask Ginny as well?"

Now, my mate Jack is a devious sort of bloke, and something told me that this wasn't going to be a straightforward retrieve. However, you look out for your mates, so I found his car, hitched the trailer and headed off, picking up my wife Ginny and Danielle on the way.

"Where are we heading for, then?"

Danielle consulted her notes: "He's landed near a place called Little Horwood."

"Where's that?"

"Somewhere close to Milton Keynes."



Long haul

Oh great. That meant a long haul around High Wycombe and Aylesbury on a Friday afternoon. The roads didn't disappoint. It took two hours to cover the 40-odd miles, and that with a trailer which, I now remembered, had the wrong number plate.

"Jack said he'd meet us outside a pub called the White Hart. Apparently it's a good landmark," said Danielle.

"OK." I thought no more of it, pubs are good reference points.

We arrived at Little Horwood just before 7pm. Sure enough, Jack was waiting for us outside the White Hart, but something wasn't right.

He greeted us with a sort of pebbledashed grin and he seemed to be swaying slightly.

"You lot took your time. I've been waiting in the pub for the last two hours."

Yes, that figured.

"So as you're so late I thought we could

have some supper first then get the glider."

It seemed a good idea. It was late June and wouldn't be dark for several hours.

We had a good meal and Jack and I had a couple of pints, my first of the day. Jack looked even more peddledashed.

Danielle paid the bill, her husband having forgotten his wallet, and we went back to the car.

"Where's the glider, Jack?"

A long silence, while we waited with the engine running.

"Umm, hang on, let me think… I think it's somewhere down that lane. No, wait on, maybe we have to drive along the road a bit… umm…"

Ominously quiet

Danielle was tapping her finger on the steering wheel and becoming ominously quiet.

"You'd better remember quickly, otherwise we're going home without the glider."

Eventually we found it. The question now was, could we get it out before it got too dark to see?

I walked into the field and fell flat on my face. It was a pea field, very fine tilthed and difficult to walk on. Especially after a couple of pints. The glider had embedded itself four inches into the tilth.

"Jack, you great pillock, just how do you suppose we're going to get it out?"

There was no way the car was going to make it across the field. We attached a rope to the belly hook and tried to drag it by hand. It dug itself in further.

Finally, we resorted to the only thing left; derigging it where it was and carrying it out in pieces. It took an hour, and by then we were covered in dust, very disgruntled and very thirsty. And it was almost pitch dark.

Danielle took the wheel for the long drive back. Jack spoke only twice the whole way.

"I say, our pub's still open, we could pull over and have last one before we…"

"You are not going back in the pub," said Danielle. "You've had quite enough already and, anyway, you've forgotten your wallet."

"Oh, ah, well I thought I'd ask….um."

As I said, that was the last we heard from him. The back seat rumbled away to his snoring the whole way back.

Danielle, on the other hand, had quite a lot to say. Mostly about husbands in general and one in particular…

WE RESORTED TO THE ONLY THING LEFT; DERIGGING IT WHERE IT WAS. WE WERE COVERED IN DUST, VERY DISGRUNTLED AND VERY THIRSTY. AND IT WAS ALMOST PITCH DARK

■ Do you have a landout story – from heaven or hell – that *S&G* could include in this series of retrieve tales? Please send it to *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk*

PHILIP WILLS MEMORIAL FUND

SUPPORTING GLIDING IN THE UK

The Philip Wills Memorial Fund has cash available now to lend to gliding clubs for capital projects. Key features of the loans are:

- **Negotiable as to length and amount of loan**
- **Requirement for a "business case" to be presented to trustees**
- **Security usually taken on asset bought + personal guarantees**
- **LOW interest rates – lower than you would pay to a bank**
- **Early repayment not a problem**
- **Minimal legal costs**
- **Easy access to lenders for discussion**

More information is available on the BGA website. If you want to just discuss informally, please email Steve Lynn at Stephen@srlynn.co.uk, or please just download the application forms at http://www.gliding.co.uk/forms/clubmanagement/PhilipWillsMemorialFund-ApplicationForm.pdf

We look forward to hearing from you.

In conjunction with the BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION



Fly-in on 20 December 2020 and a first look at the new home at RAF Shawbury

INTRODUCING RAF SHAWBURY



RSGC's K-21 prepares to land on fly-in to RAF Shawbury on 20 December 2020

AFTER 54 years based at RAF Cosford the former Wrekin Gliding Club, one of seven service clubs that form the Royal Air Force Gliding and Soaring Association (RAFGSA), has completed the move to its new home and is now established as the RAF Shawbury Gliding Club (RSGC).

Over the years many thousands of service personnel based at RAF Cosford have been introduced to the sport of gliding, the definitive experience in free flying. For some, gliding would be their only opportunity to experience flying, whilst others went on to fly professionally in their chosen careers both at home and abroad. Large numbers of former club members have gone on to fly at other RAFGSA clubs, and have participated and competed in gliding competitions and in overseas expeditions.

A change to how the Tutors operated at RAF Cosford meant the concurrent flying of RAF powered aircraft and gliders was no longer viable; the opportunity to glide at RAF Cosford had become restrictive. This



First flying lesson at RAF Shawbury. Air Cadet Joshua Walker with instructor Alan Swan

impacted upon, amongst other things, the number of flying days, the volume of students and the opportunities for instructors to maintain their ratings. Both operationally and financially, the viability of the club looked less than secure in the longer term.

As the armed services flex to meet evolving operational requirements this would not be the first time that a service gliding club had moved location. The challenge to find a new home for the club was undertaken by a small project team. After a review of a number of possible locations in the Midlands, it was decided that the best interests of the club lay in relocation to RAF Shawbury in Shrewsbury, the home of the No 1 Flying Training School and the location of the Defence College of Air and Space Operations.

The large student population, together with the permanent staff, will provide an opportunity for the club to continue to meet the aspirations of the RAFGSA in training the uninitiated, and introducing the RAF Shawbury community to this safe and exhilarating aviation sport. In addition, the club intends to maintain its strong links with RAF Cosford.

Whilst the club is disappointed that it had to move, it looks forward to a bright future in its new home. With the proximity of the Welsh mountains, RAF Shawbury provides a superb opportunity to take advantage of wave and thermal soaring flying. It is a chance to engage with a large military membership and to bring the challenge of gliding to a new audience.

Geoff Catling

■ *www.facebook.com/groups/rafshawburygc*
■ *https://twitter.com/RAF_Shawbury_GC #rafgsa #goglide #raf_shawbury*
■ *www.rafshawburygc.co.uk*

Below left: RSGC's impressive new hangar at RAF Shawbury



Below: the early days at Wrekin Gliding Club, RAF Cosford







This page, anti-clockwise from top:

Crosswind aerotow at Aboyne (Max Kirschner)

Summer tug pilot Abel Boskovitz enjoyed a late-October wave flight in Deeside's Perkoz with instructor Jakub Hlavecek (Abel Boskovitz)

Steve Codd couldn't resist taking a few photographs whilst moving hangar space for R36 at Portmoak

Wave to the east of Denbigh over Moel Y-Parc after landing, having been to over 10,000ft in London Gliding Club's Duo Discus on a summer 2020 expedition by a small group of Dunstable pilots. It was Rolph Overvliet's first experience of wave flying (Stefan Astley)

Facing page, anti-clockwise from top:
Steve Lynn enjoys a trip in the LGC Rotax Falke G-FLKS, seen here parked up for lunch at Oaksey Park in the Cotswolds on 2 September (Steve Lynn)

A view of the Cheviots from Jon Bevan's Discus 2c FES, taken during an October flight from Milfield (Jon Bevan)

View of a Felixstowe Pier from a Shark eS on 29 July 2020 (Alex Holswilder)

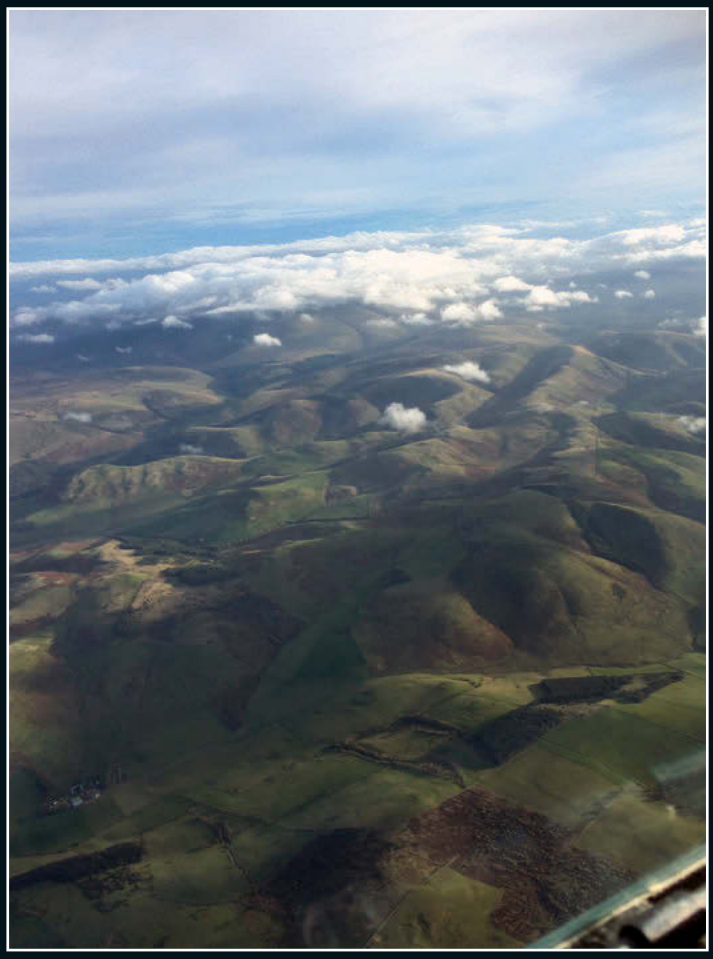
Last flight surfing a sunset before lockdown 3 (Danny Richmond)

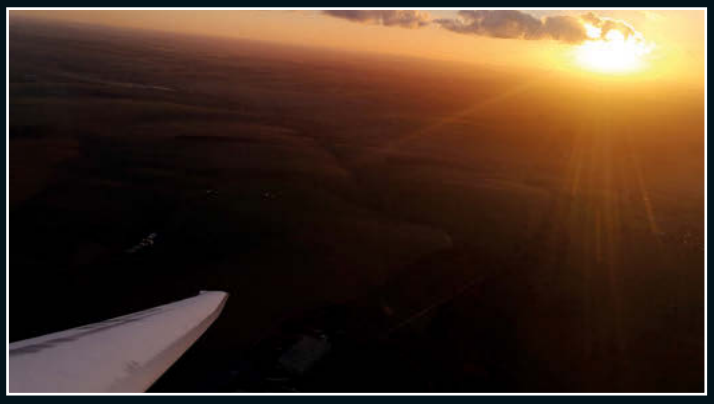
■ If you would like your previously-unpublished photographs to be considered for inclusion in Gliding Gallery, send them to: *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or upload to: *www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/dropbox*















HEAD

Mental Health First Aider Joey Beard dispels myths and advises glider pilots to talk more openly

'HOW are you today?' 'Good, thanks, yourself?' This is the usual exchange between people when they meet at a club, on an airfield, in a hangar or anywhere for that matter. Notice what happens when you ask again: 'How are you really?'. You will most likely get a much more honest answer. Needless to say, if you ask this question of a lot of glider pilots right now (I write during early February), most of you will be missing the airfield like a lost limb. For many, gliding is your escape, your time to mentally disconnect from the stresses of day-to-day life and soar away from it all.

It can be no surprise, therefore, that the past year has seen a dramatic increase in poor mental health as individuals are deprived of their usual methods of escapism. If one positive can be taken away from the pandemic, it's the growing awareness of the impacts of poor mental health: how to identify poor mental health, how to get help, and how to look after that powerful organ that resides inside your head. Individuals who previously claimed not to understand mental health have had a rude awakening, experiencing anxiety, panic attacks and depression brought on through the uncertainty and disruption caused by coronavirus and the resultant lockdowns, let alone the restrictions on flying.

Let's be completely honest, there has always been a worse than usual stigma around mental health and flying. Flight Deck Wingman released an excellent article in May 2020 titled *The Pursuit of Happiness*. In the article, a pilot spoke openly about the hurdles he had to jump, to obtain his Class 1 Medical, with depression on his medical record. Note, these were hurdles not barriers. This opened up a healthy set of confessions from fellow pilots on social media about



how being open about their mental health had caused them issues in their careers. Coming from a community of pilots, both recreational and professional, I hear this time and again. Either people are afraid to ask for help, for fear of being diagnosed and having their medical record 'ruined' for flying, or people jump to the conclusion that anyone with any medical record of mental health problems should not be fit to fly. It's time we dispelled these myths and spoke more openly about our mental health on the airfield. Above all else, this is about looking after each other and the integrity of our sport.

Myth-busting

Firstly, let's banish the myth around mental health and flying medicals. It is reported that one in four people suffer from mental health problems in any one year. With those statistics, it's likely 25 per cent of pilots are suffering with a mental health problem. The question is, how many of them are dealing with it? As we all know, to fly solo or with another pilot, all you need is a driving licence or at least have no medical condition that would deny you holding a driving licence. It gets a little trickier when we start to look at instructing. However, there are still not as many barriers as the stigma has made people believe. Without getting into the nitty gritty of CAA regulations, another myth to dispel is that taking certain anti-depressants does not make you unfit to fly. Therefore, I urge you to educate people on these myth-busting truths and, where complications exist, seek advice from the BGA Medical Officer or the CAA. The most important thing has to be to spread the message that if you are suffering from a mental health issue, do NOT hide it for fear of losing your freedom in the skies. It's time the topic of mental health stopped being taboo in aviation.

Stepping away from myths and stigma, recognising mental health issues on the airfield is tantamount to club welfare. Situations could range from an anxious trial flight participant to an overwhelmed and stressed tug pilot. Are you confident you could recognise the signs of a problem and know how to intervene appropriately? If you felt an instructor had too much on their plate, would you have the confidence to take them to one side and suggest they don't fly that day without fear of causing offence or, worse, a scene at the launch point? The

Above: Joey Beard during a pre-pandemic flight in K-21 with Jordan Bridge at Portmoak (Josh Bean)

Facing page: Joey contemplating the screenplay for *Airborne 2* or *Airborne: Where dreams are crushed by Covid* (Seb Smaka)

IF YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE, DO NOT HIDE IT FOR FEAR OF LOSING YOUR FREEDOM IN THE SKIES. IT'S TIME THE TOPIC OF MENTAL HEALTH STOPPED BEING TABOO IN AVIATION

IN THE CLOUDS



Joey Beard flew solo as an Air Cadet at Hullavington in 2002. She joined Bristol & Glos GC in April 2017 and was also member of Seahawk GSA whilst at Film School, where she produced the short film *Airborne*. Joey has taken a hiatus from retraining and is focusing on enjoying flying with friends. She is an active member of the 621 VGS Historic Flight, now based at Nympsfield. Joey has been a certified Mental Health First Aider since 2016.

answer is probably no.

Many people are not aware of the existence of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) but they are becoming as important in our lives as those trained in Physical First Aid. Similar to Physical First Aiders, MHFAs have an action plan that is hugely beneficial in helping us to navigate the awkwardness of approaching someone we believe to be suffering with their mental health:

- **APPROACH, ASSESS AND ASSIST –** approaching the individual is your first hurdle. Hopefully this shouldn't be too difficult, but if the individual is suffering from a crisis (eg a psychotic episode or panic attack), this is where MHFA training is hugely beneficial. Assessing the situation is about determining whether anyone is in any danger. Assist: if you've approached and assessed, you're already assisting.
- **LISTEN AND COMMUNICATE NON-JUDGMENTALLY –** assuming you're not a trained counsellor or psychiatrist, all you really ought to do is listen, and listen well. This does not mean empathising by comparing their issues to your own. Show understanding and sympathy and, above all, show no judgement or bias. Don't dismiss a nervous pre-solo student's anxieties and tell them to 'just get on with it'. Find out WHY they're nervous. What is it they're worried about?
- **GIVE SUPPORT AND INFORMATION –** letting the individual know they're not alone and providing information to help with their situation.
- **ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL HELP –** if the situation warrants it, suggest and encourage professional help in the form of GP, professional counselling, and mental health charities such as Mind and Anxiety UK. MHFAs usually have a directory of local support available at their disposal. For those still fearful of seeking mental health support that would 'tarnish' their medical record, there is still plenty of support available outside the NHS – particularly for those under 25.
- **ENCOURAGE OTHER SUPPORTS –** encourage the individual to talk to other people they're close to. This might be a friend, spouse, parents, but the likelihood is if you're thrown into a 'MHFA referral situation', you may be the first person this individual has broached their mental health issue with and you must encourage them to talk to others about it too.

■ For more information about Mental Health First Aid – please visit *www.mhfaengland.org*

While prohibited from flying and partaking in our beloved sport, what can we do to alleviate the ground-sickness and thirst for sheer escapism seemingly only found amongst those fluffy white clouds? One of the magical aspects of gliding is that it's 'mindful'. When you're in that cockpit, searching for thermals, very little else is entering into your mind and that's good for the brain and the soul. Mindfulness is about being in the present and focusing on what's around you. There are other ways to practise mindfulness – get into the countryside and exercise, meditate, build LEGO (see left), partake in a Condor race and learn how to create that mindful feeling virtually. The key thing is your mental health is as important as your physical health and the two are intrinsically linked.

Mental health awareness can only improve if more people talk about it. Let's keep talking.



■ ETHAN LOW's own experiences as a glider pilot inspired the proposed LEGO set pictured above. The 885-part set contains: three different glider models – a modern glass fibre glider, a classic 1930s-style wooden glider and an ultralight pioneer-era glider; three pilot minifigures and two brick-built eagles; and a base with hand-cranked rotating mechanism. The base fits two gliders of your choice, which spin around with the birds to create the illusion of flight within a thermal. The open centre shows off the mechanism.

With 10,000 supporters, this could become an official LEGO set. You can add your vote at *https://ideas.lego.com/projects/13b24a95-a418-4180-b783-6db5381074bf*

NORFOLK GLIDING CLUB

www.norfolkglidingclub.com

Come and fly at East Anglia's Premier Gliding Club

- 5 DAY COURSES, WINCH AND AEROTOW
- SOARING TRAINING
- CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING, NAVIGATION, WEATHER & ENERGY MANAGEMENT; FIELD LANDING TRAINING
- AEROBATICS
- INSTRUCTOR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT
- MOTOR GLIDER TRAINING
- BGA INSTRUCTOR MODULES
- NPPL, SLMG, LAPL (S) & SPL TMG EXTENSIONS
- PPL CONVERSION TO SOLO GLIDING

Tibenham airfield has 6 tarmac runways, is wholly owned by the club, has a café and campsite and enjoys some of the most open airspace in the country. Become a member and enjoy the use of our club fleet, flying over the fantastic East Anglian countryside all in a friendly club atmosphere.

Contact: admin@norfolkglidingclub.com or visit https://www.facebook.com/norfolkglidingclub for full details

hill aviation insurance services ltd

HILL AVIATION INSURANCE 25th ANNIVERSARY 1991 2016 SERVICES

PROVIDERS OF INSURANCE FOR GLIDERS, MOTORGLIDERS AND LIGHT AIRCRAFT SINCE 1991

PRIVATE GLIDER & MOTORGLIDER INSURANCE

PRIVATE & TUG AIRCRAFT INSURANCE

GLIDING & FLYING CLUB AIRCRAFT INSURANCE

HOT AIR BALLOON INSURANCE

T: 01765 690777 • E: info@hillaviation.com
Unit 1a, Sycamore Business Park, Copt Hewick, Ripon, HG4 5DF

www.hillaviation.com

WAR EXERCISE FOR LANDINGS

Colin Rudling looks back on an American training exercise for D-Day gliders, which took place at Dial Post in West Sussex

Below: This aerial photograph was taken soon after the landings, and covers about two-thirds of the landing area



AT 11.40AM on 18 April 1944, 48 gliders landed in the fields between Dial Post and Hooklands Lane, West Sussex. This was probably the most significant military event in this area, yet very few local people seem to have been aware of it, both at the time and to this day.

The main objects of the exercise were:

- To test the ability of pilots to land in a selected area.
- To ascertain the minimum size of fields required for satisfactory glider landings.
- To test the glider capacity of individual fields.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the glider force, in equipment and troops, for battle after landing.
- To find the length of time for the airborne force to form up, with equipment, at a selected rendezvous point.

The exercise, code named 'Sidecar', was an American operation involving the 101st Airborne Division and 437 Group, part of the 53rd Carrier Wing, which was based at Ramsbury Airfield near Marlborough in Wiltshire. The landing site was chosen because the countryside was very similar to that in Normandy, where the D-Day invasion was being prepared for. The glider pilots had to be able to land in small fields no longer than 350 yards that were surrounded by high hedges and large trees. The gliders used in this exercise were the British-built Horsa and the smaller American-built CG-4A Waco.

The Royal Air Force was kept informed of the operation, but seems to have played no active part in it. The British Meteorological Office supplied weather information.

On 15 April, three days before the landings, a team of 50 men went to the site to rehearse their ground duties. Flares were to be put on the lanes surrounding the landing area, white stripes were laid in fields, a 'Eureka' homing device was to be installed and four movie cameras to be put in place. Aerial still and movie pictures were also to be taken.

Hazardous

Initially the landings were planned to take place at dawn, which is the time that the D-Day landings would be, but this was later considered too hazardous and the time was changed to 11.40am. The local Lands Officer was ordered to make sure that all landowners and farmers in the landing zone were made aware of the landings, and to clear their fields of livestock.

The force consisted of eight Horsas and 40 Waco gliders. They took off in four flights, 15 minutes apart. The Horsas were each loaded with a Jeep combined with a 57mm gun, or a Howitzer gun, or with a similar weight of ammunition. Twelve of the Wacos were loaded with either a Jeep, a Howitzer, a 57mm gun or ammunition. The other 20

Wacos were loaded with sandbags to simulate a normal operational cargo.

Each glider had a pilot and co-pilot, but no troops were on board. The crews, who would normally be on board to unload the cargo, were waiting at the landing zone; this was a precautionary measure to minimise casualties.

The 40 Waco gliders were fitted with tail parachute brakes, which were a new development to most of the pilots.

The force arrived over the landing zone at 11.40am and at about 1,000ft. It was completely landed within five to 10 minutes. Only one glider landed outside an area of one square mile; another five landed just outside the designated zone. Officers on the ground watching the landings reported that the pilots did a "superior job" landing their gliders in the fields, which were, if anything, smaller than the fields they would be using in France. The pilots had not seen the landing area before except on maps and photos.

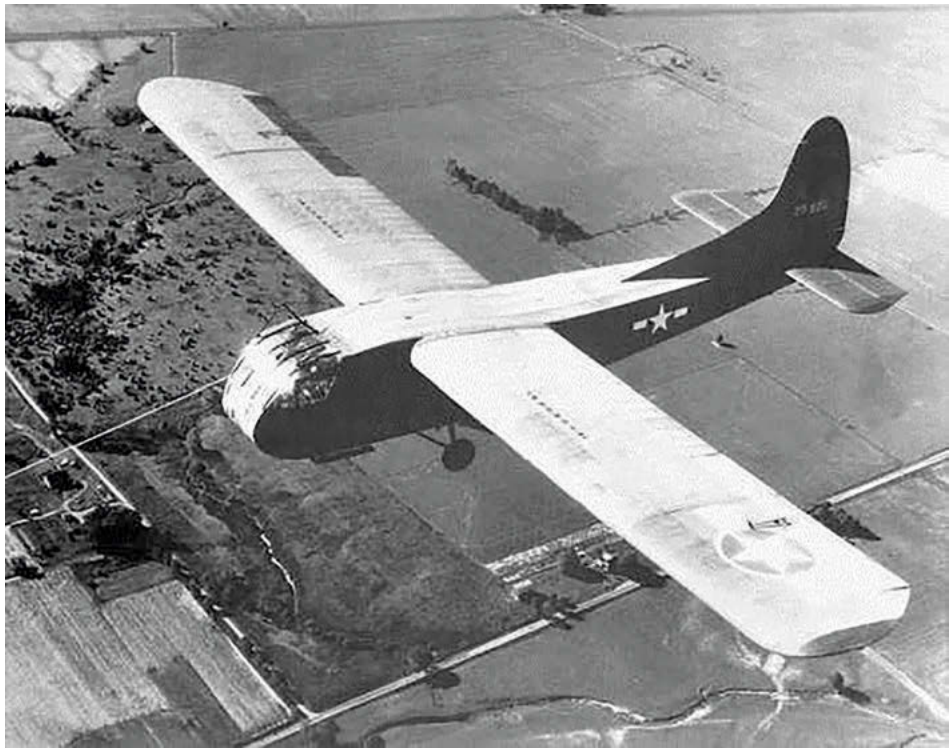
Less than an hour after the last glider had landed, one glider had been retrieved by the automatic pick-up device. This was to continue with all gliders that were flyable.

Snatches

Glider recoveries or "snatches" as the crews called them, were carried out as follows. One end of a nylon towrope was attached to the glider's nose. Two 12-foot poles, placed 20 feet apart, supported the other end of the 350-foot long towrope, which was formed into a loop in the centre of the two poles. The tug aircraft, usually a C47 Dakota, with a 20-foot long arresting hook hanging down from the tail, flew over at about 40 feet above the ground. The hook was attached to a cable that was wound around a steel drum within the tow plane. With the Dakota flying over the glider and elevated towrope sling, the hook "snatched" the glider's towline at 110mph. The glider was airborne in about three seconds.

Gliders numbered 5 (Horsa), 6 (Horsa) and 19 (Waco) made crash landings. Casualties would have occurred had personnel been riding in those gliders. All the other gliders made safe landings.

The gliders were fairly well concentrated in the landing area. However, no attempt was made to land the Waco gliders that contained a Howitzer or gun section close to a glider carrying a Jeep that would be towing it after the landing. The larger Horsa gliders had the advantage that they could carry both Jeep and Howitzer. This exercise showed that the Wacos needed to land in pairs, in order to speed up the unloading process.



The American-built CG-4A Waco was made of fabric-covered wood and had a metal frame. Smaller than the Horsa, it had a wingspan of 84ft and was 49ft long. Its load capacity was around 3,700lb

Initial general conclusions

Captain James M Robinett, Field Artillery Liaison Officer, made the following assessment immediately after the landings:

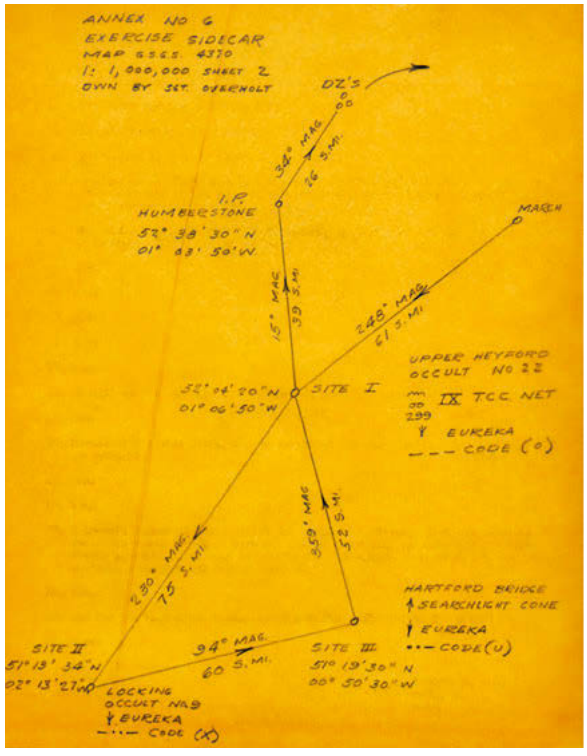
- Equipment can be removed from crashed gliders of either type within half an hour, provided the equipment itself is not damaged.
- Gliders can be landed in a limited area composed of small fields without an undue number of casualties and loss of equipment.
- Gun sections, or Jeep and trailer, can be assembled from two CG4A Waco gliders without loss of time provided they are landed close to each other, or the Jeep driver knows the location of the weapon or trailer. Identifying markings on the gliders to indicate a prime mover or towed load would aid assembling after landing.
- Glider leaders will use ingenuity in unloading gliders that have crash landed.

Two days after the exercise the following evaluation was made:

- The value of the glider rehearsal carried out by 437 Group of IX TCC on 18 April was, to a large extent, discounted by the fact that it was not carried out until 11.40am when weather and light conditions were good.
- The test was carried out more as a demonstration than a rehearsal, and the

WITH THE DAKOTA FLYING OVER THE GLIDER AND ELEVATED TOWROPE SLING, THE HOOK 'SNATCHED' THE GLIDER'S TOWLINE AT 110MPH. THE GLIDER WAS AIRBORNE IN ABOUT THREE SECONDS

■ Scan this QR code to read the full article, or visit visit *www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/current-issue*



This is a scan of the original Sidecar route as flown on 4 April 1944 as part of the D-Day preparation mission. The Troop Carriers had to basically stay within England, so the different Troop Carrier Groups flew a giant letter 'X' in the sky to extend the training flight time to landing and drop zones. The goal was to try to fly the same amount of time the actual route to Normandy would take. The route entry location for the 52nd Troop Carrier Wing Groups was at point 'March'. This is the route the 314th Troop Carrier Group flew. (Source: the Clayton Stiles Collection at the University of Wyoming, USA)

postponement of the landing from the dawn hour for which it was fixed was unfortunate as the weather conditions at dawn appeared satisfactory, though undoubtedly more difficult.

The following factors made the exercise easier than under operational conditions:

- The flight to the target was carried out in good weather conditions and wholly by daylight. It lasted for 40 minutes instead of about two hours. There was no enemy opposition. Navigation was easy.
- Considerably more reconnaissance of the landing area had taken place than could occur over enemy territory.
- The marking of the area was exceptionally clear and lavish. Large white strips and coloured smoke were laid out all around the area, which must have been very easy to see from the air.
- The landing took place in full daylight without ground opposition.

The results of the landings as far as the gliders are concerned were as follows:

Gliders

- Landed outside area, or in fields not assigned to them – 12.5 per cent
- Bad damage – 15 per cent
- Less badly damaged – 43 per cent
- Undamaged – 27.5 per cent
- Special glider for demonstration (?) – 2 per cent

Fifty per cent of the gliders landed outside what was understood to be the fields selected for landings. Three per cent of the glider pilots taking part were injured, none seriously. It appeared that about two per cent of the equipment in the gliders would have been badly damaged, and that perhaps five per cent of the troops, if carried in the gliders, might have been injured.

In short, the exercise confirmed that it is a perfectly practicable proposition to land gliders by daylight in fields of this size in peaceful conditions.

The following points of interest emerged from this exercise:

- More than 50 per cent of the gliders landed in fields in which they were not briefed to land.
- It appeared to be mainly the later gliders that landed outside the area or in the wrong field, and some of the pilots reported that this was due to their fields being already full. It appears that arable fields will not hold as many gliders as anticipated, the earth causes them to lose their undercarriages which prevents them running to the end of the field, leaving room for following gliders to land.

In my opinion, the glider pilots showed great skill in landing their gliders as well as they did. The task of landing in small fields with practically no wind proved more difficult than I expected, and even the glider pilots who appeared to judge their approach accurately got into trouble. In my opinion the casualties at first light would have been far greater.

Horsas

Although the approach and glide of the Horsa appeared to be much safer than that of the Waco, every Horsa overshot rather badly or crashed. Some expert pilots said they were being flown too fast, but it was also clear that the loaded Horsa runs a long way on the ground as compared with the Waco.

Wacos

The float and glide of the Waco was so flat as to appear dangerous, but once the Waco touched down it pulled up in a very short distance. Time and time again Wacos that I thought were going to crash badly, pulled up in about 25 yards with no serious damage.

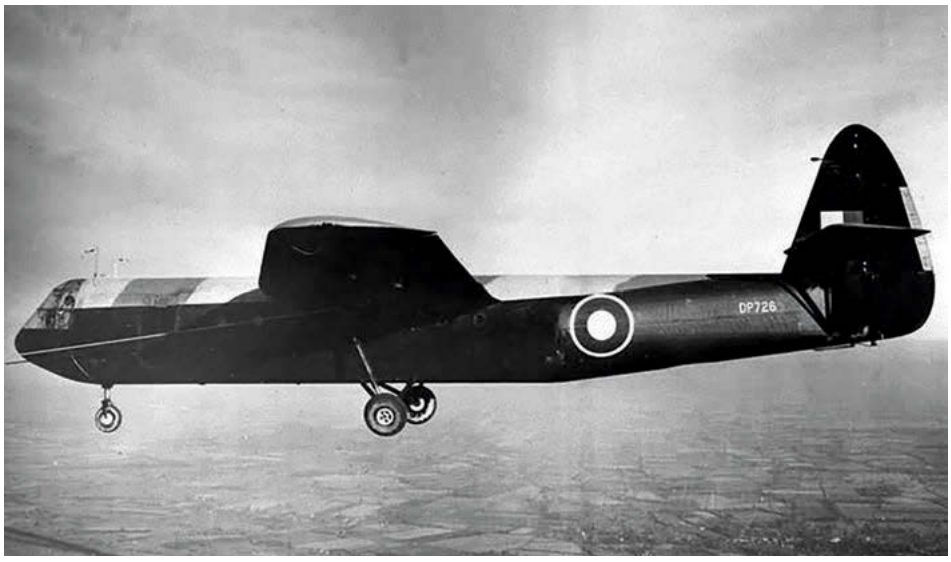
Gliders were released from between 800 and 1,200 feet. Most of the pilots seemed to consider this too high, as there was congestion and risk of a collision during the glide down. I think this was due to the concentrated release, bad flight plan after release, and the fact that US glider pilots are used to being released at a low height.

Ground equipment

The collection of the ground equipment was somewhat unrealistic as insufficient gliders were carrying equipment. The point that struck me was that, immediately after landing had taken place, it was impossible to tell where any particular glider had landed. I think they will have to carry a much more conspicuous means of identification.

Conclusion

From the point of view of 'Overlord' the exercise does not answer the really difficult air questions to which answers were required, but it does confirm that gliders can be landed without undue casualties in daylight in areas of this nature, provided they can be towed there free from serious enemy opposition and



The British-built Airspeed Horsa glider was completely made of wood, had a wingspan of 88ft and was 67ft long. The load capacity was 7,750lb

provided there is plenty of time to collect equipment after landing.

Air Vice-Marshal HEP Wigglesworth, Royal Air Force Senior Staff Officer, having read a report of the exercise, commented "All very well, but oh the losses or damage."

On 14 May 1944, almost a month after the landings, the local Lands Officer wrote to Allied Headquarters complaining that difficulties were being experienced in connection with the settlement of outstanding claims for damage caused by the exercise.

Various damaged gliders had not been removed and, apart from the question of further damage which may arise if and when the gliders were removed, some of them were in growing crops and therefore the longer their removal was postponed the more damage ultimately would be caused. In addition, broken gates and damaged fences could not be repaired until all the damaged gliders had been removed, with the result that certain fields could not be used for cattle.

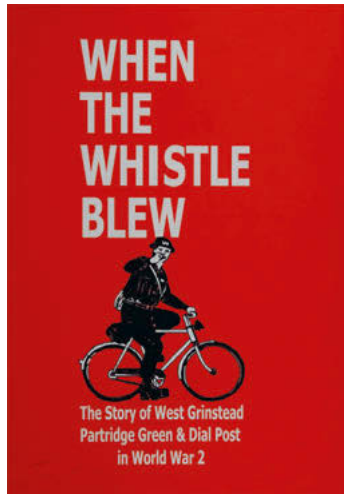
The Lands Officer requested that if the remaining wrecked gliders were not going to be removed in the near future, that permission be given to burn or otherwise dispose of them on site.

Footnote

Over 200 gliders took to the skies on the night of 5 June1944, at the start of Operation Overlord. The first wave carried Allied paratroops whose mission it was to secure key objectives and prepare a secure landing ground for the next wave of gliders carrying Jeeps, Howitzers, anti-tank guns and ammunition.

Fighting was intense and casualties were heavy, but the main objective, to prevent the Germans reinforcing their troops resisting the D-Day landings on 6 June, was largely achieved, saving many lives.

OVER 200 GLIDERS TOOK TO THE SKIES ON THE NIGHT OF 5 JUNE 1944, AT THE START OF OPERATION OVERLORD



■ This article first appeared in a book assembled and published by the West Grinstead Local History Group, which consisted of a series of articles/chapters about life in West Sussex during the war. The publication was called *When the Whistle Blew*. It is no longer on sale and only a limited number of copies were produced. Some of the West Sussex libraries have copies available for reference only. The ISBN number is 9780956114204.

Forbes Insurance
Always Thinking Ahead

Can we save you money and improve your cover?

- Known to be competitive on pricing
- In-depth knowledge of gliding and gliding clubs
- We are active glider and power pilots
- Proven claims service - on your side

Contact our friendly team
Phone us on 0116 238 8874 or email info@forbesbrokers.com



FLYING WITH GHOSTS



John Symonds: an experience of a lifetime

John Symonds swaps his usual K-6 for a Spitfire during a lifetime experience at Biggin Hill



Holding on taxiway – final checks…

IT WAS Monday 14 September 2020 at Biggin Hill, exactly 80 years since the height of the Battle of Britain, and I was about to fly in an aircraft that is almost as old as I am.

The day was perfect, much as it had been 80 years before, and as I drove up to the Heritage Hangar with my wife, Angela, anticipation was high. We were met and taken up to the briefing room, where I was issued with a flying suit and gloves, before being required to watch two videos. The first, entitled: *The risks associated with flying in a Spitfire or Hurricane aircraft*, covered pilot incapacitation, personal health, mid-air collision, engine or component failure, and design standard – somewhat different in the 1930s compared with the regulatory dimensions under which we operate today. The film concluded by reminding me that I could decide not to take the flight at any time up until engine start, with full refund – no chance! I did not ask how many people have taken this option after the various frighteners.

The second film covered the emergency procedures associated with flying the Spitfire – the Arc was drilled into me. Right hand onto the seat adjustment lever, and lower the seat; right hand to the canopy and pull the red release toggle, left hand to the side door, release and let drop down. Listen for further instructions.

It was time to meet my pilot and I was delighted to be introduced to Ian 'Smithy' Smith – ex-Red Arrows, ex-CO Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, and an erstwhile Typhoon pilot. It was clear that I would be in very capable hands. All preparations concluded we walked to the aircraft, while Angela was able to watch from the spectators' gallery.

Assisted into the cockpit of MJ627 by the groundcrew I was strapped into my parachute (static line), before securing the straps and receiving a final safety reminder – lower the seat, eject the canopy, release the side door. And then the canopy was closed and I was alone in the cockpit, giddy with the aroma of oil, leather and all the



John Symonds (left) with Spitfire pilot Ian 'Smithy' Smith

characteristic smells of a 1930's cockpit.

Smithy gave clear prop and attempted engine start, resulting in quite a lot of flame and smoke but no ignition. After one or two more attempts with more smoke and flames the Merlin burst into full-throated life and, with checks done, we taxied onto the perimeter track and set course for runway two-one, with the characteristic tail dragger weave. As we worked our way round the airfield I had a chance to become a bit more familiar with the controls and instrument panel, enveloped as I was in this fascinating time capsule of the technical ingenuity of that era.

Lined up, final checks, and we were off! There was quite a surge as the Merlin was given full power plus boost, and we were soon off the ground and climbing at 155kts. Biggin Hill is, of course, fairly near to Gatwick and this is a pretty busy bit of airspace, limiting our flight to a ceiling of 2,500ft. The significance of this airfield and its location becomes very apparent as the London skyline looms surprisingly close. We levelled off at around 1,500ft and the rpm came back to the cruise. To my enormous delight, Smithy gave me control.

It is a handle control, with the firing button conveniently under your right thumb, and the first impression was how light she was on the controls – in fact, a beautifully balanced machine. Smithy told me to fly up the M25 and then follow the M20 past Gravesend and down towards Rochester, before turning WSW towards Tonbridge. Then came the question – would you like to do a Victory Roll? Certainly I replied, and Smithy told me to follow through on the controls while he demonstrated the manoeuvre. A roll requires a minimum speed of 206kts, so down goes the nose to gain speed before pulling up to almost 45˚, and then hard over with the control – some sensation. He talked me through a second one, and then told me to have a go. That was exciting and seemed to go quite well, so he suggested that I did another – I didn't hesitate.

By now it was time to head back to Biggin Hill. I was not disheartened to hear ATC saying that there was an aircraft taxiing to take off and that we should loiter awhile – a bit more time in this mesmerising aircraft. So followed a gentle exploration of the area around Sevenoaks before we were given clearance to enter the circuit and were soon downwind to land. Undercarriage – down, three greens; rpm – set to 2,650. Supercharger – red light out; carburettor air intake filter control – closed; fuel – main tanks cock on; flaps down. Then it was base leg and onto finals and across the piano keys at 95kts, with the flare being a matter of experience and instinct – this is a tail dragger.

We taxied back to the Heritage Hangar and shut down – by now euphoria had well and truly set in. It was a fabulous experience, and a real privilege to fly such a venerated and historic aircraft. It is something that I would like to repeat, possibly somewhere with slightly fewer flight restrictions – but I would have to break into the piggy bank!

WARTIME HISTORY OF MJ627

SPITFIRE MJ627 was ordered by the Ministry of Aircraft Production in May 1942. She was built at the Castle Bromwich aircraft factory in 1943 as part of a batch of Mk IXc aircraft fitted with the Rolls-Royce Merlin 66 engine.

MJ627 first flew in November 1943, and entered service with the Royal Air Force on 5 December 1943. In September 1944 she joined 4415 RCAF (Silver Fox) Squadron, serving with the RAF at Advanced Landing Ground B70 in Belgium (thus the invasion stripes). On 27 September, while on patrol in the Arnhem area, 15 BF109s and FW190s were engaged 10 miles east of Arnhem at 6,000ft. Flying in MJ627, Pilot Officer Bregnan was credited with destroying a BF109.

In December 1944, the Squadron was moved to the Orkneys for defence of the Fleet. On 9 March 1945 MJ627 suffered engine failure, which resulted in a landout in heather, resulting in Cat B damage – beyond repair on site. She was despatched to Air Services Ltd in Hamble, having recorded 245 operational flying hours.



After 42 years as an administrator in the Royal Air Force and the Ministry of Defence, John Symonds returned to the West Country. In 1998 he joined the Bath Wilts & North Dorset GC, which has been one of his Happy Places over the past 22 years. John owns a much-loved K-6e, and has a part share in a DG-300. He is a Silver C.

■ This article first appeared in *GlideAngle*

EXPERIENC A LIFETIME



CE OF



Andrea Venturini explains why Rieti, hailed as 'the Mecca of gliding', is even better if soaring with a true champion

I FIRST read about Rieti, Italy, a few years ago while visiting Scotland during one of my first experiences in the gliding world. I still remember the *S&G* article I found in the Portmoak clubhouse, it read: "Rieti, the Mecca of Gliding". Before last summer's competition, I had been in Rieti only once before for a brief stay. Soaring conditions were not great at the time, being too late in the season; after September it goes quiet until the following spring.

I am now 54, but started gliding just seven years ago. So how did I get to fly amongst the world champions in one of the greatest gliding competitions? How did I really get there?

Let's start from the beginning! I first tried gliding during a summer visit to Edinburgh in 2013. I was 47 and before that had flown only on a Fournier as passenger in 1997, but... it was from Florence, Italy, to Popham in the UK. I had never flown in a pure glider before, and still remember being frustrated at not understanding how to keep the nose straight. It was a trial flight experience at the Scottish Gliding Centre, Portmoak, in one of the club K-21s. Unfortunately, it was not a good soaring day… rainy, no ridge lift, only three launches, with a "lucky" cable break (a real one!) that actually allowed me the thrill of an extra flight!

That was it... I fell in love with the joy of gliding. I was "hooked" and I've not stopped flying since. I have currently logged around 400hrs in the past six years, now hold a PPL (EASA and FAA) and an SPL EASA, which allows me to fly almost anywhere, so that is what I do.

Even if I consider myself still at the beginning of my flying odyssey, I have managed to score some "lucky shots" in a very brief amount of time. I've soared twice in Aosta (Italy) over Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn, and at more than 10 sites around Europe, including Munich, Lasham, Hus Bos, Feshie and Bicester, plus two sites across the pond in New England.

I am now fully qualified as a tug pilot and thoroughly enjoy this extension to my flying experience, being able to tow in

EVERY TASK ALLOWED US TO RACE LIKE CRAZY, SOARING AT 10,000FT EVERY DAY AND PUSHING OURSELVES ON THE FINAL GLIDE AT A VNE SPEED JUST BELOW 300KM/H!

Main photograph on centre pages: Gran Sasso massif – trying to catch convergences

Below: Valley of Avezzano, with amazing checked effect created by irrigation and dry land
(All photos by Andrea Venturini)

Aosta between the peaks of Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn.

Unfortunately, BGA licences weren't recognised by Italian gliding clubs back in 2014 so I had to do it all over again: steep turns, mushing stalls, spins, spirals, forward slips, truncated circuits, etc… all with no credits! But I actually enjoyed it and finally earned an all-new EASA licence, which allowed me to go into aerobatics and be trained by Italy's famous Pietro Filippini – truly one of the fathers of aerobatic gliding – who also mentored the famous young aerobatic world champion, Luca Bertossio.

Before my trip to Rieti last summer, I had never flown in an Arcus, especially the Arcus M. This top glider costs close to €300,000, so it is not for everyone, I guess! I started to call it "the Ferrari of gliders". The first thing that impressed me was the avionics package installed in the cockpit; the LX 9000 really is a must if you hope for top results, especially in a 10-day competition surrounded by the most accomplished pilots in the world, including six world champions.



My previous experience in competitions was limited to aerobatics; two years earlier I took part in an Italian Championship for new pilots like myself. I really loved the experience and the amount of security aerobatics can add to a pilot's airmanship. However, five minutes of adrenaline doesn't really compare with four hours of soaring over the best landscapes in the world at speeds close to 200km/h and covering 400km every day, allowing you to view the Adriatic Sea at the beginning of the race and the Mediterranean Sea at the end of an exhilarating day. That is definitely something every pilot should experience in their life.

There were about 50 participants at Rieti and, considering the Covid crisis, I thought this was a good result for the organisers.

By 8am we were preparing the gliders, cleaning, topping up the water ballast – and that was the boring part! The best bit was the briefing Italian-style: around a table with the gang from Varese Gliding Club by the caravan park – they offered everyone espresso. My contribution was 'paste fresche' from a local patisserie. By noon, we were all lined up on the runway, divided into two groups. I flew the 'Beast' before the race started, bringing it on top of Monte Terminillo. During the race, I sat in the back working 'information' – airspace, navigation, look out and mainly learning as much as I could flying with my amazing pilot, Alberto Sironi.

Control

He never lost control of the situation; never a moment of indecision. Remember, you can find yourself fighting for the best thermals surrounded by over 20 gliders all soaring next to each other at 150km/hr while performing tight turns and climbing up to 8m/s. The first day with Alberto, after an amazing race fighting for the lead, we nearly lost it all in just a few minutes in the last valley, the Valle Nerina (small Black Valley). We had a finish line at 1,300ft so had to divert to Terni, where we knew the factory roofs would release some heat, creating lift, even if was at the end of the day. We managed to cross the factories at around 600ft AGL. Alberto started using a 0.5m/s lift to work his way up; we were both sweating in the extreme heat, not only due to 38ºC degrees, but for the stress of seeing the clock ticking our race away. Not a word was spoken by Alberto for 20 minutes, he just focused and flew like a champ. Crossing the finish line "was a miracle" and we didn't throw the race away.

My first impression of this new

"competition circus" was "sooner or later we won't be able to finish a race: 3/400km per task, more than four hours of soaring – how can this go on for over two weeks without landouts?" Well, in August, Rieti holds two competitions: the International Mediterranean Cup and the Coppa Citta di Rieti. The whole thing stretches for almost a month with continuous excellent soaring conditions. I really know now why so many people enjoy these events, with many pilots not having missed one race in the past 20 or 30 years. Apart from two days of heavy rain at the beginning, every task allowed us to race like crazy, soaring at 10,000ft every day and pushing ourselves on the final glide at a VNE speed just below 300km/h!

Rieti sits in a bowl, surrounded by hills, and therefore any direction the wind comes from will generate some kind of lift; for this reason it has been called the "Mecca" of gliding. Mountains are as high as 10,000ft; the Apennine range stretches from north to south for 1,000km. Every day at noon, cloud streets form and the breeze from the west sometimes meets that from the east, forming an ideal convergence that can shoot you up and ahead like a rocket.

Freedom

I have always been a keen photographer and couldn't hide that from the rear seat. I enjoyed my extra freedom and took plenty of shots with my iPhone and GoPro. The funniest part was to be able to send pictures and clips "live" to Clara Bartolini, the person in charge of the press release each day. The total views of my clips topped over 20,000. Clara is from Florence and, being from my hometown, it made all the difference.

When you show up and you are a "nobody" you can really feel intimidated by the "big shots". As I had no real connections with anyone in particular, on my arrival every evening after the races I was able to join a different group at dinner: the "Varesotti" (Varese Gliding Club), the "Romani"(mainly from Rome), the locals, some Fiorentini (from Tuscany, such as myself) and so on.

In Tuscany at my local club, fellow pilots nicknamed me the "Englander" as soon as I arrived back from my Scottish training. I guess now this name will stick with me forever. As soon as I arrived in Rieti I searched for the British "gang". I have become accustomed to the cultural differences between, say, Scots and the Italians, but a beer soon appeared for me and it turned out to be a fun encounter.



Corbara Lake joining the Tiber River: heading west toward Tyrrhenian Sea

In 2020, I was privileged to first complete the Mediterranean Cup with an accomplished pilot from the Dolomites. I then left late at night after the closing ceremony and headed for Aosta (with almost a nine-hour drive!) where I was scheduled to tow. Early the next morning I received an unexpected call: "Buongiorno Andrea, this is Alberto (Sironi). I asked for your number to ask if you would you like to come and compete with me in the next Rieti Cup tomorrow?"

Enthusiastic

GOD EXISTS! This guy, who just won the Mediterranean Cup, wants to fly with me?! OK, I am an enthusiastic pilot, but clearly inexperienced for this situation. I asked him to wait for a minute so I could call my CFI in Aosta, asking him to postpone my tugging shift for a few days. After a day to prepare my stuff, there I was, driving all night, in Rieti for breakfast, and back in an Arcus for the new adventure.

As they say: Luck is blind, but it certainly plays its part in one's destiny!

I certainly hope to see many of you at Rieti in 2021; the amazing part of this experience is that even if you don't win the race, the quality of food and the overall ambiance is just amazing! Feel free to contact me for any tips about coming to Rieti, or to arrange any expedition in Aosta.



Andrea Venturini first started gliding at Portmoak. He is based in Aosta and Tuscany, mainly soaring in the Alps, but still flies regularly in Scotland and the USA. He only started flying in 2014 and already holds both SPL and PPL licences, with 300 and 200 hours respectively, including aerobatic, towing, taildragger and seaplane endorsements. Andrea is studying to become sailplane instructor as soon as Covid restrictions permit. He is particularly interested in safety regulation comparisons from around the world

IT'S WRITTEN IN MAGIC MARKER

Steve Schuler reflects on a terrifying solo that tested his courage and training as he was sucked up into a thundercloud

THE drone of an aircraft engine filled the air along with the smell of wet dirt from the early morning rain. I stepped from my car onto the graded parking lot. It was a typical day on Florida's west coast—humid and warm.

In the distance, a clinging fog outlined a surreal image. Two sailplanes lashed to the ground as if wild and dangerous beasts. The early sun glistened across the slender wings suspended from the sleek metal bodies. My sneakers soaked up morning dew as I walked across the field.

I began the process of untying her, inspecting every detail as I prepared the sailplane for flight. Having done this many times before nothing escaped my scrutiny.

A solid pop of a car door momentarily broke my routine. Without looking up I knew it was Bob, chief flight instructor, tow pilot, and teller of tales. Bob was a no-nonsense guy. He seemed to slam just about everything slammable and even slammed some things that were not. I glanced up as he walked across the open field – his gait somewhat resembled a charge.

Bob came up beside me and stood rocking back and forth fiddling with pocket keys. He wouldn't interrupt the moment. Bob held great respect for airplanes and those who flew them. I finally turned my attention to my mentor.

He grinned. "Think she'll fly?" he quipped. What he really wanted to know is if I was ready to fly.

Bob was a gifted teacher. He sensed by tone and expression more than by words. During his Air Force career, Bob sent many men into the air equipped with something much greater than skill and knowledge – those could be taught by anyone. Bob infused his students with self-reliance and self-confidence peppered with a dose of humility. If you didn't have the right attitude you were doomed to a "boots-on-the-ground" career. It was that or you'd be sitting in a cargo hold with a parachute strapped to your back. He often warned young pilots, "There are old pilots, and there are bold pilots, but there aren't any old, bold pilots." It was a worn cliché, but from a man who has flown combat missions through two wars, I listened with reverence. Hell, he might be quoting himself.

When I completed my inspection, I was standing there between childhood fears of self-doubt and an adrenaline rush when he repeated, "Well, do you think she'll fly?".

He handed me a silver coin out of the pocket where he had his keys.

I nodded, "It's a go." I held up the silver dollar size coin and examined it. On the front side, there was the depiction of Charles Lindbergh's solo flight over the Atlantic in 1927. "What's this, Bob?"



"Keep it, it's yours."

With a nod of thanks, I pocketed the coin. Then reached into the cockpit to close the spoilers, often called air-brakes. I preferred the term spoiler since their purpose was spoiling lift generated by the wing.

Today's weather wasn't ideal. An approaching front created ominous cloud formations in the northwest sky. It wouldn't have surprised me if Bob suggested we wait for a better day. My bit of self-doubt hoped he'd give me that option. Perhaps I wasn't ready for solo flight. I wanted to fly, but the less than perfect weather conditions had me on edge. The excuses kept floating around in my head. After yesterday's training session, Bob told me I was ready. My confidence wasn't that high, and I had even said so. But he grinned and told me he slept through the whole flight.

Finally, I asked, "Who's the tug today?"

"Oh, I think I'll pull ya. Not much goin' on this morning."

I knew he would. Towing students on their first solo flight was a long-held tradition for Bob. Perhaps it held symbolic meaning; like a bird pushing her fledgling from the nest.

By now, Jimmy and Rick were there offering to help. The two young brothers lived within walking distance from the airfield. They were there every Saturday, anxious for someone to offer them a plane ride or to give a helping hand as ground crew. Jimmy, the younger, had told me he would fly jet airplanes when he grew up… nice ambitions for a 12-year-old boy. I promised them both I would take them for a flight as soon as I got my licence.

Throaty roar

Bob walked off to speak with the tow pilot. Several minutes later I heard a clash of gears engage the starter on the Bellanca taildragger. She chugged, belched and smoke spewed from her exhaust before she whirled into a throaty roar. The sound of the engine gave me a jolt of exhilaration and anticipation. The hair on my arms stood at attention. Yes, this was the day. The adrenaline won.

We had completed two duo flights to refresh my training before Bob gave me the go-ahead. The winds were moderate and the sky mostly clear. A few scattered clouds began forming with the rising temperature. Even though the approaching front seemed to slow to a crawl I could feel a change in the air.

"Let's get a move on," Bob said. "This plane ain't going to fly itself."



Illustration by Ross Martin

I was both anxious and excited. "Okay, let's go."

Rick picked up the left wing, balancing the plane on its single wheel. I instinctively looked towards the horizon for traffic as I walked around to the other wing. With Rick holding one wing and me holding the other, we maneuvered the sailplane out to the runway's edge.

"Okay Jimmy," I yelled, "Attach the towline to the tug." He ran off with great enthusiasm.

Now that the plane was positioned for take-off, things would happen quickly. I still needed to go over my pre-flight checklist. I lifted open the canopy and slid in – pulling the five-point harness over my head and snapping it securely. I grabbed the list from my pocket and went over each detail. Jimmy attached the tow cable while I set the altimeter to the field elevation. I pulled the release handle to check its operation. He hooked it back up again after the test release and gave me a thumbs up. The conspicuously yellow handle had a warning label below it, "Caution, Tow Release." The next time I pulled it would be a few thousand feet above the ground. I checked the wind direction and flipped on the two-way radio.

Beads of sweat were beginning to form on my brow as Bob's voice crackled call signs over the radio.

"Blanik Three Four, this is Foxtrot."

I responded: "Foxtrot, let's go to three thousand feet – west of the runway."

My attention now focused on my wingman. He had an important job that lasted most of 20 feet. Holding the wings level, he would run with the sailplane as it

TODAY'S WEATHER WASN'T IDEAL. AN APPROACHING FRONT CREATED OMINOUS CLOUD FORMATIONS IN THE NORTHWEST SKY. IT WOULDN'T HAVE SURPRISED ME IF BOB SUGGESTED WE WAIT FOR A BETTER DAY. MY BIT OF SELF-DOUBT HOPED HE'D GIVE ME THAT OPTION

■ Updates about Steve's soon to be published book – *Rock, Paper, Innocence*, can be found on his website. He also writes about coping with losing a loved one due to cancer and how it affected his family. Scan the QR code for links to Steve's blog *https://steveschuler.com/*



Steve and first wife, Linda, by Taylorcraft

I FOUND MYSELF HOLDING MY BREATH, SOMETHING WAS WRONG. I HAD THE SENSATION THAT THE PLANE WAS DIVING BUT MY ALTIMETER INDICATED OTHERWISE. I WAS TRAPPED IN A ROGUE UPDRAFT

accelerated down the runway. For the first few seconds, I would be at his mercy.

"Rick," I shouted, "Bring the wing up, check inbound traffic." I pulled the canopy over my head and latched it. The taildragger's engine roared as it manoeuvered into position.

I gave thumbs up to Rick. He lifted the wing while gazing for incoming traffic. Then with a windmill whirling motion of his arm, he signaled to the tug we were ready.

I was relatively calm – until now. I watched the tow rope uncoil until it pulled taut enough for a high wire act by "The Flying Wallendas". My grip on the control stick followed suit. A bead of sweat clung to the end of my nose. My hands felt clammy. I slid open the small canopy vent. The pitch of the engine coming up to full power broke the silence. We were beginning to accelerate down the runway. Slowly at first, but then, in what seemed a wild rush, she was airborne, skimming a few feet above the ground. I pushed the control stick forward, holding her from climbing. She jolted alive, like a stallion on the run. This was a critical moment; if I initiated a climb before the tow plane gained enough airspeed, it could pull his tail up, nosing him back into the runway. With the extra weight of the sailplane, Bob would wait until he reached an airspeed of at least 65kts before lifting off.

Slowly, the tow plane began a steady climb, with me in pursuit as we flew in a tight formation. The altimeter indicated a climb rate of 500ft per minute. It would be a short six-minute ascent to our designated altitude of 3,000ft; about 1,000ft under the cloudbase that was now moving in off the Gulf of Mexico.

Twelve hundred, sixteen hundred, 2,100 feet – then bang, I hit the edge of a rising air thermal. It threw my right wing hard skyward, the left wing pointing at the ground. This was a massive thermal feeding into a cloud a few thousand feet above me. Its dark base warned of a developing thunderhead. Bob knew cloud formations well, and I guess he intentionally flew towards this one. I leveled the wings then dipped the nose to get a visual on the towline connecting the two planes. I grabbed the yellow release handle without hesitation.

I pulled. The towline shot away like an overstressed rubber band. Immediately, Bob dove hard left when he felt the release. I banked right as I pulled the nose up to bleed off speed. It was a well-choreographed ballet and a beautiful sight from my view. One hundred knots of roaring wind fell eerily quiet as I surged skyward, slowing the plane to near half that speed. I caught myself breathless as I lingered in the sensation of silent flight. I pulled into a hard-left turn in search of the thermal. G-forces pushed me heavy into my seat as the plane rotated 45 degrees to the horizon… exhilarating!

Within minutes, I plunged back into the thermal. It hit with the force of a freight train. My stomach jumped into my throat. The rate of climb indicator pegged at its maximum – 1,000ft per minute. It could have been twice more.

I flattened the horizon and slowed to 50kts. The sky grayed as I climbed higher. Water droplets started racing across my canopy. An unfamiliar howl intensified as daylight receded into darkness. The exhilaration of flying turned into panic when the wingtips disappeared into the mist. The horizon gone.

Thunderhead

The plane shuddered. My heart pounded and I clenched the control stick tighter. I was in trouble and needed to break free from the grip of this thunderhead. The plane responded quickly when I pushed the control stick forward into a tenacious dive. I found myself holding my breath, something was wrong. I had the sensation that the plane was diving but my altimeter indicated otherwise. I was trapped in a rogue updraft. Without visual reference, vertigo set in. I checked my airspeed – over 100kts and climbing. I was hurtling towards the red line speed of 139kts, the theoretical number to never exceed without ripping the wings off. Wingless, the fuselage would take on the characteristics of a lawn dart. Plummeting blindly, the plane buffeted warnings of failure at the hurricane wind speed. An echo of voices sang amidst the raging wind. I realised it was the radio and silenced it. Other options began pinging around in my brain. Crossing controls would stall the plane, sending it into a downward spiral. Too late. I should have taken that option at the first sign of trouble and at a much lower airspeed. My inexperience was one beat short of a plan.

I yanked open the wing spoilers. Immediately the nose dropped. I had the sensation of falling. It was a trade-off, the

plane stopped accelerating – but my stomach found its way back into my throat. Gradually, the sky grew lighter. Then suddenly, I shot out of the darkness, thousands of feet from my point of entry and near the lower edge of the towering thunderhead. In the distance, I could see the Gulf, though the water was mostly blocked by scattered clouds. Cluttered along the shoreline, buildings faded into a low-quality black and white movie taken from too far away. A glance at the altimeter confirmed my reality – I was well over a mile high. I had a sudden realisation that I may have a fear of heights. For the third time, my stomach migrated back into my throat.

Dodging pockets of clouds, I weaved a course towards the airfield hidden a few miles away. I relaxed my death grip on the controls and wiped the sweat from my face. In 10 minutes, I would be back on the ground.

The adrenaline was beginning to wear off as the pinging in my head turned to silence. I was flying on autopilot. Reality sank in, I didn't have autopilot. During the short flight back to the airport, I rethought my future in aviation. I pondered the number of FAA flight rules I may have violated. I doubted there was a regulation against going brain dead during an emergency.

At 1,000ft, I crossed over the runway, scanning for traffic. I flipped the radio back on to announce my landing. Turning downwind I located the windsock. It indicated a 10-15kt breeze out of the northwest. Parked airplanes skirted the grassy area on the outside edge of the runway. A small group gathered near the tow plane. I reduced my speed and extended the wing flaps as I continued my descent. At 300ft, I turned on final approach, mere moments from touchdown. People started waving and giving me thumbs up.

Descent

Gliding on final, I adjusted the spoilers to increase my descent. When I cleared the fence bordering the airfield, I pulled the spoilers full on. The ground rushed beneath me as I flattened my approach. The single tyre chirped in complaint on touchdown. After rolling a few hundred feet down the runway I angled towards a grassy area. My left-wing slowly dipped and lightly kissed the ground. It was a great landing, perhaps my best. I sat quietly for a moment, then remembered the coin Bob had given me. I pulled it out of my pocket. I was in mental rewind when a tap on the canopy snapped me back to reality. It was Bob.

"Hey, you gonna let someone else fly today?" Bob looked relieved. "I'm glad you brought the plane back, thought you got sucked up into a thundercloud."

Bob was chattering, but nothing was registering. I pulled the latch and opened the canopy. Bob grabbed my hand to help me out. "A guy from the terminal was waiting for me when I landed. Said a lady reported a glider got sucked into a thundercloud and disappeared. You had me worried. I tried contacting you on the radio." Numb with thought, I'd heard his words but lacked a response.

Rick and Jimmy were there too, ready to pull the sailplane back down the runway. There were high fives, backslaps as we walked the plane back to the foot of the runway. My brain was still at 6,000ft, and my thoughts weren't together. In some ways, I felt different. New respect for life, maybe. New respect for myself, perhaps. An image of an earthbound sailplane in the morning mist flashed through my mind.

Scissors

"Come on guys; let me tell you the tale of my first solo," I boasted.

Rick grabbed hold of my sleeve. He held a pair of scissors in his other hand. "Bob says he needs a slice of your shirt." I pulled it off. He used a pair of scissors to clip a piece from the back.

Jimmy and a few others came over. We sat under the shade of an old Stearman biplane. Bob leaned against the wing. I thumbed my lucky coin while telling the tale of my epic flight. I thanked Bob for the coin and all he taught me.

"Ahhh, you don't need the coin," he said, "Wasn't luck got ya on the ground." He handed me the shirt piece Rick had cut off. These words were written in magic marker, "First Solo, May 9th, 1976."

***

Over the years I have lost track of the two brothers, Rick and Jimmy, but I have no doubt Jimmy enthusiastically pursued his life's dream of flying. While this is where my story closes, I can only envision new beginnings…

I stood behind the young man, bouncing a coin in my hand. "Well, you think she'll fly, Jimmy?" I quipped. He was still Jimmy to me, everyone else called him Captain.

"Yep," he said with confidence.

"Here ya go," I flipped my coin towards Jimmy as he looked up just in time to catch it. He nodded with a smile.

I headed towards the tow plane.

CLUTTERED ALONG THE SHORELINE, BUILDINGS FADED INTO A LOW-QUALITY BLACK AND WHITE MOVIE TAKEN FROM TOO FAR AWAY. A GLANCE AT THE ALTIMETER CONFIRMED MY REALITY – I WAS WELL OVER A MILE HIGH. I HAD A SUDDEN REALISATION THAT I MAY HAVE A FEAR OF HEIGHTS



Steve Schuler, published author, and graduate of the University of South Florida began flying sailplanes in 1976. He has owned two taildraggers, a J3 Cub and Taylorcraft, BC-12D. He has hours of aerobatic flight in a Citabria. On September 27, 2013, Steve lost his first wife, Linda, to kidney cancer. He keeps their memories alive with tales of life's journeys and travelling adventures spanning 45 years. Steve remarried and still lives in Florida, with his lovely wife, Lisa (pictured with Steve above)



ADVISORY 18: HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVE... THINKING YOUR WAY OUT OF GLIDING POVERTY

Ebenezer Grimshaw advises newbies how to regard gliding royalty and their superships

BUT 'tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But, when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.
– Julius Caesar, Act 2 Scene 1

DEAR Newbie… We've floated a long way ahead in our quest for adventure in the mountains, so perhaps we should backtrack quite a bit and return to our original idea. In other words we must not, in our lust for adventure or glory, forget the lowly… those who haven't been gliding all that long. Simple, unsuspecting folk… not supermen… not millionaires… just ordinary chaps. Let it not be said that Grimshaw scorned any base degrees. This is why I was sent to Earth… remember?

I mention this because it may have come to your attention that not everyone flies club gliders. This is despite club craft having been carefully chosen for robustness and straightforward handling. So it will slowly occur to you that the Great Ones of the gliding fraternity must have their own fussier machines discreetly tucked away somewhere. And you'd be right! You don't normally get to see them unless a) There's a competition on, or b) It's a really stonking day. Because these are the Superships… belonging to gliding royalty… chaps who hurtle round in huge triangles at great speed. The sleek modern Tupperware they've acquired for this are rigged and launched early, so a competition grid is usually the only place you're likely to encounter them close-up.

CAUTION: Competition grids are not like launching club gliders. You'll be working flat-out, but don't just pick up a wingtip and expect to cast off. Superships can be full of water and even if you *can* lift one of those wings, you're supposed to wait until the sloshing load inside has levelled itself out. It's worrying when your wingtip wants to drop like a stone, but you have no means of telling the pilot this when he's 30 feet



away! You may be asked to rip off bits of tape covering water vents. It's hard to believe that people fill their gliders with water, but that's how royal and whizzy these people are! Do not stare. Do not grovel. Above all, do not hold the wing back on launch or induce any kind of yaw. You could precipitate a crash… which means paperwork. Try to look as if you know what you're doing. A brief salute may be in order. One day we'll have a BGA Endorsement for wing-running in competition grids… it's only a matter of time.

For the rest of the day those ships'll be miles away… over North Yorkshire, or the Welsh reservoirs or somewhere. Superships land late and are put to bed almost immediately. With pop-up motors they seldom land in fields, so you won't be asked to help retrieve one. Away from the cockpit their pilots are indistinguishable from anyone else… which is one of the problems. Gliding is egalitarian by culture… no one wears their blasted badges. This means that royals and riff-raff all look the same, so the gliders are the only way to tell who's who. If they're not in their shiny trailer, Superships are probably tucked away in a private hangar somewhere. *Yes… some Whizz Kids actually own their own hangar!* I know it sounds fantastic… but as CS Lewis pointed out… truth seldom turns out to be anything you could guess… or even imagine. Like pop-up motors for instance.

The point is that you won't have been gliding for very long before it becomes obvious that not everyone is as cash-strapped as you! Money matters are delicate and Grimshaw has discreet, paternal advice here:

Under no circumstances should you look into the price of a new glider.

Yes, I know Uncle Nesbit left you a small inheritance and Auntie Doris keeps asking what you want for Christmas with a bit of a wink, but take it from me it's a matter best left undisturbed. Factory catalogues are not for the likes of you or me. Owners of new gliders live in a different world. Maybe they're better-bred… or else sold the family silver. Who knows? But since you can't tell them from the rest of us, it's easy to make social *faux pas*. There is no dress code for gliding other than a silly hat and slightly scratched sunglasses. Philip Wills and a young Derek Piggott were the last glider pilots ever seen wearing a jacket and tie near a cockpit. And that was only because they were flying a youthful Duke of Edinburgh at the time! So who *are* gliding royalty and how do you spot them?

Well it's tricky because gliding folk always were a very mixed bunch. And long may it be so! There are very good pilots at all levels of equipment. There are Lords… ladies… and loaders. It doesn't matter where you're from. That's not the issue. There are names at conferences and names you keep reading in magazines. There are names at the top of the ladders and lists. Some Supership owners became instructors. Instructors are far better pilots than you or I, but some simply enjoyed teaching and own very little. Many Whizz Kids do their time in thankless committees. But there are those who just turn up and expect to be launched. Their name darkens no rota. So who am I talking about here?

Easy! Gliding royalty is anyone with a superior performance machine I can't afford!

Because it's the *machines* that are the real objects of wonder here. Peering into a brand new cockpit is irresistible, *but you mustn't do it.* You'll start asking questions and not understand half the answers. Just when you thought you'd got this whole gliding business roughly sorted you'll feel like a beginner all over again. Ask about electronic conspicuity for instance and see how much of it you understand! I say this because such gadgets are appearing in cockpits now and they all tend to be different systems. Ask advocates how many banks of extra batteries they have to power it all up… *the one with the lowest number is the winner.* Once again I suggest you avoid the delicate matter of how much they spent on it. You'll reel backwards, staggered by the price… *all that…* just to soup-up the FLARM. And with two-seaters, displays are *doubled*!

I made that mistake last year. A colleague was tinkering with his brand new Ventus 3 and eager to show me what was under his Perspex.

I got a shock!

For a start there wasn't *a single bit of mud, grass or toffee wrapper anywhere on the cockpit floor!* Can you imagine pulling negative G with no tell-tale bits of dust and debris rising up in your face? How on earth will you know you've gone negative? One of the most shocking things I learned was that just his radio, transponder and ADSB alone cost as much my Skylark 4... I should never have asked! I guess I must have vaguely assumed that, considering the vast amount spent, the

YOU WON'T HAVE BEEN GLIDING FOR VERY LONG BEFORE IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT NOT EVERYONE IS AS CASH-STRAPPED AS YOU...





IF YOU STILL HANKER AFTER WHITENESS THEN JOIN A SYNDICATE, FLYING SOMETHING SENSIBLY MODEST



■ NEXT TIME: *Ye Olde Grimshaw Shoppe. Handy goodies for newbies...*



NO, NO, 'HC' IS 'HOT CHOCOLATE'...

■ All cartoons by Ross Martin

instruments came free with the glider!

But it was the *detail* that really stunned me. *The nav screen had a flap indicator on it!* On the bottom left there's a little box that shows your flap setting... I suppose in some machines you could easily mislay the lever. Perhaps not be bothered to rummage around looking for it amongst all the others. And in this Ventus the whole nav system was *integrated*... imagine! Should you decide... in your magnificence... in your spare time... to use the radio, then all the relevant info *comes up automatically* on the nav screen. You don't need to remember anything from your radio licensing tests. You simply touch an ATU on the map screen and your entire position reporting sequence appears in the right order. With your radial and all the numbers filled in. What's more, it dials up the frequency automatically and puts it on standby! *Surely that's cheating?* Does the FAI know this sort of thing is going on? I wondered if the release knob was gold-plated, but it merely seemed made from some new material unknown to science. I tried to look nonchalant, but in my head I was pricing up the whole arrangement in terms of my own glider:

- Radio, transponder and ADSB: One entire Skylark 4.
- Nav: One Skylark at least... maybe two!
- Rest of panel: One Skylark
- Trailer, rigging and tow out: Four Skylarks
- Odds and Ends: Probably another Skylark

... and none of that includes the actual glider! Overall Cost: One Average House Up North... many *many* Skylarks!

Clearly normal folk can't compete with this sort of thing. So how can Grimshaw help the struggling newbie that wants his own machine? Lift him out of his slough of despond? Well the obvious thing is to go Vintage. Quite apart from needing only a fortieth of the cash, you'll have the following advantages:

You won't wait years for delivery. You can have proper dive brakes and take off and land at only two-thirds the speed and weight. You can do your own repairs. In the best machines (ie a Skylark) you should be able to land on a cabbage patch, if you have to. *You can out-climb any Whizz Kids in a small thermal...* just don't ask where they've all gone when you get to the top. It's like those Battle of Britain accounts... a whirling mêlée... then suddenly you're all alone! Thumb your nose by all means, but don't try to follow when Superships vanish into the haze! You might consider challenging a Whizz Kid to a race across hostile, intimidating country on a poor day with only tiny fields and small, weak thermals. Know anywhere like that? *You'd hold all the advantages...* what could possibly go wrong?

You can paint your vintage machine any colour you like. Jazz it up and show it off with abandon... it won't turn to Plasticene in the South of France. Whereas the only places royalty are allowed to paint their uniform white are the wingtips and a bit on the nose. Maybe half the rudder!

Feeling better now?

Oh. Well if you still hanker after whiteness then join a syndicate, flying something sensibly modest. It'll cost you several thousand pounds more... and you'll just have to ask around. But how do you know what potential partners are really like? When buying a house, it's not the HIPS report you need... it's a psychiatrist's report on the neighbours! It's the same with gliders. The Grimshaw tip is this: Take the whole syndicate out to dinner. Suggest you share the bill. Note what happens when it comes. Then multiply any hassle or misunderstanding by the square of the number of people to simulate real life ownership... Does that help?

Oh. Well the only other thing I can suggest is a total parent/education/career transplant. For those with bravado and ability who expect a high reward for leadership, enterprise and teamwork... *crime* is probably your best option. Or simply sell the house/wife/kids. Not here.... somewhere discreet.

But I can offer one solid crumb of comfort. Even though Superships cost 40 times more than Skylarks, I can guarantee that the owners, for all their wizardry, are not having 40 times more fun. Nothing like it.... their pop-up motors might not start. They might push a wrong button somewhere. Repairs cost a fortune. The sheer stress of flying anything that valuable and complex is bound to reduce their life-expectancy. We bleed for them... honest!

Strange but true... almost!

Ebenezer Grimshaw

#6 WATER: THE FORCE MULTIPLIER IN THE THERMAL FACTORY - PART 4

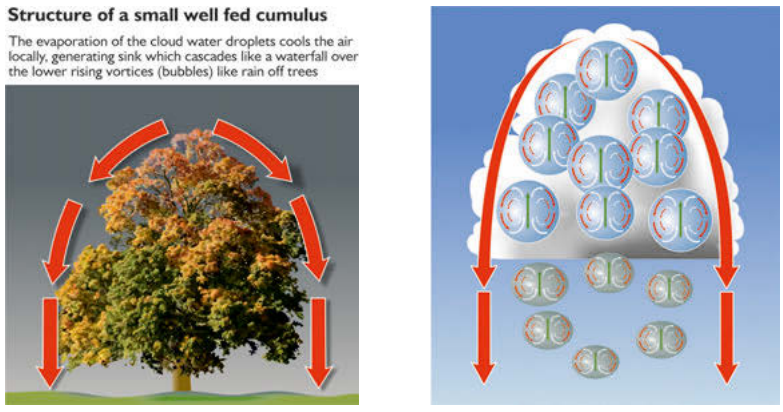


Figure 1: Depicts the mechanism of cooled sinking air (illustration by Steve Longland) GMAD – Gliding Mathematics and Atmospheric Dynamics

THE flawed concept that all our lift is generated from a ground source is reinforced by reading numerous meteorological texts. We might be misled further with generalised simple statements that temperature reduces with height and that the wind veers and increases in strength with height. These general statements are correct from the surface to the tropopause, but they are not hard rules to which the glider pilot should hang his floppy hat on. The routine formation of thunderstorms, streeting, cumulus over the sea and, as Jack Harrison mentioned, the stunning activity after a very wet cold front confirms that most of our thermals and best gliding weather is not always directly connected to 'sunny dry hot spots'.

We continuously talk about lift (rising air) but with little or no consideration for the formation of sink (sinking air), without which there would be no rising vortex. We have to look deeper into how the changing states of water enhance development within the now outsourced thermal factory. To suggest heating air somehow makes clouds (of water) is obvious alchemy, akin to the skulduggery of suggesting heating lead will make gold.

We accept that less dense air rises and that the density of any air is reduced by warming and/or having greater humidity than the surrounding air.

The former is simple. When warmed, free air will expand and thus become less dense.

Dry air, however, is denser than humid air. Gas laws dictate that within any volume of a gas at a specific temperature and pressure there are the same number of molecules. As water molecules replace nitrogen molecules, oxygen molecules and/or carbon dioxide molecules, all of which are heavier than a water molecule, then as the value of humidity increases the air becomes lighter. So much for the increase in buoyancy. To generate a vortex, a downward flow must also be generated which is sufficient to accelerate the air upwards; we have to look at how the surrounding air might have been made denser?

Sinking air will only ever fall as a waterfall. The same two main properties of air make it denser. The first property is drier air is heavier, so on a passage of a cold front much drier (heavy) air is introduced over humid air and instability will occur quite early in the morning.

The more important secondary contribution to the generation of stronger column thermals is the effect of cloud evaporation. The vortex rotation of active cumulus means that the bulk of the evaporation takes place on the outer edges of the cumulus cloud where the air is drier. This generates a thin flow of sinking cool air which cascades down the sides of any developing cumulus. As this descends it generates a continued sinking flow which, although warming adiabatically (at a fixed rate) is cooler and possibly drier than the adjacent air, including the rising air that it now surrounds. The density contrast below cloud base between the rising humid air and falling more dense, colder air then enhances the rising air.

Kevin Atkinson, Aim Higher lead coach

■ ***Next time: Supercharging the thermal factory.***

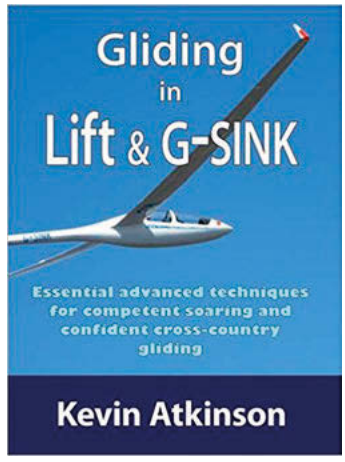
Aim Higher

■ Aim Higher courses are held at clubs by arrangement, run either by Kevin or by club coaches briefed on the training materials and *S&G* articles developed by Kevin and Tony Cronshaw.

Please contact *kratkinson@yahoo.com* if you, or your club, would like to participate in future Aim Higher courses.



Kevin Atkinson is the club coach lead for the BGA Aim Higher initiative (*www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/aimhigher.htm*). With more than 7,500 military jet hours (Tiger Moths to Typhoon), Kevin started gliding at age 13 at Ouse GC (now York), flying his first solo on his 16th. Kevin has over 3,500 hours gliding, including competing in UK national and regional competitions



■ Kevin's book *Gliding in Lift and G-SINK* is available at *www.bgashop.co.uk* or direct from *kratkinson@yahoo.com*

STORIES FOR EVIDENCE

STORIES form the basis of most communication of valuable information. Whether for local planning, project planning and funding, or marketing, the website and social media, your gliding experiences can help build a rock solid bank of evidence for whenever someone needs to create a compelling case for the club. This will save them the extra time and effort of asking for your input whilst also assembling a high quality case against a potentially terminal external threat.

If you feel inspired, volunteering to manage the club archive will probably be welcomed.

There's no need to wait for an emergency, dig out photos and write your stories: how you joined the club; your first solo soaring flight; fond memories; nearly everything counts.



It is the stories about our gliding experiences that have the greatest value and illustrate what gliding brings to people, places and the local economy. The photo above is from Burn GC's Glide Britain video

■ **Alison Randle**
BGA Development Officer
alison@gliding.co.uk

LOCAL PLANNING CHALLENGES...

THE people running your club often have to turn their hand to new, unanticipated challenges, such as mounting an objection to a local planning proposal which, if permission were granted, would impinge on the safe running of the club's flying operations. To support club volunteers, the BGA Development Committee is fortunate to be able to call on expert volunteers, and we usually work closely with both the club and specialist volunteer as the risk is assessed, potential mitigations examined and a strategy is developed. The next step is to communicate the issues carefully and clearly as the planning professionals involved with a case are highly unlikely to know anything about gliding, let alone the nuances of flying operations around a site. As long as we're involved in good time, the process whilst requiring diligence needn't be too daunting.

What of the planning proposals which pose a potentially existential threat? These are infrequent, but it is rare for them to appear out of the blue. Often there will have been a thinning of the wedge over time, with shrewd developers gradually building a precedent that becomes difficult for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to refute. This is why it is important to properly assess all proposals in the vicinity of your club.

Non-Official Aerodrome Safeguarding (NOAS) schemes form part of a club's longer-term strategy and help potential developers and the LPA to understand that additional research is required to establish whether a proposal could conflict with operations at non-licensed airfields. The club is consulted as the airfield operator and, therefore, is the expert on the site's flying operations. We'll come back to this in the next issue.

There are three straightforward ways to effectively support your club to help protect it:

- If you live locally, be alert to local planning proposals and let club management know in good time.
- Wait until you see the club's objections before writing your letter.
- Provide evidence about your experience of gliding at your club.

If in place and working effectively, a safeguarding plan will render the first point redundant. Once club management are aware of a proposal, they should contact the BGA Development Committee and we'll work together to develop a strategy. Any objection must have a basis in evidence, and the most prudent course of action might not be immediately obvious to club members. To have greatest effect, you should wait for the club to explain the context and the basis for their objection before writing to the LPA in support of the club's objection. This will avoid the situation where a wide range of conflicting information is sprayed all over the case, which immediately sets the club on the back foot and potentially weakens the club's case. All a letter of support needs to do is to state your support for the club's case. There is no need for repetition, instead use point three to really power up the case.

Be positive

Rather than being defensive, be positive! Explain what gliding and the club means to you now and what the effects of losing it would be; and what the club has done for you and the effect it has had on your life. We all know about the young glider pilots who go on to be professional pilots, but do not underestimate the power of gliding on your physical and mental well-being and how those benefits are valued. Perhaps gliding has helped you during a low time in your life, or helped you find your feet when you moved into the area? Perhaps you don't live locally, but when you visit the club you stay in the area and spend money in the local economy. All this is useful evidence, of the sort that Planning Officers and local councillors need when they are weighing up the evidence ahead of the decision making process. Whilst they might not understand the nuances of gliding, they can easily understand the benefits that gliding brings for people, places and the local economy.

WORKING FOR A SIMPLE FUTURE

The BGA's Chief Executive, Pete Stratten, reports on ongoing changes for UK gliding

HOPEFULLY, nobody missed the news that we left the EU and EASA at the end of last year. A few known developments relevant to gliding that have yet to settle in place are described below.

The UK has retained EU regulations. That means, for example, that the EASA sailplane flight crew licensing rules (Part-SFCL) have effectively been cut and pasted to become UK-Part SFCL. The BGA is talking to the DfT about how the Government intends to diverge or stay aligned with the EU regulations and how UK stakeholders will have their say in developments going forward. In so far as the EU and EASA countries are concerned, the UK is now a third country. So when we operate outside the UK, we need to be ICAO compliant. The UK Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) is ICAO compliant with a Class 2 medical certificate. To date, it is not clear how EASA countries will respond to UK SPLs and UK Class 2 medical certificates. As all these countries are ICAO signatories, in theory it is straightforward. Time will tell.

The late, great Dr Peter Saundby was an effective proponent of self-declaration medicals for air sport pilots. The BGA and others lobbied hard to ensure that UK regulators got the point and, several years ago, a pilot medical declaration (PMD) option was enshrined within the Air Navigation Order, including an option for the CAA to add medical exclusions that allow flight in aircraft up to 5,700kg. In January 2021, the Government changed the law to enable UK SPL and other licence holders to utilise the PMD. At the time of writing, the BGA and others are engaged with the CAA to ensure that going forward the CAA's PMD additional medical exclusions that apply to SPL and other licence holders are proportionate. We believe that SPL holders should be able to declare to the exclusions relevant to flying aircraft up to 2,000kg.

The previously buoyant used glider market has changed now that VAT applies on imports from the EU, resulting in a 20 per cent increase in cost on imported used gliders. It may be possible to reclaim the original VAT paid, and the BGA is interested in hearing from owners with experience of doing so.

Every year, many pilots and owners take their gliders across the Channel to fly on the European mainland for holiday, expedition and competition flying. Scottish wave, competitions and Vintage gliding gatherings bring visitors the other way. Changes from 1 January have resulted in lack of clarity regarding temporary imports and exports of gliders across the UK border. Working with others, the BGA is engaged with Border Force and HMRC to identify the simplest way forward and, thanks to an interested club member, we have seen the French customs' position. Our aim is to avoid the need for Carnets and associated costs. When we have clarity, which may well occur as this issue of *S&G* appears, we will publish or signpost guidance through the usual channels.



Carefully manage the risks when you are able to return to flying after a long break

Who thought this time last year that we would be so impacted by Covid-19 and would still dealing with the challenges a year later? There is optimism that the vaccination programme and various changes to our lifestyles will, in due course, allow us to enjoy the 2021 gliding summer and beyond without significant interruption. Clubs have done a fantastic job in keeping everything together ready for a return to flying. Our highly valued student pilots can look forward to resuming their training. The big priority in 2021 will be gliding getting back on its feet and into the air in a significant way. In due course, following conversations with clubs, we will all hear more about 'Discover Gliding', new training resources and our fit for the future initiative. You can read about the Women's World Gliding Championship being held at The Gliding Centre in August 2022 at *https://wwgc2022.co.uk/*

And finally, many of us have flown little over the winter. Some have not flown at all for many months. Please take your time, check everything without distraction, and carefully manage the risks.

THE BIG PRIORITY IN 2021 WILL BE GLIDING GETTING BACK ON ITS FEET AND INTO THE AIR IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY





This page:

❶ A snowy winter's day at Lasham (Jordan Bridge)

❷ Grenville Croll and Nathan Godding explore some interesting clouds in Rattlesden's K-21 (Nathan Godding)

❸ Lasham's K-21B at the end of a day's flying (Jordan Bridge)

❹ Shawbury's R66 with Moreton Corbet Castle in the background

Facing page:

❶ + ❷ Southdown members have been planting 1,400 hedgerow saplings to help define the footpaths around the airfield in order to improve safety and improve the club's carbon footprint

❸ Honorary Chief Inspector Isla supervising SGU's DCFI Bruce Duncan at work

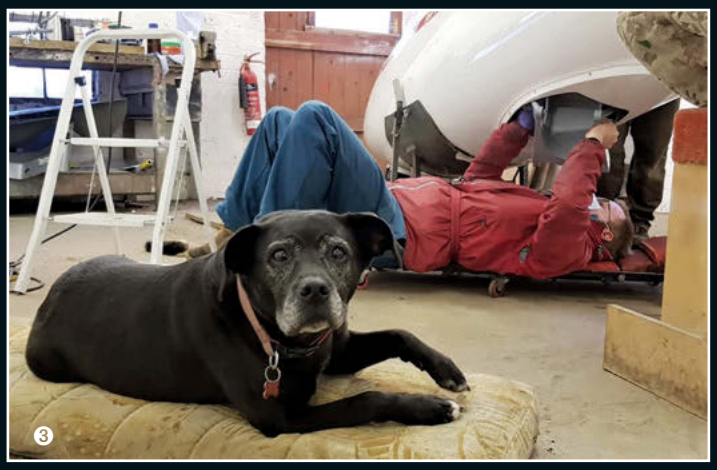
❹ Brocken Spectre phenomenon viewed from a glider (Jordan Bridge)






1


2


3


4

■ Our thanks to all the photographers and to our *Club News* contributors for sending these in. If you'd like to submit your previously-unpublished photographs for possible inclusion somewhere in *S&G*, please email them to: *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or upload to: *www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/dropbox*

APRIL/MAY 21 _VOL72 NO2

CLUB NEWS

AGC ANGLIA (WATTISHAM)
WWW.ANGLIAGLIDINGCLUB.ORG.UK
520739N 0005722E
AS REPORTED in the last issue, following the Government's announcement and BGA/CAA advice, we briefly returned to flying again during the first week of December 2020. However, very quickly, like every club in the UK, we had to stop all activities. We've continued to be active on Condor and the group has grown further. The friendly inter-club Condor rivalry between Anglia (AGC) and Essex (EGC) has also continued, using Zoom or Discord for in-flight group chat. Many hadn't done any ridge or mountain flying before and being able to practise in new environments and terrains has been very interesting, educational and confidence building. It's also been very helpful to learn to fly flapped gliders for the first time. We're all looking forward to getting back in the air for real when the lockdown measures ease, hopefully in the early spring. Fingers crossed!
Simon Ginns

BANNERDOWN (RAF KEEVIL)
WWW.BANNERDOWN.CO.UK
511858N 0020631W
PLANS for the Inter-Services 24-31 July are under way. Places are already starting to fill up, but remember the comp is open to all! Otherwise, not much else to report. Maintenance on club gliders continues.
Alison Arnold

BATH, WILTS & NORTH DORSET (THE PARK)
WWW.BWND.CO.UK
510742N 0021445W
LIKE everywhere else, club operations at The Park are pretty much suspended. All flying is stopped and the site's closed, in accordance with BGA advice, for all but essential maintenance by prior arrangement and with strict Covid-19 precautions in force. Our regular winch has been waiting for some work, necessitating a return to Skylaunch. In case we get back into the air sooner than expected, the company has loaned us a temporary winch with a James Bond connection. Remember the Islander being forcibly de-rigged? Power supplied by our loan winch, which sports the designation 007 by the cab! Our depleted instructor base is looking forward to an injection of new blood as Nigel Warren, Julian Reynolds and Gavin McMullen train to raise their categories to Assistant, and Harriet Gamble and Dan Weston train to replace them as BIs.
Chris Basham

BIDFORD (BIDFORD)
WWW.BIDFORDGLIDINGANDFLYING CLUB.CO.UK 520803N 0015103W
WHAT a way to start the year with our field waterlogged and the club closed due to Covid-19. Our committee has been hard at work getting our fleet of gliders prepared for the season. Fibre broadband is being installed, following which security equipment for the clubhouse will also be installed. It's hoped that the AGM will be held during the summer, combined with a BBQ. This may coincide with our regional competition, which is due to start on 26 June.
Mike Pope

BLACK MOUNTAINS (TALGARTH)
WWW.BLACKMOUNTAINSGLIDING.CO.UK
515848N 0031215W
OUR appearance on BBC's *Countryfile* generated tremendous interest in the club and boosted sales of introductory aerotow vouchers. We plan to fly these vouchers and return to flying in general as soon as lockdown is relaxed and the weather has improved. In the meantime, we're using the lockdown productively by offering our members tuition and examination for the Bronze paper online. Our tug master, Barry Gwynnett, and his dedicated team are also working hard to improve thrust from our Pawnee's rebuilt engine and reconditioned propeller combination. Completion works on our hangar for our reserve Pawnee are also anticipated later this year. We look forward to better times ahead.
Mike Codd

BOOKER (WYCOMBE AIR PARK)
WWW.BOOKERGLIDING.CO.UK
513642N 0004830W
DURING the latest lockdown we keep occupied with the CFI's daily briefing, an extended weather brief from Nils on Saturdays, and talks on a variety of subjects, including preparing for a return to flying, using Condor in some cases to demonstrate exercises. The Condor group flies twice a week – as well as being fun, it is a good opportunity for participants to learn and practise thermalling and cross-country strategy. Meanwhile in the workshop, the Cub rebuild continues, as does annual maintenance on the fleet.
Jane Moore

BORDERS (MILFIELD)
WWW.BORDERSGLIDING.CO.UK
553514N 0020510W
JUST before the latest lockdown, on 30 December, the weather settled down enough for a few determined individuals to get back in the air while they could. One such is teenager Max Fawcus, who has featured before when he went solo and then had over an hour thermalling last summer. This time, there was a northerly wind and after a brief check flight with our new instructor, Tony Brown, he managed two hours 18 minutes on the local ridge, which will do nicely towards his Bronze Badge, no doubt as soon as restrictions are lifted – good effort, Max! On the same day, CFI Geoff Forster went off in our SuperCub for nearly an hour, which he is now fully qualified to enjoy.
Beatrice Ashley

BRISTOL & GLOS (NYMPSFIELD)
WWW.BGGC.CO.UK
514251N 0021701W
WE MANAGED to get a couple of days until shot down by lockdown. Essential maintenance on aircraft has continued, thanks to Kevin's team. The Pawnee engine was returned following overhaul and is being refitted. The club conducted an email-based AGM. Thanks to Bob, the outgoing secretary, and the chairman, it got the required business done. The Old Flying Cafe was wound up with no immediate prospect of being able to recommence trading, however we hope to have more cafe news in the spring. With the launch control bus on its last legs, a plan was hatched. The 2020-sponsored cadets, having had their training trashed in 2020, were offered friendly terms to continue. Planning for 2021 proceeded. Larry and a variety of courses will be back soon.
Greg O'Hagan

BUCKMINSTER (SALTBY)
WWW.BUCKMINSTERGC.CO.UK
524912N 04228W
AFTER a month's return to flying in some inclement weather, we shut down. Our last

(Left to right): **Buckminster**'s last flying week before lockdown 3 saw some interesting snowy flying for the really hardy; **Cambridge**'s new CFI, Ollie Bosanko; Hannah Funnell with **Cranwell** instructor Luke Dale on completion of her first solo flight on the last flying day of the year





flying week saw some interesting in the snow flying. Just before the shutdown we purchased a very nice K-13 to add to our fleet. It'll be ready when we return to flying. We have two 'members of the year' in treasurer John Church and Cathy Lawrence; John for keeping the books and finances brilliantly and Cathy for her contributions to operations, making sandwiches and loads of logging. Our weekly webinar program has operated all winter, with sessions planned till mid-March. The workshop team's tackling bibs and bobs so that aircraft downtime will be minimised once we fly again. There'll be currency and annual flight reviews to do, so we expect a busy time when we can start.
Danny Lamb

BURN (BURN)
WWW.BURNGLIDINGCLUB.CO.UK
534445N 0010504W
ONCE again, it has been a most challenging period. We managed to fly as frequently as the weather would allow, right up until Christmas. The only consolation is that the weather has been so bad we would've had limited opportunities anyway. We've been taking every chance to refine our club's strategy and members have been asked about participating in focused training opportunities, such as aerobatics, cross-country, wave flying and better thermalling. If anyone's interested, get in touch. We're straining to give pilots the opportunity to get their Bronze with a cross-country endorsement in to meet the December deadline for the proposed transition to Sailplane Pilot Licences. Sadly, in January, we lost one of our popular former members, Ron Jubb, to Covid-19 (see obit p70).
Neil Bale

CAMBRIDGE (GRANSDEN LODGE)
WWW.CAMGLIDING.UK
521041N 0000653W
AS WE sit out the third Coronavirus lockdown there's not a lot to say. We are not flying, the simulator is switched off, we are not current, and we are not doing our annual checks. The workshop is closed, no aircraft maintenance is taking place and the whole winter programme is on hold. In the midst of all this, we welcome Ollie Bosanko as the club's new CFI and thank Colin Cownden for all his work in this role as he departs for pastures new. Despite the gloom and the lack of any clear idea as to when restrictions may be lifted, our club officers are working away behind the scenes to make sure we're ready when the skies open once again.
Chris Davis

COTSWOLD (ASTON DOWN)
WWW.COTSWOLDGLIDING.CO.UK
514228N 0020750W
2021 opens with only essential works and the AGM held online, with over 50 members taking part. Despite no competition and limited flying last year, our finances, thanks to government support, remain robust. We now have state-of-the-art mowing equipment and are investigating levelling one of our landing areas. We did have some notable flights last summer, with Andy Smith completing three 750km and Elliot Apperley making very good progress after his first solo to win the Junior Cup. At the AGM we learnt that the committee is re-assessing its priorities to better serve the membership in these changed times. Mike and Jane Randle retire as secretary and vice chairman respectively and we thank them for their service. We have hosting the Junior Nationals in August to look forward to!
Frank Birlison

CRANWELL (RAF CRANWELL)
WWW.CRANWELLGC.CO.UK
530231N 0002936W
WE HAD a short respite that allowed us to resume gliding. Our last day on the field before the current lockdown was 30 December. A good way to finish 2020. Hannah Funnell became the first student from the Army to go from ab initio to solo at the club in living memory. Kelvin Ware re-soloed after a break of 28 years. Katie Mclean converted onto the Astir for her first single-seater. News of the lockdown reached us as we were packing away so everything was prepared for a lay off. Our Falke's prop has been sent away for refurb, hopefully it'll be back and fitted by the time we can fly. We have a regular Tuesday evening Condor group taking on the challenges of tasks around the Alps, Slovenia, Chile, NZ and even occasionally the UK. Here's looking forward to a better year in 2021.
Ian Webb

CROWN SERVICES (LASHAM)
WWW.CSGC.WEBSITE
511112N 0010155W
SOME of our members have been brushing up on their cross-country skills over the latest lockdown. They have been meeting once a fortnight over Zoom, with former Lasham cross-country coach Martin Roberts running the sessions. We can't wait to finally utilise our lockdown-discovered cross-country wisdom. Over this winter, the members have been busy with trailer improvements, new batteries for the gliders and developing new advertising for the club. Our AGM is on 6 March, with our membership year ending on 31 March. We look forward to welcoming new members for what promises to be a fruitful season for the club.
Peter Freeland

DENBIGH (LLEWENI PARC)
WWW.DENBIGHGLIDING.CO.UK
531239N 0032312W
WE'RE busy using the Government's grants to make improvements to our site, ready for when we can re-open. We welcome Adam Berrisford to the team, he will be running our 'trial lesson' operation in the motorglider. We have changed our DG-1001M to an Arcus M, which is the machine we provide soaring and cross-country coaching in. If you are looking to further your horizons, get in touch and fly with me in the Arcus.
Chris Gill

DEVON AND SOMERSET (NORTH HILL)
WWW.DSGC.CO.UK
505107N 0031639W
WE MADE the most of the flyable days in December to get as many members flown and current as possible, including a welcome return by Liam Vile, who resoloed. Lockdown 3 saw another increase in Condor racing, with mountain tasks in a variety of countries led by Stewart Henshall. The regular local North Hill flights on Sunday afternoon/evenings also proved very popular. Stewart and Dan Hender are competing in various Condor competitions and also providing lead and follow and spectator coaching on Condor. This will hopefully lead to more cross-country pilots at the club. The sun is always shining in Condor.
Jill Harmer

(Left to right): BA Swallow II G-AFGD in **Herefordshire**'s new hangar with Louise Pye – yes it had an engine, then it didn't, now it does! (Bob Pye); **Lasham**'s Jordan Bridge congratulating Joe Tofts (right) on passing Bronze in December; snowy **Lasham** from above (Jordan Bridge)







DORSET (EYRES FIELD)
WWW.DORSETGLIDINGCLUB.CO.UK
504233N 0021310W
DUAL and solo flying for members resumed on 2 December and continued until 2 January, when the club was closed for the national lockdown period. A series of nine lectures covering the Bronze C theory syllabus has been compiled in conjunction with the Mendip and Bath, Wilts & North Dorset clubs. These lectures have been made available to club members using Zoom meetings. A Junior Meet is planned for the end of July, with Bath, Wilts & North Dorset and Mendip clubs. This will take place at Eyres Field and will consist of a day of flying followed by a social event.
Allan Powell

ESSEX (RIDGEWELL)
WWW.ESSEXGLIDING.COM
520253N 0003330E
WE'RE all now desperate to climb into our cockpits, dreaming of even a quick circuit and landing. Some of us have been enjoying exciting flights in friendly competitions at some interesting venues with our friends from Wattisham, occasionally joined by members of the British squad. This is all from our homes, with a little help from Condor. We've also been participating in Zoom seminars and the BGA webinars. We welcome Dave Hertzberg back as our CFI, with Kevin King stepping in as our new DCFI. We thank Alex Harris for his dedication in his role as CFI over the past few years. When we do return to Ridgewell, we hope to have the addition of an open cockpit K-13, thanks to Dave Jones, who's currently working on this project in his workshop. Let's hope that by the time you're reading this some real flying will be happening.
Cathy Dellar

ESSEX & SUFFOLK (WORMINGFORD)
WWW.ESGC.CO.UK
515630N 0004723E
THE club is normally quiet this time of year, with flying restricted by the weather. Let's hope the situation improves by the time this is published. In the meantime we're keeping busy with essential maintenance so that we will be able to restart as soon as the lockdown eases. We have also been looking hard at the future of the club and members have completed a survey giving their opinions. As a result we plan to expand our operations and move to a seven-day-a-week operation during the summer months, with some changes to our instructing regime to better meet the wishes and ambitions of members. Not much in the way of badge flights in the recent months due to weather and the lockdown, but congratulations to George White for his selection as a reserve for the British Junior Europeans Team for Lithuania 2021.
Steve Jones

HEREFORDSHIRE (SHOBDON)
WWW.SHOBDONGLIDING.CO.UK
521429N 0025253W
MANY have pressed noses to windows as we witnessed some cracking wave days come and go. However, we are not moping around, club aircraft are being maintained and work is being done on developing the new hangar's workshop area and, hopefully, a clubhouse. Some excellent virtual presentations on wave, ridge flying and pressure instruments from Phil and Diana King and William Brewis have been both social and educational. Our hangar is playing host (much to the treasurer's joy) to a number of other aircraft; of interest is a BA Swallow II G-AFGD, which has been a Shobdon resident for a number of years. The Swallow was designed as a powered aircraft, but adapted as a glider to train glider pilots in WW2, which was a role undertaken at Shobdon.
Bob Pye

HIGHLAND (EASTERTON)
WWW.HIGHGLIDE.CO.UK
573508N 0031841W
WE ARE taking the opportunity provided by lockdown to plan and prepare for some improvements to the site. John and Toni are leading a clubhouse improvement initiative, Robert is applying finishing touches to the simulator, and additional Perfo has been purchased to extend the take-off run at the west end of the field. We did get some good flying in just before lockdown, despite local flooding closing one of the approach roads; 22 December was the last day of flying, with some good wave and ridge soaring. The day finished with the K-21 landing out, necessitating a very cold and wet retrieve the next morning.
John Thomson

KENT (CHALLOCK)
WWW.KENT-GLIDING-CLUB.CO.UK
51123N 0004950E
IT SOMETIMES feels rather selfish to worry about not being able to go gliding when many people, at the time of writing, are facing much bigger problems and losses. However, during the Covid-19 restrictions, we have all much missed that mental stimulation and camaraderie that gliding and sport in general can provide. Our WhatsApp group has helped members to keep in contact and regular communication to club members, we hope, has helped. Hopefully by the time of publication the situation will have significantly improved and we have provisionally planned our AGM (actual meeting – we hope) for the end of March. We stand ready to return to flying as soon as it is permitted and safe. We look forward to meeting old friends again and to finding again that special uplift that our sport provides.
Mike Bowyer

LAKES (WALNEY)
WWW.LAKESGC.CO.UK
570752N 0031549W
STILL no flying due to lockdown. Thanks to John Burdett we now have a new glider and self-launch glider inspector. Member Gill Scurrah died just before Christmas. He was an adventurous pilot with a share in the club Libelle. On one wave day he was flying for several hours and reported back that he was at 7,500ft over the Isle of Man. We couldn't believe where he was and asked him to repeat. He'd flown to Keswick, gained height to 12,000ft, set course to St Bees Head and continued on. He couldn't see the Isle of Man at this point. He landed at Jurby, was arrested for not filing a flight plan and was aerotowed back to Walney. He lived life to the full and was generous with his time and help. He will be missed.
Peter Craven

LASHAM (LASHAM)
WWW.LASHAMGLIDING.CO.UK
511112N 0010155W
THE brief period between the November and January lockdowns was utilised as much as possible, with Bronze badges obtained by Mark Bennett and Joe Tofts amongst the other training that was possible. This culminated with some festive flying right

(Left to right): **Lincolnshire** instructors return to flight – Richard Walker, Dick Skerry, Katharine York and Paul Kerman (Charlie Krajewski); DG-500/22 G-SORA climbing in September wave near **Milfield**; Chris Adams and Paul Groves deliver **Portsmouth Naval**'s restored Supermunk





up until sunset on Christmas Eve, which turned out to be our last flying day for some time. Work continues at Lasham with us contributing to the UK Junior Gliding BGA webinar series, and ensuring that our equipment and facilities are ready to go come the spring. Secure online Bronze exams have also been a great success allowing progress to continue despite the lockdown. As lockdown ends, we will shortly be releasing more information about our 2021 courses on our website.
Jordan Bridge

LONDON (DUNSTABLE)
WWW.LONDONGLIDINGCLUB.CO.UK
515200N 0003254W
WE SAY farewell to our chef Trevor who, in the 10 years he has been with us, has probably served some of the best food at any airfield. Congratulations to Rafael Schouchana, who in the last year has done an amazing job in turning our newsletter into a very professional magazine for the club. A huge well done and thanks go to Hugo Ribeira, who has worked on the new flight viewer 'Glana' for the BGA Ladder. It is a great addition and we look forward to using it this season. As always, guests are welcome at the Dunstable Regionals (21-29 August).
Tom Pridgeon

MENDIP (HALESLAND)
WWW.MENDIPGLIDINGCLUB.CO.UK
511544N 0024356W
WE'RE deep into another frustrating, but necessary, lockdown and live in hope of an early reprieve. Our CFI Simon Withey is preparing to assist recency/currency problems to get us all back flying safely. Don Puttock has prepared, in conjunction with our neighbours at Bath, Wilts & N Dorset GC, a winter programme of Zoom Bronze lectures. He's also arranged for instructors to give Zoom talks. One of our ex-members shared his experiences as a ferry pilot. The prospect of flying a single-engined aircraft across the N Atlantic to the Middle East was daunting. He also discussed adventures carrying out survey work in the Balkans, Iraq and South Sudan. Les Saker and Henry Ford have been carrying out essential maintenance on club aircraft and the solar-powered electrical system.
Barry Hogarth

MIDLAND (LONG MYND)
WWW.MIDLANDGLIDING.CLUB
523108N 0025233W
WE are looking forward to being able to fly again and expecting to be able to run courses and resume First Flights later in the year. Meanwhile, we are continuing with the fleet maintenance programme in readiness. The office systems are being reorganised and we have also installed a new telephone system. Our popular online 'Corona Lectures' are continuing, the most recent ones being on competition flying and wave flying, with the next one being specifically on winch launching. Our 'Virtual Bar' on Friday evenings continues to be well attended and is now a regular occurrence. Congratulations to Holly Harris on becoming our latest Basic Instructor.
Steven Gunn-Russell

NORFOLK (TIBENHAM)
WWW.NORFOLKGLIDINGCLUB.COM
522724N 0010915E
BY THE time you read this, let us hope that all members will have been vaccinated at least once against this dreadful virus and are looking ahead to when we can launch our gliders into a glorious sky, and a marvellous soaring season. We can but hope and, in the meantime, keep safe. Until then we are making do with online fun and Zoom meetings. I must say I've learnt more about my XCSoar in the past few months than I thought possible. So some good may have come out of this lockdown after all.
Adrian and Barbara Prime

NORTH WALES (LLANTYSILIO)
WWW.NWGC.ORG.UK
530239N 0031315W
WITH the reduced GA traffic, gliding at NWGC has been fantastic. Thermals, hill lift and wave was amazing. Due to the improved flying conditions, most of us solo pilots have got our Diamond heights and over five hours' flights. No one tried to get their 50km, due to the possibility of landing out and retrieval issues within Wales and across the border. Three, two, one… back in the room. I was daydreaming, sadly. Due to lockdown in Wales, we have been shut for well over a month, so are keeping in touch via Zoom, Skype, etc. With the adolescents among us (me), trying out different virtual backgrounds. Yes, everything is virtual now.
Ian Masson

OXFORD (RAF WESTON ON THE GREEN)
WWW.OXFORD-GLIDING-CLUB.CO.UK
515249N 0011311W
WE'VE become a virtual gliding club with lots of online flying and coaching taking place to keep our members sane. Some of the virtual cross-country sessions have been quite competitive, with tasks set in more exotic locations. It's probably best not to ponder whether our junior members are devoting more time to this than their e-learning. But in the spirit of gliding should we introduce virtual landouts and retrieves? Members have been attending webinars and lectures and can't wait to put theory into practice, when able. I think we can all agree that 2021 and lockdown 3 has been rubbish, but at least the weather has been sympathetic. We're now running a sweepstake on which will come first – the airfield drying out, or the relaxation of the restrictions.
Norman G Nome

PETERBOROUGH & SPALDING (CROWLAND)
WWW.PSGC.CO.UK
524233N 0000834W
WE FIND ourselves in lockdown 3, wondering when the turmoil will end. There's been no flying since before Christmas and our treasurer is starting to feel the pinch; as with all clubs, we have fixed costs to manage. Progress has been made on refitting the refurbished engine back into the Husky and maintenance on the glider fleet continues. Our committee has decided that the club membership and flying fees will remain the same as last year, we just need the end of lockdown and the weather to play its part! To keep club members engaged we've been conducting Zoom meetings on a Sunday morning, with a mixture of general chat, church notices and presentations on subjects. Although fairly basic, these have proved worthwhile in reminding members of simple skills they've forgotten during this non-flying period.
Roland Pitch

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL (MIDDLE WALLOP)
WWW.PNGC.CO.UK
510858N 0013413W
WE HAVE now settled into our new home at Middle Wallop and, despite all the challenges, it was a very successful 2020. Initially, we started with winch launching; a few months later we

(Left to right): **Rattlesden**'s Puchacz leaves a ghostly image after a rain shower (Nathan Godding); **Seahawk** at the end of a double rainbow; celebrating his 80th Birthday **RSGC**'s Mike Osborn prepares for a flight in his Ventus 2T





had our Grob 109 motorglider online and, recently, our newly-converted Supermunk made an appearance. With a fleet of three K-21s, the Discus and the Duo Discus, we are now fully prepared for the start of the year. A huge thank you to everyone who has made this possible.
Lee Allinson

RATTLESDEN (RATTLESDEN)
WWW.RATTLESDENGLIDING.COM
521001N 0005216E
IN THE last issue we had reported that we had just come out of lockdown and were enjoying getting back to flying – little did we realise that our flying days were going to be curtailed once again. As I write this, we are stuck in the middle of yet another lockdown with no real way of knowing exactly where it will end. Due to the fact that we are not allowed to make any unnecessary journeys, the actual club site has been very quiet. The committee has been busy behind the scenes sorting out our marketing strategy and other issues for when we can get back to normality. Some members are still enjoying keeping their hand in with Condor and flying together with impromptu competitions.
Gary Western

SCOTTISH GLIDING CENTRE (PORTMOAK)
WWW.SCOTTISHGLIDINGCENTRE.CO.UK
561121N 0031945W
WE ALL look forward to our new Perkoz arriving in March. Meanwhile volunteer efforts are preparing the club for the flying season. Special thanks go to Bill Fulton, Dominic Newton, Mike Forster, David Barbour, Bruce Duncan, Rhod and Ross Nicol, David Coats, John Thomas and Alex Rougvie for completing the 3,000-hour inspection of our club K-21 LOV, led by our technical officer Maks Kochanski; an excellent effort. The tug annual was also brought forward, the work team being Hamish Eagleton, Jamie Dickson, Matty Morris and Tony Brown. Alan Gillanders spent many hours leading the maintenance of the winch and buildings. Finally, club members won the BGA's De Havilland and Frank Foster trophies, as well as the Manio Cup for 2020.
Sant Cervantes

SEAHAWK (RNAS CULDROSE)
WWW.SEAHAWKGLIDING.CO.UK
500509N 051520W
WHAT with the winter weather and lockdowns, there's been little chance of flying. We did manage to get airborne between lockdowns, so at least all the club's regulars are as current as possible. The Thursday Warriors managed to finish maintenance on our tug, including a prop overhaul and ARC, so it'll be ready to go. Otherwise, the winter maintenance has ceased as Cornwall shot up the league tables for Covid-19 cases. After a first toe in the water with a Zoom committee meeting, we took the plunge and held a very successful virtual AGM and prize-giving just before Christmas. Many congratulations to the winners and all club members who've rallied around magnificently throughout this difficult time to keep the club going and make the most of the opportunities to fly.
Chris Bryning

SHAWBURY (RAF SHAWBURY)
WWW.RAFSHAWBURYGC.CO.UK
527927N 0026575W
A BRIEF window of opportunity allowed us to aerotow the fleet into RAF Shawbury on 20 December and, with our move from RAF Cosford complete, our thanks must go to the staff of RAF Shawbury and the RAFGSA for going the extra mile. Also to Zoom for making the move possible, despite the added complexity of Covid-19. Congratulations go to Alan Swan, nominated RAFGSA Member of the Year for his work in managing the move. We're now well established in our new home and managed a number of flying days prior to lockdown. Being that much closer to Wales, we've also experienced our first day of wave. We now share a common boundary with Sleap, so new opportunities beckon. We've had a number of expressions of interest from the RAF Shawbury community.
Geoff Catling

SHENINGTON (EDGEHILL)
WWW.SHENINGTON-GLIDING.CO.UK
520507N 0012828W
FEBRUARY finds us still locked down so there's not a lot of the normal type of club activity to report. We had our much-delayed AGM over Zoom in January. A big thank you to Lech Zakrzewski and Iain Symon, who've stepped down from the committee, and a big welcome to new committee members Eric Lown, Dave Spragg and Rod Connors. We're thankful for another Covid-19 grant, to help get us through the winter months. We're looking to get back into the Inter-club League this year if there is enough of a season, and we're also hopeful that we will be able to run our Regionals in June. We look forward to having visitors once life gets back to normal, perhaps later in the year. You can email Charlie in the office to discuss the options and put potential dates in the diary.
Tess Whiting

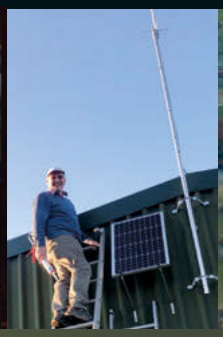
SOUTHDOWN (PARHAM)
WWW.SOUTHDOWNGLIDING.CO.UK
505532N 0002828W
WITH the move to a total lockdown, we joined the rest of the gliding community in passing our time in virtual reality aviation activities. The gardeners among us were occupied in planting 1,400 saplings at the north end of the airfield and generally tidying up. Members have been able to tune in to Bronze lectures on their iPads and await happier times. Prior to the closure Kevin Butler resoloed after a long break, and Alex Westgate, son of renowned aerobatics champion Guy Westgate, went solo on his 14th birthday.
Peter J Holloway

SOUTH WALES (USK)
WWW.USKGC.CO.UK
514306N 0025101W
DESPITE the extensive drainage improvements carried out a few years ago, substantial periods of heavy rain have made our airfield unusable for long periods in recent months. That, and the seasonal prevalence of low-visibility conditions, have meant that the current nationwide Covid-19 lockdown restrictions have not been quite as frustrating as they might otherwise have been. Our committee members have continued their work and our club plans to switch over to FreeFlight admin software in the near future. Continuing monthly contributions from our substantial and loyal membership have protected our club from severe financial problems, and we are also fortunate that a small team of keen members has been able to attend to routine maintenance matters.
Stuart Edinborough

STAFFORDSHIRE (SEIGHFORD)
WWW.STAFFORDSHIREGLIDING.CO.UK
524940N 0021212W
AT THE time of writing, we are in the third lockdown and although everyone is fed up

(Left to right): a **RSGC** bi-weekly Zoom meeting ends with a topical quiz; **Southdown**'s John Matthews investigates the feasibility of installing a solar panel driven OGN-R system; **Staffordshire**'s Graham Stanford flies his K-14 for the first time on a snowy day






with the situation plenty has been going on. The club has held numerous Zoom meetings on various subjects. A small amount of flying was achieved over the Christmas break with a small team being able to travel to Sleap to fly their Grob 103, which they kindly let a few members fly. One of our members, Graham Stanford, flew his K-14 for the first time on a snowy day. Possibly only one of two maybe three flying examples in the UK. Other news includes a myriad of works going on, such as the refurbishment of the motor floater, which should be back in the air by the time you are reading this note. Everyone is looking forward to better weather and to being able to fly again as a club.
Graham Stanford

STRATFORD ON AVON (SNITTERFIELD)
WWW.STRATFORDGLIDING.CO.UK
521406N 0014310W
WE MANAGED a surprising amount of flying through December by utilising the few dry areas on the airfield. It made for some interesting and challenging circuits, as well as good practice for spot landings. There was an excellent turnout on Christmas Eve, with over 30 flights followed by some socially distanced pre-Christmas refreshments. After that more rain and the lockdown meant that activities at the club have been very limited. Our virtual club room sessions have resumed (thanks to Val) and are getting plenty of regular visitors. We've also had several quiz nights (thanks Val and Richard), with more planned. Our committee has been updating some changes to our visitor flying packages, as well as updating some of the club admin material. Not exciting, but important to keep on top of these things, and better than in the soaring season.
Andy Balkwill

SURREY HILLS (KENLEY)
WWW.SURREYHILLSGLIDING.CO.UK
511820N 0000537W
LIKE everyone else we are in limbo at the moment and waiting for hopefully better times later this year. We continue to email the members regularly and have occasional open clubhouse meetings online. WhatsApp is also in daily use and is a great method of asking questions, getting help and just generally keeping in touch. One of our younger members, Sam Coole, who took a year out to glide, has been getting very bored so he is currently designing and building a simulator for the club in his bedroom – this will be a great addition when we can get it installed at the club.
Chris Leggett

ULSTER (BELLARENA)
WWW.ULSTERGLIDINGCLUB.ORG
550819N 0065753W
THE Covid-19 circuit breaker returned post-Christmas as a full closedown and we've just heard (end of January) that NI is extending that until 5 March. So, it'll be unlikely that we'll get to fly before then. It was therefore good that in the period between both, we were able to fly on several days. We were able, under DfT rules, to get the tug away and back for its annual so now we just await the end of the current lockdown. A few members living within 10 miles of the site have been getting on with some minor site work, glider annuals and ARCs. Our application for grant support for the construction of a new club website, voucher sales and booking system has just been approved by the council tourism committee. We've been keeping in touch with members via Zoom.
Michael D Miskimmin

WELLAND (LYVEDEN)
WWW.WELLANDGC.CO.UK
522758N 0003430W
A NEWLY-ACQUIRED pair of Jeeps should keep us mobile in all weathers, but only if we can tear ourselves away from the warm, dry comfort of Condor. In addition to the usual winter maintenance tasks we are transplanting our beefy Tost winch on to a trailer chassis, and putting the finishing touches to our new east-end cabin.
Andy Burton

WOLDS (POCKLINGTON)
WWW.WOLDS-GLIDING.COM
535532N 0004740W
WHILE lockdown continues, we have been having a series of well attended Zoom briefings by instructors working to upgrade their status and these have proved popular and useful to all involved. With reports of a number of members vaccinated already, we are looking forward to a new season and have our plans in place for a flying start, particularly for Sam Salter, Fin Ledger, Tom Burton and Ciprian Rudy – four juniors who soloed last season. In anticipation, Sandy Loynd has organised a club expedition to Denbigh in May. Bob Holdroyd will be directing the Two-Seater Competition again this year and has started putting together his team. With some entries already in, held over from last year, why not join us in August for the friendliest competition in gliding?
George Morris

YORK (RUFFORTH)
WWW.YORKGLIDINGCENTRE.CO.UK
5357100N 00111332W
AFTER a brief respite, the national lockdown from 4 January has once more halted operations. We were fortunate to see some worthy achievements before Christmas, with Grace Malone going solo and Richard Bamford re-soloing after 17 years. Well done to both! Our big news is that Tom Pavis has been selected to fly with the UK Junior Gliding Team in the European championships in Lithuania this year. This is a fantastic achievement and we are all immensely proud of him. Aside from this, we have all been enjoying our series of winter lectures albeit via Zoom rather than in person. We are optimistic that with the vaccine now being rolled out we may be airborne again before too long.
Andy Carden

YORKSHIRE (SUTTON BANK)
WWW.YGC.CO.UK
541338N 0011249W
BETWEEN lockdowns, December weather did not cooperate as only one-third of the days were flyable. Nevertheless, we did manage to exploit every opportunity, including several good wave and ridge soaring days before operations had to cease at the end of the month. Since then, we have been informed and entertained by a series of Zoom lectures masterfully conducted by Full Cat instructor turned raconteur, Steve Thompson. These well attended weekly events, expertly illustrated by pictures and Steve's great narrative, have been much appreciated by members. More online sessions are planned, including a Zoom Club Forum as we wait for a vaccine-enabled return to flying operations.
Ken Arkley

***S&G*'s thanks as usual to Debb Evans for editing Club News – Susan Newby, editor**



■ BFGC's dedicated team of instructors has a wealth of experience and can offer members small-group aerobatics courses and cross-country training. (Members have flown from Chipping up to the Lakes and across the Pennines.) The club also mounts regular expeditions to other sites.

CLUB FOCUS

BOWLAND FOREST

AT A GLANCE

Membership:
Full: £220
Student: £95
Junior: £30
Country: £125
Reciprocal: like for like

Launch type:
Winch: £7

Club fleet:
2 x K-13, K-21, Twin II Acro, K-8

Private gliders:
20

Instructors/Members:
16/72

Types of lift:
Ridge, wave, thermal

Operates:
Four days per week, year round

Contact:
Tel: 01995 61267
Enquiries@bfgc.co.uk
www.bfgc.co.uk

Long and Lat:
535301N 0023714W

Radio
118.685kHz

BOWLAND FOREST GC first started flying in the 1950s and has occupied its present airfield since 1973. As we own our own site, have no employed staff and enjoy CASC status, we can keep members' fees and flying costs very low.

Our airfield sits at 600ft amsl on the edge of the Bowland Forest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with local ridges rising to over 1,700ft, providing us with easy access to excellent hill soaring in most wind directions. We also enjoy thermal and wave flying and have spectacular and extensive views across the Lancashire plain and coast to North Wales, the Isle of Man and the Lake District, as well as our local fells and the Yorkshire Three Peaks. We have relatively free airspace to FL65 with a LoA up to FL140 when the wave beckons.

We have a well-drained grass airfield and can fly year round, courtesy of our primary runway (orientation 30/12) and additional hardened areas along 07 and 30R. However, in favourable conditions the whole field is available for landing in any direction. Our grounds maintenance team has plans for further improvements to extend our ability to fly in difficult conditions.

We generally operate at weekends, Wednesdays and Fridays, although other days can be added when weather permits. We have a booking system to fly visitors at weekends, but can also fly small groups on summer evenings, when they can enjoy stunning cockpit views as the sun sets over the sea.

New members are actively sought and we have introduced an online booking system for instruction, which has proved popular and beneficial to everyone. We can also offer day courses for faster progression.

Our large clubhouse has a briefing room, a members' lounge, a kitchen, bunk rooms and showers. We also have a club workshop and a large hangar to store club aircraft and our Skylaunch winch. The club fleet currently comprises four two-seaters and three single-seaters, so we can cater for all abilities and for flying progression.

A friendly club, we welcome pilots and visitors from other sites.

Richard Turpin (with thanks to Keith Clarke)

LEAVING HOME

Mike Fox shares a snippet from the 'flying away from home' chapter of his recently published *Soaring Adventure* book

MOST people start to glide because they want adventure. That feeling of breaking new ground and succeeding at a complex skill is amazing! One of the special things about gliding is that those feelings never disappear, because every gliding day is different.

After basic training, there are many avenues a pilot might take; and they may not even be gliding. As an experienced glider pilot, my first solo in both a motor glider and in a Piper Cub were amazing experiences. However, cross-country soaring holds the most special fascination for me. Planning an exciting route that takes me far from home, perhaps the exhilaration of pulling up into a strong thermal and taking it to cloudbase, diving onto a ridge-line to watch rocks and tussocks fly by my wingtip, the relative serenity of running along a pure white wave bar with the deep blue sky above. This is the sort of flight that I'd like to encourage others to take part in.

While you're learning to fly and passing your flying tests, you are guided through the process by an instructor. In many cases within British gliding, rightly or wrongly, once you pass this stage you enjoy becoming a far more autonomous pilot, but you may also lose that helpful guidance.

What sort of pilot do you want to be?

Some pilots are cursed not by a lack of innate flying skill, but by the feeling that everyone else can fly better than they do. There are some, rare pilots who DO have better natural skills than others, but why let that put you off? Why not imagine the kind of pilot you'd like to become and work towards that? You can take small, positive steps in the right direction.

Perhaps you are an artist, teacher, financial consultant, military strategist, engineer, shop assistant or airline pilot. The truth is that people from any background who take part in gliding can find personal fulfilment in this great sport. What are YOU searching for? Is it excitement? Relaxation? Adventure? Escape from everyday routines? What binds all of us, surely, is the quest for personal fulfilment. How much excitement and new experience we can cope with and enjoy will be different for each of us.

How and when to progress?

We all feel apprehensive before setting out on a new venture. Flying cross-country for the first time is, quite literally, a journey into the unknown, even with high quality training.

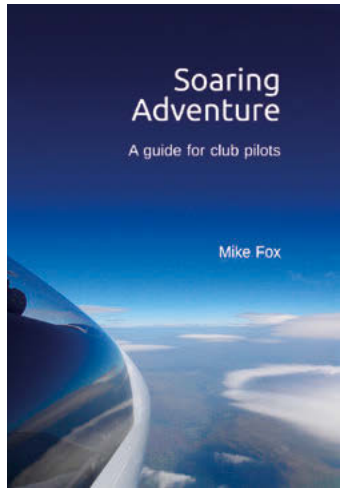
Any fear you may feel will morph into exhilaration, when you are properly prepared for progression, as you begin to enjoy the new challenge. You must find an instructor that you respect and trust and take his or her advice as you move forward. Remember – and it really is true – there are no old, bold pilots; only ones who measure out their new challenges carefully as confidence builds. Let's delve deeper into how we can make this happen in real life.

Confidence and self-belief

Some skills in aviation require a pilot to learn a 'mechanical' technique. Turning the aircraft, for instance, requires a method that can be learnt and refined using immediate feedback from indicators like the string, the attitude of the glider and the ASI reading. Circuit planning requires more judgement, but again gives a direct form of feedback; if your circuit planning is off, you will have a hard time landing in the right place!

When you fly cross-country in a glider, you need to use a lot of judgement, and sometimes creative thinking, to simply stay in the air, let alone consider all the other things vying for your time and attention. As each skill develops, overall faith in your ability to perform the next exciting stage of your flying career improves. Confidence is not something you just feel – it doesn't even simply come with, or from, experience. It comes from a solid understanding and then practice of each individual component skill. The pilot who brings together a set of these skills, all of which have been learnt and practised well enough to gain proficiency, will feel self-assured about their ability to perform a complex task. In this way, every time your confidence wanes and you think 'what if', you will have a tool to use, and the skills to back it up.

■ My book aims to encourage and nurture skills. I attempt to tackle how pilots may be feeling at the beginning of an adventure, as well as the techniques required.



Soaring adventure - a guide for club pilots, by Mike Fox
Paperback; 125 pages, illustrated
RRP: £25 plus p&p, from *www.navboys.com*
or from *https://mikefox.org/products/*

AS EACH SKILL DEVELOPS, FAITH IN YOUR ABILITY TO PERFORM THE NEXT EXCITING STAGE OF YOUR FLYING CAREER IMPROVES

■ What are the multiple skills required to fly cross-country and how can we become confident in them? Read the rest of this chapter in my book to find out!

VGC'S HONOUR FOR HISTORIAN

Martin Simons is awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the Vintage Glider Club, reports Andrew Jarvis



Above: Just some of Martin Simons' book titles
Below: VGC Historical Group in 2011 – Martin is pictured on the right



THE name Martin Simons is familiar to all vintage-minded pilots, not least through his unique range of reference books on historic gliders. Martin did not stop writing (and drawing) when he had covered the entire range of wooden gliders: his final volume went right up to the year 2000, thus including at least the earlier versions of the majority of modern gliders. Somehow, he had never been formally honoured by the Vintage Glider Club, which seems to me a great shame, since almost every member must have referred to these books at some time or other.

I'm very happy to report that, as a sort of New Year resolution, it was unanimously agreed by the Board that Martin Simons, now aged 90, should be awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the VGC. I should also mention that this was wholly due to the initiative of past president, Jan Forster.



Above: Martin Simons in Mü13D-3 (now at the Gliding Heritage Centre, Lasham)



Right: Jan Forster produced this certificate to mark Martin's Honorary Life Membership of the VGC

Personally, I would find it hard to pursue vintage gliding without having at least one or two of Martin Simons' books to refer to. His unique series of six major reference works were all written after he emigrated to Australia in 1968. Australia is famous for gold mining and, I assure you, every one of these books is a gold mine of information on the development of gliding, from the earliest days in Germany, right up to the present day.

These volumes, however, are not just catalogues of facts, figures and superb drawings: one should carefully read the preface to each book, to hear the voice of a lifelong gliding enthusiast as he traces his passion from his own schoolboy days to the present time.

Martin entered the gliding scene when every glider was what we now call a 'vintage' glider. In one preface, he vividly describes a freezing cold New Year's Day in 1946, waiting for a launch at Camphill. Many of the great gliding figures were then in their prime. Martin met, or corresponded with, most of them; the acknowledgements paragraph in the introduction to the Kookaburra volume reads like a Who's Who of gliding. When Chris Wills founded the VGC in 1973, Martin became one of the earliest members and attended a great many rallies, despite the huge amount of travelling that this entailed for him.

He was an excellent and quite competitive glider pilot, briefly beating the legendary Helmut Reichmann in the Australian nationals in 1971. Martin was also an expert aeromodeller and, naturally, wrote very serious books on the subject.

The one important aspect of Martin's life which might surprise us was his day job – teaching philosophy at Adelaide University. Whatever do you say to a philosopher? Better get back to safer ground and talk about gliding!

I know that every reader of this column will want to thank Martin, who is now living in Melbourne with his daughter Margaret, for his lifetime's work.



Above: Bernard Silke took this photo from Bellarena's ridge of Owen Anderson flying an Oly 2B

UNSETTLED OUTLOOK FOR THE VINTAGE YEAR AHEAD

COVID news changes literally by the day. The virus has the special ability of making anything one writes look a bit silly as soon as it appears in print! I expect most readers in the UK will have had their first jab by the time this issue appears, but we are told that the curiously mis-named social distancing (I would have called it antisocial distancing) will remain in force. Professor Whitty says it's for 'a long period of time'.

This means that rallies can go ahead as regards flying, but they will be rather bleak affairs otherwise. In general, things have changed little from the previous issue. Phil Drake and Geoff Pook are still happy to proceed with the opening rally – Park and Glide, at the Park Airfield (Bath, Wilts & North Dorset GC), 7-10 May.

As regards the UK National Rally at Bellarena, Northern Ireland (29 May-4 June), I've had a monthly Zoom meeting with the organising team. We feel that the general trend is improving, so as of now the rally is still 'on'. However, a dreadful new spectre looms up. To quote the Bard, 'when sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions'! Yes, it's the ATA Carnet story, as recently revealed on the BGA website. Incredibly, and outrageously, it looks as though we might get charged nearly £300 to take a vintage glider to Northern Ireland. Ulster GC Chairman Brian Irwin and I have written to the BGA's Chief Executive Pete Stratten, who has the unenviable task of trying to defuse this post-Brexit landmine, but at present it still is 'worrying'.

The other UK Rallies, and our two international events – the Rendezvous and the main rally, are still planned to go ahead. Note that the VGC website is right up to date, thanks to very hard work from rally secretary Martijn Hoogenbosch in particular. Do look at our website: 'not a lot of people know' that on the first page there is an inconspicuous link which takes you to the incredible collection of old gliding magazines, originally amassed by the late Peter Redshaw. Included in this treasure-trove are the first 100 issues of *VGC News*. (You can also see copies of *VGC News* up to 2003 on the *S&G* online archive – ed.)

Andrew Jarvis

2021 RALLIES

- Park and Glide rally, The Park, 7-10 May
- UK National Rally, Bellarena, 29 May – 4 June
- The 25th Camphill Vintage Rally, 18-25 June
- Sutton Bank Slingsby Rally, 27 August – 3 September
- VGC Rendezvous, Flugplatz Nordhorn-Lingen, Germany, 23-29 July
- 48th VGC International Rally, Achmer, Germany, 31 July – 8 August

■ *www.vintagegliderclub.org*

ERODED MARGINS

What have gliders got in common with NASA? The BGA safety team looks at incidents caused by the normalisation of deviance



During the lift-off of Space Shuttle *Columbia* on 16 January 2003 a piece of foam insulation broke off, hitting a wing. The problem was spotted, but not acted on possibly because failure of the foam insulation had become the norm (photo courtesy of NASA)

THE term *normalisation of deviance* was coined by sociologist Diane Vaughan in the aftermath of the 1986 Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster [1]. It's one of the main reasons that gliders end up in trees and overhead cables.

Challenger broke up just over a minute after lift-off when flame leaking from a solid rocket booster damaged the spacecraft structure. A Presidential Commission [2] found that primary O-ring seals had failed repeatedly on previous flights but that, as they had flexed or re-formed before the back-up seal could be affected, their failure had become first acceptable, and then the norm. Physicist Richard Feynman identified a 'slow shift towards decreasing safety factor' within the Shuttle programme:

The argument that the same risk was flown before without failure is often accepted as an argument for the safety of accepting it again… The fact that this danger did not lead to a catastrophe before is no guarantee that it will not the next time…

Erosion of margins

It is quite natural to adjust our behaviour in light of what we observe and discover. The snag is that a limited sample of a few successful events may lead us to neglect the small risk of a catastrophic outcome, or to accept the risk if it avoids a more likely but less grave result, such as inconvenience, embarrassment or delay [3]. The usual solution in aviation is a mix of standard operating procedures and threat & error management – which means that we've either individually, or collectively, analysed the situation beforehand. Three examples are the minimum heights around circuit, when soaring a ridge, and for selecting a field.

A minimum final turn height of 300ft ensures not only that we can clear obstacles on the approach, but that we have energy in hand if we encounter wind gradient or turbulence, the wind proves stronger than



expected, we need to adjust our landing area, or wet wings cause a loss of performance. It also gives us time to stabilise the approach and deal with the workload.

Similarly, a decent height margin above the ridge gives us energy to cope with sink and options to manoeuvre, and identify and fly to a landing site. While we may be able to carry some of the energy as speed, a height margin also keeps us clear of treetops and cables. For the same reasons, late field selection is a major cause of field landing accidents, because it leaves us fewer options, less time and greater workload.

Yet, if conditions are benign and luck is on our side, it is quite likely that reduced margins will not punish us, and we may learn that we can get away with another lift-seeking turn, or a gratifying extension to an instructing or introductory flight. The minimum first becomes a target, and then the reduced margins become the norm – as does the idea that we don't need to comply with our previous decisions or instructions.

Unfortunately, if one of the rare but foreseen events eventually occurs, we might not have the clearance, energy, options or time to make a safe recovery, and several gliders each year end up in trees, hedges or cables. Common causes are persisting too long with a marginal final glide, often after drifting downwind; too low a final turn and approach, perhaps to avoid a trudge back to the launch point; skimming too close to a wooded ridge; late field selection; deviating to avoid ground obstacles; and failing to take account of wet wings or windshear.

Press-on-itis

Seventeen years after the *Challenger* tragedy, its sister shuttle *Columbia* broke up during re-entry when the port wing structure melted after its leading-edge heat protection was damaged by insulation debris during the launch. Foam loss, which had been a major

concern early in the Shuttle programme, had become commonplace, and was evident in over 80 per cent of the missions subsequently examined. Normalisation of deviance was again identified [4]:

With each successful landing… NASA engineers and managers increasingly regarded the foam-shedding as inevitable, and as either unlikely to jeopardise safety or simply an acceptable risk.

One driving factor is **loss aversion** – our reluctance to give up a goal or admit defeat. Within a day, NASA knew from launch imagery about the foam loss and impact, but it cancelled requests for further investigation because it threatened the mission and an already tight schedule for future launches. Supported by an unhealthy dose of optimism and over-confidence, and coupled with **plan continuation bias** which makes us understandably hesitant to depart from a prior plan, such '**press-on-itis**' was identified behind 42 per cent of fatal approach and landing accidents in commercial aviation [5].

Individual actions

Glider pilots are just as susceptible to these 'cognitive biases'. We'd far rather a glorious finish than the trouble and delay of a field retrieve; if we could just cross that gap in ridge lift then we'd be back on task; and we don't want to be thought over-cautious. Besides, we got away with it last time…

It helps to analyse eventualities and decision criteria, plan options and be willing to use them. A field landing is less daunting if a retrieve is already prepared and we've left time in hand. Prior planning makes us less likely to succumb to **normalcy bias**, **confirmation bias** or **denial**, which delay our recognition and acceptance that things are going wrong. We can then stick to our planned minima and temper any sense of defeat by taking pride in a sound decision. These are all individual actions, but the safety atmosphere in which we operate can be an important factor.

Club culture

Vaughan concluded that flawed individual decisions often stemmed directly from NASA's culture and structure. Posters promoting safety were widespread, but the agency's focus was upon operational objectives. Poor communications structures hindered safety issues from reaching the right people, and engineers felt that raising safety concerns could lead to ridicule by their peers and managers.

Likewise, it is easy in a gliding club to lose a general safety priority amid a fervour to start flying, keep up a good launch rate and deliver promised training and First Flights. Maintaining a healthy safety culture is a key club responsibility.

One club chairman, investigating a run of tug incidents, unearthed a subliminal focus upon launch delivery that put off fixing problems till the end of the day; happily, after airing his observations, he easily convinced his team that safe decisions deserved more regard. In another club, the CFI analysed logger traces to persuade his instructors that low final turns were more than a rare aberration; aware that they were setting an example, they promptly restored the intended margins. In both cases, good pilots had felt an expectation – perhaps self-imposed – to deliver performance and 'value for money'. The sense of duty can be especially strong amongst volunteers.

Yet in a club environment, it is largely the individual pilots who create the safety culture through their priorities, actions and results. Discipline amongst experienced pilots sets an example to their juniors, and careful flying generates the expectation that accidents are shocking and rare. We can all contribute by setting sensible margins and decision criteria, and taking pride in adhering to them. Minimum heights above the ridge, for final turns and field selection should be minima rather than targets; and we should be strict about what are tolerable defects and acceptable practices.

We can learn from NASA's experience. After all, once their rocket fuel was spent, the Space Shuttles were all gliders.

Tim Freegarde and the BGA safety team

■ Clubs can obtain printed copies of Safety Briefings from the BGA Office.

■ An excellent series of articles on threat & error management by Arthur Gatland is available from the BGA website [6].

[1] D Vaughan, The Challenger Launch Decision, U Chicago Press (1996)
[2] Report of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident (1986) *https://tinyurl.com/flyright2109*
[3] R Hertwig & I Erev, Trends Cogn Sci 13 (12), 517 (2009) *https://tinyurl.com/flyright2110*
[4] Columbia Accident Investigation Board report (2003) *https://tinyurl.com/flyright2111*
[5] Flight Safety Digest 17 (11-12), 1 (1998) *https://tinyurl.com/flyright2112*
[6] A Gatland, *Soaring NZ*, June p16, August p18, October p24 (2010) https://tinyurl.com/flyright2113

PREVIOUS 'FLY RIGHT' ARTICLES

The Perils of Distraction (Apr/May 19)
Keeping Safe in Thermals (June/July 19)
Why It Is Good to Think Ahead (Aug/Sep 19)
The Effects of Wind Gradient (Oct/Nov 19)
A Fun but Safe Introduction (Dec19/Jan20)
Stop the Drop (Feb/Mar 20)
Avoiding Upset (Apr/May 20)
Backroom Boys (June/July 20)
Cockpit muddle (Aug/Sep 20)
Safe rotation (Oct/Nov 20)
Cockpit remedies (Dec 20/Jan 21)
Covid currency (Feb/March 21)

Launch Point
Supporting British Gliding

Leaving a legacy

Supporting people to progress in gliding is important. A gift to our charity "Launchpoint" will help develop the next generations of pilots, and you will be part of the future of gliding.

Please see https://members.gliding.co.uk/leaving-a-gift-in-your-will/

BGA accident/incident summaries

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
96	ASW 19	minor	06/08/20, 14:30	none	56

Airbrake/undercarriage lever confusion. In the light and variable wind, the club were using different runways for taking off and landing. The glider was seen to fly down the landing runway without losing height and when it reached the end of the runway it turned away to set up an approach to another cross runway. It flew down the runway low and fast before turning and flying low over some trees just outside the airfield. The last the witnesses saw was the glider making another low turn before it disappeared from sight. The glider landed safely, but wheel up, in a field near the airfield; the only damage was to an undercarriage door. The CFI's report after debriefing the pilot mentions that the pilot returned to the airfield with less than the usual circuit joining height and that the added workload led to the pilot leaving his hand on the undercarriage lever after lowering the wheel. He stresses the importance of returning to the airfield with sufficient height to perform pre-landing checks as well as identifying the correct controls.

98	LS4	none	24/08/20, 14:10	none	180

The pilot misjudged his approach to a spot landing just inside the airfield, clipping and damaging some crop just outside the airfield.

99	ASH 25	–	26/08/20, 13:15	fatal/minor	–

AAIB investigation.

101	K-8	substantial	31/08/20, 15:05	none	239

Wingtip hit fence during low final turn. The glider was seen in the high key area so low that some witnesses expected the pilot to set up an approach to the reciprocal runway. Instead, the pilot flew a low circuit before making a very low final turn during which the wingtip caught on a boundary fence. The glider yawed through 180° before landing, breaking off the wingtip and twisting the fuselage. The pilot reports seeing 900ft on the altimeter during the downwind leg.

102	Slingsby T-21	minor	31/08/20, 15:30	none	703

Heavy landing broke the nose skid. Although the pilot was experienced at flying vintage gliders, he was relatively new to the T-21. As the release handle is in the centre of the instrument panel the pilot, flying from the left seat, was holding the control column with his left hand. Early in the aerotow, at about 150-200ft ato, the pilot noticed some oscillations in pitch so decided to release to prevent a tug upset. Seeing trees and powerlines ahead he decided to turn back to land on the airfield. During the final turn to line up with the runway, the wingtip touched the ground, yawing the glider so that it landed sideways, breaking off the nose skid.

108	DG-500	minor	31/08/20, 11:30	none/none	2287

Undercarriage collapsed during landing causing minor scuffs and scratches. The CFI reports that the P1 was very experienced in the glider and the wheel was seen to be down during the circuit. The P1 reports lowering the wheel as part of his pre-landing checks before joining the circuit. He thinks that he may not have moved the lever fully sideways into the locked down position.

113	K-21	minor	09/08/20, 16:20	minor/none	645

Heavy landing. The flight was a mutual flight for two qualified pilots, with the front seat pilot nominated as the handling pilot. After an otherwise normal approach the pilot failed to round out sufficiently and the glider landed heavily. X-rays later revealed the front seat pilot had damaged a vertebra; the glider had damage to a forward frame adjacent to the nosewheel.

Incidents

95	Nimbus 2	none	01/08/20, 15:30	none	1300

Landing groundloop. While flying a high energy finish down a crosswind runway, the pilot noted a glider parked on the into-wind runway, apparently preparing for a winch launch. After pulling up into a circuit the pilot was unwilling to land on the into-wind runway, potentially conflicting with a winch launch, so committed to landing on the crosswind runway. The first half of this runway was barely wider than the glider's wingspan so the pilot elected to land in the wider northern half of the runway. Despite full flap, full airbrake and wheel brake, the pilot had to initiate the groundloop to prevent the glider running off the end of the runway. He cites lack of headwind and possible fatigue after a tricky cross-country flight as factors.

97	Grob 103	minor	23/08/20, 17:30	–	–

As the glider was being pushed backwards into the T-hangar, and despite the presence of a member watching and guiding the tail, the end of the elevator struck the edge of the hangar causing minor damage to the elevator.

100	Slingsby Swallow	none	29/08/20, 12:00	none	–

Flight with elevator trim cables reversed. The glider had previously been de-rigged by a group unfamiliar with the aircraft, who removed the trim cables before removing the tailplane, unaware that the trim tab was self connecting. After being stored for four years the glider was put through annual maintenance during which the trim cables were re-attached incorrectly. The pilot noticed that the trim tab was working during the DI but failed to realise that it was moving in the wrong direction. The reversed trim became obvious in flight, but the pilot was able to land safely.

103	K-21	none	31/08/20, –	none	52

Positive G limit exceeded during aerobatic flight.

BGA accident/incident summaries *continued*

AIRCRAFT Ref	Type	Damage	Date, time	PILOT Injury	P1 hours
104	Standard Cirrus	none	30/08/20, 14:00	none	79

Incorrectly rigged tailplane. While de-rigging after a landout the pilot realised that the tailplane had not been properly secured. The tailplane locking lever was not in the fully secured position; the safety pin designed to hold the lever in the locked closed position had been inserted prematurely and was preventing the lever from moving to the locked position. Although the tailplane seemed secure it was only a spring acting on the locking lever that was holding it in. The pilot was aware of the fatal outcome of a similar situation a year previously but had not read the AAIB report. As the glider was a student's union glider it was normally kept rigged in the hangar and had been DI'd several times and flown for approx. 30 hours since being rigged. The CFI's report recommends markings on the tailplane to indicate safe/unsafe lever position and further training in rigging and inspecting the glider. The BGA advises that a "glider should be rigged and a daily inspection carried out in accordance with the instructions provided in the Flight Manual ..." (Managing Flying Risk – Preparation for Flight web page.)

105	HpH Shark	none	31/08/20, 13:50	none	550

Airprox with another glider. While climbing in a thermal the pilot received a FLARM warning which quickly became an urgent warning. The pilot levelled the wings and headed away from the potential collision, catching sight of the other glider as he did so. The other glider made no noticeable change in heading as it flew through what would have been the reporting pilot's position had he not taken avoiding action.

106	K-21	none	07/09/20, 12:25	none/none	254

The P1 allowed the glider to get high relative to the tug while pointing out site features to the P2. The tug released the glider at about 1,500ft ato and both returned to the airfield.

107	DG-303	none	31/08/20, 17:00	none	96

Undercarriage collapsed during landing. The pilot was aware of undercarriage issues with this type of glider and reports taking care to ensure that the lever was securely in the locked down position before joining the circuit. Despite this, the wheel retracted on touchdown.

109	K-8	none	10/09/20, 18:10	none	–

Landing overshoot. The inexperienced pilot was briefed to do a hangar landing. The briefing included a detailed description of the approach, reference point, landing area and where to stop, as well as how to manage the slight tailwind. However, the pilot turned on to final approach too high, overshot the landing area and landed safely in a field near the airfield.

110	ASW 20	none	31/08/20,	–	–

Unsecured tailplane noticed during DI. The two syndicate partners rigged and inspected the glider together before leaving it in the hangar when it began to rain. On the day of the incident, one partner noticed an unusual amount of play in the tailplane and after removing the tape covering the tailplane securing bolt it was found that the securing bolt had not been fitted during rigging. The bolt was later found in the rigging bag. The syndicate partnership had been recently formed and the report mentions that both pilots had different rigging techniques. One pilot preferred to rig the glider and then go back and secure all the fittings; the other pilot preferred to rig, secure and tape each component as he went along. The latter pilot had assumed that the tailplane securing bolt had been already fitted by his partner so he taped up the hole. Following a debrief both pilots have agreed that one person should take sole responsibility for rigging.

111	Libelle	none	20/08/20, 13:00	none	–

Aileron not connected during rigging. The club's chief technical officer noticed both ailerons drooping while the glider was in the launch queue. It was only the second time that the pilot had rigged the glider and he omitted to check the connections properly. He also failed to carry out a positive control check.

112	K-13	none	05/09/20, 13:35	none	112

Landing groundloop. Flying in strong sink, the pilot realised that he would not be able to reach the high key area but was unsure what to do about it. In the end he chose to set up an approach across the airfield to land partly into wind. When he realised that he would overshoot into a wire fence he turned downwind and flew a bounced landing before groundlooping during the downwind ground run. The CFI intends to conduct further training in modified circuits with the pilot.

114	Mosquito	none	30/08/20, 14:10	none	649
	EuroFOX	none		none	–

Airprox during landing approach. The glider pilot made a left downwind radio call as he started the circuit. He later heard the tug calling downwind for a right downwind but could not see the tug. On short final he became aware of the tug passing him, about 20ft above and slightly to his right. Just as he started to flare the towrope passed over his elevator and starboard wing, but he was able to land safely and stop short. The tug continued to the end of the runway. The tug pilot reports that he did not hear the glider pilot's downwind call and did not see the glider at any stage. Neither pilot received a FLARM warning, this was later resolved by updating the glider FLARM.

During BGA Club Safety Officer seminars it was proposed that, to further encourage reporting, it would be a good idea to remove site names from summaries. This has been reflected in the summaries on these pages. Edward Lockhart continues to provide a little extra detail, where available, in these listings. We would also like to publish (anonymously) your stories of particular flights that have taught you a valuable flying lesson. Please send details to *editor@sailplaneandgliding.co.uk* or by post to the address on p3.

CHRIS PRICE (1938 – 2020)



CHRIS passed away on 2 December. He had not been able to fly for almost five years following his first stroke in April 2016.

He joined Essex & Suffolk GC in 1990 when the club moved to its new site at Wormingford Airfield, close by his home. With his enthusiasm, Chris was soon in the thick of things, becoming chairman 1992.

After going solo he bought a K-21, next a Janus C and, finally, a new Duo Discus T in a syndicate in which I had a share. We toured extensively, going to the Alps on numerous occasions in both France and Austria, and also the Pyrenees in Spain, as well as visiting many UK clubs and doing various UK comps each year.

During his term as chairman, the club went through a period of planning battles to survive, including having to fight through two public enquiries. Under Chris' astute and effective leadership we won through to form the great club of today. He was later voted in as club president.

Chris was born in Rochester, Kent, and his main pastime in his younger years was sailing the Thames, East and South Coasts and visits across the Channel.

Professionally he started work in the City as a junior, but with his determination he became a partner. Later he became an associate in Vivian Grey stockbrokers, but by this time he and wife Elizabeth had moved near to Colchester and soon became disenchanted with the daily commute.

Chris loved reading and could always be found with his head buried in a book or reading the broadsheets. After reading an article on 'changing lifestyle' he bought a small timber company, which he ran successfully for a few years before being approached by a larger company specialising in Cricket Bat Willows and thereafter joined them as financial director. This cricket bat business, to his pleasure, took him to many cricket-loving nations and he did this until retiring in 2005.

Chris loved to spend time at the gliding club and would turn his hand to any job. Most weeks in the summer he would turn up with his trailer full of lawnmowers, strimmers, etc, to cut grass areas around the clubhouse and hangars.

Although Chris became a competent solo pilot, he always seemed happier to share flights and on most of our many hundreds of hours gliding together, mainly in the Duo, he was happy for me to do all the flying. With our shared love of maps, charts and topography, Chris was content to view the passing countryside and often he'd come out with comments such as "that's an estate owned by the Duke of Buccleuch" or "see that field of willows, they're ours for cricket bats".

He also loved the good times spent with friends and competitors when staying on gliding sites and, having a big personality combined with having a quite large stature and loudish voice, he was easily recognisable.

In the earlier days, Chris used to sleep in my caravan's awning and one amusing incident springs to mind. He used to turn up with a camp bed, which was a relic from WW2. One night I was woken by a commotion and found Chris sprawled on the floor cursing that the canvas had ripped apart! As usual, he was still smiling.

Although Chris had been unable to get to the club recently, he leaves an extremely large hole among his many friends there. Our thoughts are with his wife Liz, children Rupert and Laura and five grandchildren.

Paul Rice, Essex & Suffolk GC

DEREK 'DEBS' REYNOLDS (1935-2021)



MY EARLIEST memory of Derek is watching him enjoy (offensively sweet) tea, while planning a gliding lesson for my mother. I was probably three. After he left, my mother looked at me and said, "you could strap planks to that man's arms, throw him off a roof and he'd soar." I don't think she was wrong. In January 2021, Covid-19 claimed our friend, and gliding lost a gentleman-character.

There's no decent way to encapsulate a love of gliding that spans 60 years, but here's a snapshot. Derek (known to the gliding world as Debbie, or Debs) started gliding at Windrushers in 1961. He soloed, quickly earning Bronze and Silver badges, plus Gold and Diamond distances.

A long-time instructor, he didn't succeed in sending my mother solo. He did once try to encourage her by pointing out that "even a monkey can learn to fly with enough time". Not, as it turns out, an effective tactic.

He certainly had his fair share of misadventures: of note, he field-landed in a graveyard; landed in a tree and sat in the cockpit laughing; crashed in the Hole of Horcum, needing to be rescued by his sons Colin and Graham driving his car illegally; and whilst doing aeros from Carlton Bank went into a spin and nearly crashed before scraping back onto the airfield, only to be soundly rebuked by the female instructor for frightening everyone.

Debs was on the RAFGSA Centre staff at Bicester in the 70s, and settled to make most of North Yorkshire his personal airfield. A regular visitor at Sutton Bank, Carlton Moor and Rufforth, he became a Dishforth stalwart. One club member recalls "we hadn't long had the new (to us) winch. I was doing some fettling and having some problem with it. In walked Debs (we'd only met a week or so before) and asked did I need a hand? It was then I discovered his engineering prowess. He was a genius." Indeed he was, and with a meticulous eye for detail. There wasn't anything with a moving part he couldn't repair and Debs served as a BGA inspector from 1992 until 2015. One of his biggest accomplishments was rebuilding his beloved Wassamer Bijave with Mac McKenzie. The work provided hours of muttering, cursing and laughing before they ever took it back to the sky.

Debs loved a good party, as other friends from Dishforth recall: "Wonderful memories of many hours spent in the Cleveland's bar and the volumes of Barcardi consumed whilst talking all things aviation (which I understood) and engineering (much of which I didn't). Debs was a true gentleman and always welcoming. And, of course, a fabulous craftsman."

He was also a favourite among younger visitors to the airfield… "He was the source of jelly sweets for my girls whenever they saw him at the club. I can remember Charlotte coming home with a pocketful telling me it was OK because Debs had given her them."

Debb Hackett, Bannerdown GC

JACK WARDLE (1932-2021)



JACK passed away peacefully on Saturday 16 January. He was born near Durham on Christmas Day 1932.

Jack spent most of his working life as a draughtsman; at one time he was working for Saunders Roe when they were making

the Princess flying boat.

His first glider flight was in 1950 at Kenley in a T-21 as a cadet with the ATC. After that experience flight, all of his initial flying training was on primary gliders. He was not allowed back on to the T-21 until he had qualified as a solo pilot with an A certificate on the primary. A highlight of his cadet days was a three-hour flight in a Halifax that was towing a Horsa glider.

Jack first came to Lasham on a gliding course in 1959 and then joined as a full member. Over the years he had shares in various gliders, including T-21b (Lucy), Skylark 2, Libelle and Grob Acro. He had to stop gliding when in his 80s due to failing eyesight and spent the last couple of years in a care home in Bournemouth.

I don't think that Jack was ever a competition pilot, but he did do a lot of crewing. He would always be on hand to help with rigging and at the launch point. He crewed for me and shared flying as P2 in the ASH25 BB at Competition Enterprise when at North Hill, Sutton Bank and Long Mynd.

Jack's other hobby was table tennis, where he was coaching juniors and organising teams for the county.

He did enjoy the social life at Lasham, where he was easily recognised with his full beard, often acting as Father Christmas. He loved parties and demonstrating his version of dancing. There was a period of time when carpet bowls became a favourite late-night pastime in the club bar; Jack was one of the group that was found still playing (and drinking) when the cleaner came in early in the morning!

Never a big name in gliding, but we will miss him.

Michael Wells, Lasham GS

IAN DANDIE (1932-2020)



JOHN Alexander Dandie, known to everyone as Ian, was a dentist and started gliding in 1955 during his National Service in the RAF, which he described as "serving Queen and country with mirror, probe and forceps".

After National Service, he returned to practice in Stirling, and joined the SGU in 1957, just as the club was moving from Balado Airfield to Portmoak. He rapidly became one of the pillars of the club for the next 60 years, becoming an instructor in 1962 and serving as CFI on no fewer than three occasions. Ian was chairman of the BGA Safety Panel in 1973 and also a member of the Instructors Panel, being appointed senior regional examiner for Scotland. Over the years, CFIs came and went, but Ian was always there as a dependable source of wise advice to them all. He was particularly good at encouraging and mentoring young members, and I am much indebted for his interest back in my early days. I shall always remember the relief in his voice when I phoned in after completing my Silver distance on a day when the nice white puffy cumulus had rapidly developed and merged into the mother of all thunderstorms!

After gaining his PPL in 1967, Ian soon became a tug pilot and motor glider examiner. I suspect that he would gauge the competence of pilots while tugging, as his turns would become progressively tighter as the tow went on, until the glider's position keeping started to get a bit ragged! In later years, when he owned a share in a Jodel, he would use it to give field selection exercises to those working towards their Bronze badges. In about 1980, Ian became an inspector, frequently assisting in ARCs for club gliders while doing the same for many syndicates and private owners.

Working for the club took precedence over Ian's own gliding, though he owned shares at various times in a Skylark 2, an Olympia 463 and a Libelle. He recorded 61 types of glider in his logbook, and after retirement took the opportunity, during holidays to Australia, to complete his Gold and Diamond badges. He had to repeat his Gold distance, although he had completed the declared task, as he had forgotten to start his barograph! I can just imagine his howls of laughter, as he was never slow to see the funny side in any of his own slip-ups.

Ian was a modest person, never one to seek recognition for his services to the SGU and gliding in general, but, to his embarrassment, these were rewarded by a BGA Diploma in 2004 and a Royal Aero Club Certificate of Merit in 2013.

It was a shock to us all when Ian started to develop dementia, the prospect of which he bore stoically. Sadly, he had to spend his final years in care. After a short illness, Ian died on Christmas Eve 2020. He will be long remembered by all at Portmoak for his kindness, willingness to help and good humour. We extend our sympathy to his wife Ann and to his family.

Bruce Marshall, Scottish Gliding Centre

ROBERT 'BOB' REECE (1929–2020)



AFTER attending Worcester Royal Grammar School, National Service with the RAF in Aden followed. Bob's interest in gliding was whetted whilst working for a pattern maker in Worcester, who did work on the T G Nyborg glider that flew locally, pre- and post-WW2. He learnt to glide at the embryonic Worcestershire Gliding Club near Bidford on Avon, where he lost his appetite for committees. In the early-70s Bob bought a T-31, built a winch from a truck and went gliding in the Avon valley with a 'band of brothers'!

Following the decline of the British car industry, and a loss of orders for his stove enamelling business, Bob turned his hand to glider repairs. As a senior inspector he turned out some major feats of reconstruction, as well as developing a modified version of the K-7, giving it the low wing of the 13 leading it to be dubbed a 'K-10'. This in turn led to the need for a double canopy which, of course, Bob produced on a machine that would have done credit to Rowland Emett. The production of replacement canopies for a wide range of gliders followed under the ReMatic brand, many exported worldwide.

Bob became a member of The Royal Institute of Science for his work on sustainable energy sources, a passionate sideline.

Bob was of the same vintage as 'Barney' Banks, Lou Glover and Eric Ralph. He had an amazing ability to explain technology in simple terms; was able to debunk many supposed scientific advances and was a true teacher. He will be sorely missed.

Jim Pailing, Essex

RICHARD CARTWRIGHT (1945-2020)



RICHARD was one of life's gentlemen; his laid-back persona belied an acute business acumen. He was a long-time member of Hus Bos after starting flying at Nymsfield in the early-90s. He instructed, enjoyed competition flying especially the Wolds (Pocklington) two-

seater comp and flying trips abroad and at home. With his keen eyesight he was nicknamed 'cat's eye Cartwright' by his syndicate. He is deeply missed by his wife Liz and children Jamie and Lydia, and all who knew and flew with him. A nicer chap and better friend would be hard to find.
Richard Large, Hus Bos

RON JUBB (1936 – 2021)



RON Jubb, who was one of our more flamboyant members and a former syndicate partner, sadly passed away in hospital. Ron was a true gentleman, extremely kind and generous to both the gliding club and to all those he respected. He had a great sense of humour and a strong sense of fair play, but he did not suffer fools gladly.

Ron ran a well-known and successful sign manufacturing business in Bentley, Doncaster, for many years and also served as a local magistrate.

He had a wide range of hobbies in his life and was a big fan of jazz music and brass bands. Ron played brass instruments when he was younger, and most of the CDs in his car were of brass bands. Ron also loved dogs and was very knowledgeable; he had been a dog breeder, plus he showed and judged dogs across a wide variety of locations.

In his earlier years, Ron also enjoyed cycle road racing. He was national 24-hour cycling champion in 1959, riding 448 miles 1,312 yards without stopping, which demonstrated his fitness and competitive spirit. He was always good company, and a fantastic raconteur.

After taking a trial flight in a glider at Portmoak, which was bought as a present, Ron became a member of Burn Gliding Club in 2002. Due to his advanced years he took time to get to solo standard, but once he was solo he set his sights on flying aerobatics. Ron gained his Standard Aerobatics badge in 2005 and completed his Silver Gliding badge in 2008, with a distance flight from Lasham to Old Sarum. Ron won the Novice Class in the National Gliding Aerobatics Championship at his first attempt, and went on to complete at national level in both Intermediate and Sport aerobatic classes. Ron remained a member of both Burn and Buckminster clubs, though he elected to take a safety pilot with him for aerobatic flights in recent years.

Ron was diagnosed with cancer a few months ago and was undergoing treatment. He sadly lost his wife, Constance, on 17 December. Ron was admitted to hospital on 25 December because he was having breathing difficulties and was diagnosed with Covid-19 a few days later. Unfortunately the odds were against him.

He will be sadly missed by those who knew him well; both Ron and his cousin Maureen were also well known at Lasham, Milfield and Saltby. Our thoughts and sympathy are with his family.
Martin Ellis and Matt Ellis, Burn GC

TONY EVANS (1942-2021)



IT IS with sadness that I report the passing of John Anthony (Tony) Evans on 27 January 2021 after a short battle with cancer.

Tony started gliding when he was in the RAF, at the Crusaders Gliding Club in Cyprus and, later, when Rod Witter was his officer, flying at Humber GC. After leaving the RAF he joined British Aerospace as an avionics engineer, working on Canberra, and most other aircraft. When BAe apprentices refurbished Spitfire PR19, PS915 for the BBMF, Tony's son Darren worked on it as an apprentice and Tony tested and de-snagged the radios.

I met Tony when at Blackpool and Fylde (now Bowland Forest) Gliding Club, where he was an excellent instructor for many years. I remember having approach issues so Tony showed me a 747 approach (high and long); he cured my problems in one flight. He helped lots of others in similar ways.

He did, however, have one complaint; he was a light guy and very popular with the larger pupils, who couldn't fly with heavy instructors. He would say: "I am sick of not being able to trim the glider!"

Tony and his wife Phyllis became firm friends and we planned an holiday in Cyprus, where they would show us around. In the meantime, Alison and I got engaged and married; the holiday became our honeymoon, we must have been good friends. At least he arranged for us all to have a glider flight.

Tony had a share in an immaculate red Dart 17R and, later, in an Open Cirrus CWL. Tony then joined Ken Fixter and me in Nimbus 2b G-DEAM – great times, until Alison and Darren's syndicate were looking at buying the "one-off" 23m Nimbus 2CS. There was no way we could let them have bigger wings than us, so we combined syndicates and had two Nimbus between seven of us.

One day, Tony said he had ordered a Ventus 2ct: "You can come in with me if you want, but I am having one!" So we shared our gorgeous Ventus in a five-person syndicate, including Alison, Darren and Alan Roberts. In total, Tony and I were syndicate partners for 20 years.

Tony also enjoyed flying motor gliders. He had shares in the SZD-45 Ogar G-BKTM, an immaculate Fournier RF5 that he helped refurbish, and the ex-demonstrator Taifun G-TFUN.

Tony will be remembered at various sites, including Feshie, Pocklington and Jaca in Spain; he loved the fantastic flying at Jaca.

Condolences go to Phyllis, Darren, his daughter-in-law, Claudia, and grandson Jenson.

Tony was a small guy with a large heart and a massive personality. He will be missed.
Paul Myers, Bowland Forest and Cairngorm Gliding Clubs

NEVILLE DEAN (1932-2021)



NEVILLE 'Dixie' Dean passed away recently. He started gliding with the Air Cadets in 1950 with 22 Sqn, later to become 643 Gliding School.

He served with the ATC from 1950 to 1976 flying from RAF Waltham, RAF Kirton in Lindsey, RAF Hemswell and RAF Lindholme. Dixie finished his flying with Trent Valley Gliding Club, who operate from Kirton in Lindsey.

Dixie was a frequent visitor and a well known character up at Portmoak and spent many hours on the Bishop and Benarty, waiting for the wave to form.

He also had a share in an Auster and he used to transit from Bardney to Kirton in Lindsey, allowing pilots to have aerotows in the early-70s.

He was awarded the Cadet Forces Medal for long service. During his flying career Dixie achieved 12,250 launches and 3,750hrs. A great character and fantastic glider pilot, he will be sadly missed. RIP Dixie Dean.
Tim Graham, nephew, Kestrel GC

CNVV Saint-Auban, France

FEELING FLAT?

COME AND DISCOVER OUR MOUNTAIN GLIDING COURSES AT THE CNVV IN PROVENCE

AND WE'LL PUT SOME LIFT INTO YOUR LIFE!



CONTACT US TO START PLANNING A WEEK OF WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN GLIDING IN SAINT-AUBAN!

info@cnvv.net +33 (0)492 642 971 www.cnvv.net

The Bristol & Gloucestershire Gliding Club

Fly at Nympsfield, enjoy XC, ridge and wave soaring. See our website for courses, task weeks and events. Visiting pilots welcome.

Learn to fly or develop your skills with the BGGC
Thermal, wave, ridge running & convergence soaring
Open all year round, new members & experienced pilots welcome
Beginner, improver and advanced courses
Excellent for club expeditions & visiting gliders

Website: bggc.co.uk, or contact office@bggc.co.uk, Tel. 01453-860342

ZULU GLASSTEK LTD

ZULU GLASSTEK SOLE UK AGENT TO ALEXANDER SCHLEICHER SAILPLANES.
NEW AS34 ELECTRIC SELF LAUNCHER HAS JUST FLOWN AND NOW AVAILABLE.
TWO NEW GLIDERS IN THE PIPELINE – WATCH THIS SPACE!!!







SALES, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTACT:
Zulu Glasstek Ltd...Peter & Sally Wells, Baileys Farm, Westfield Road, Long Crendon, Bucks HP18 9EN
Workshop/Office Tel: 01844 208157 Email: office@zulu-glasstek.co.uk - Parts Office Hours Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 9.30am-12.30pm
www.zuluglasstek.co.uk - www.twister.airshows.org.uk

BGA BADGES

Gold Distance

Howard Joseph	Booker	21/07/2020
Colwyn Darlow	Gliding Centre	01/09/2020

Silver Badge

Peter Gill	Black Mountains/ Derby & Lancs	19/10/2020
Harry Bloxham	Bristol & Glos	02/03/2020

Silver Distance

Peter Gill	Black Mountains/ Derby & Lancs	19/10/2020
Piotr Czartolomny	Staffordshire	24/08/2020

Silver Duration

Andrew Wells	Essex & Suffolk	29/07/2020
Harry Bloxham	Bristol & Glos	02/03/2020
Matthew Morris	SGU	09/10/2020
Ramsay Leuchars	SGU	05/09/2020

Cross Country Endorsement

Daryl Neave	Rattlesden	23/06/2019
Mark Wallis	Devon & Somerset	06/12/2020
Simon Anthony	Gliding Centre	15/12/2021
David Yerbury	Stratford On Avon	20/12/2020

Aerobatic Badge (Standard)

Roy Ferguson-Dalling	Buckminster	17/12/2020
Philip Sturley	Chilterns	19/12/2020
Lee Davidson	Anglia	11/01/2021

Congratulations to everyone listed achieving badges

Classifieds

Please send the text of your classified advert to Debbie Carr at the BGA office (not to the editor) – *debbie@gliding.co.uk* Call 0116 289 2956 if you have any queries about classified adverts.

Please remember that, if you are emailing text, your advert may not appear unless we have received payment by post or credit card by the deadline. The deadline for classifieds to be included in **June/July 21** is **6 May 2021**. Text: 80p/word, minimum 20 words (£16). Photographs: £6 extra. Box number: £3 extra. All prices include VAT.

GASCo Flight safety

If you're serious about your flying...

Please subscribe

Subscription only £16 p.a. including UK postage and a digital version. Quarterly.

- Keep up with the latest developments towards greater safety
- Read about recent AirProxes, GA Occurrences and AAIB accident reports
- Follow the well informed commentary in our articles and letters
- Help us with our work at GASCo



Go to www.gasco.org.uk
or phone 01634 200203
Editor: Dave Unwin

life cover
FOR GLIDER PILOTS

Without specialist advice glider pilots can often face expensive premium loadings when applying for life insurance.

We can help you minimise or possibly avoid such loadings altogether.

- Life insurance for your family, mortgage or business.
- 24/7 cover including flying.
- Cover can be arranged over the phone.

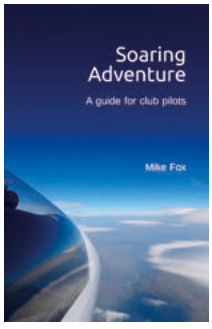


stein pilot insurance

FREEPHONE 0800 5999 101
flyingcover.co.uk

"THE CLEAREST, SAFEST, EASIEST, MOST HONEST, ENCOURAGING GLIDING BOOK I HAVE YET READ."

Soaring adventure - a guide for club pilots, has been published by Mike Fox with the aim of encouraging pilots of all abilities to develop their skill and confidence to stretch their horizons. It is available for £25 plus p&p, from *www.navboys.com* or from *https://mikefox.org/products/*



Oxfordshire Sportflying

The Premier Motor Gliding School

- Courses by the hour for NPPL, SLMG & TMG PPL. Ground school available.
- Bronze C Cross County & Field Landing Checks.
- Convert your BGA Licence to an NPPL SLMG.
- RT/AGCS Examination Centre.



www.enstoneaerodrome.co.uk
Telephone 01608 677208

We would like to thank all our advertisers for continuing to support *S&G*

General Aviation Legal Consultant

TIM SCORER CONSULTING

TIM SCORER, MRAeS, Aviation Solicitor and current PPL provides legal advice and assistance to a wide variety of GA clients. He has been credited with "an unsurpassed knowledge of UK General Aviation" and "a very realistic and affable approach as well as good client instincts". The application of his technical knowledge underlies a service based on sound legal experience.

Tim.scorer@kennedyslaw.com
Mobile phone: +44 07860 557766
Direct: +44 0 207 667 9372
Based at 25 Fenchurch Ave. London EC3M 5AD



Winter Gliding Holidays in South Africa

Fully compliant with Covid protocols

The Country

Magnificent Scenery and Unique Wildlife

No jet lag - Same Time Zone
as Central Europe

Convenient overnight flights
to Cape Town and Johannesburg

The Site

Friendly Club Atmosphere
Good airfield facilities

World Class Guest Houses
within 4km's of the airfield

The Gliding

Ideal cross country environment
Strong thermals, high cloud bases
and safe outlanding conditions

Excellent fleet of well equipped gliders

Daily Met Briefings
Task Planning and Guidance

Detailed post flight analysis

Comprehensive fleet of well equipped gliders - 2 x JS1, Duo Discus, Ash25, Nimbus 3, ASW27, LS6c 18, Ventus b 16.7, LS7 and LS4

~ GLIDING WITH A DIFFERENCE ~
Soaring Safaris

www.soaring-safaris.com

rbradley@soaring-safaris.com
Dick Bradley : +27 83 280 1028

Bronze & Beyond

Get ready for the summer!

The book that tells you what every British cross-country pilot should know.

Available from BGA, larger gliding clubs & direct from:

www.mccullagh.biz

SAILPLANE &GLIDING



NEW FOR 2021: subscribers will have free access to an online version of *S&G**

*** your username is the email address you have registered with the BGA**

www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/online-issues

Six issues for the price of three!

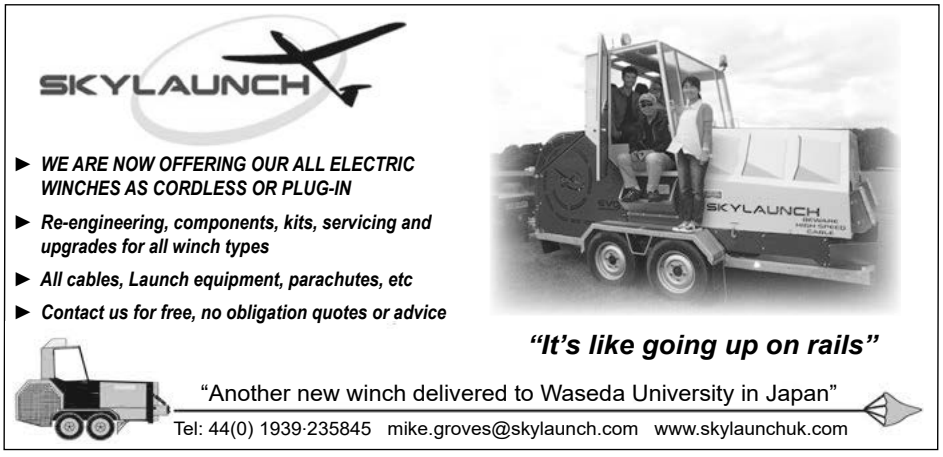
Subscribe to S&G today by Direct Debit and you will receive six copies of S&G for the price of three – that's just £12.88 for the first year of your DD subscription. Subscribing to *S&G* costs just £25.75 for one year (six issues) for UK-based pilots.
THAT'S LESS THAN THE COST OF A SINGLE AEROTOW!
www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/subscribe-now

Photo: Ron Smith Photography









INDEX TO DISPLAY ADVERTISERS

AFE/RD Aviation	inside back cover
Airborne Composites	74
Bristol & Glos GC	71
BGA	9 + 15 + 65
Centre National de Vol á Voile	71
East of England	74
Forbes Brokers	35
GASCo Flight Safety	72
Hayward Aviation	15
Hill Aviation	31
John McCullagh	73
Kennedys Law	73
Lasham GS	7
Midland GC	42
Norfolk GC	31
North Yorkshire Sailplanes	74
Oxfordshire Sportflying	72
Philip Wills Trust	23
Pooleys	IFC
Skylaunch	74
Soaring Safaris	73
Southern Sailplanes	back cover
Stein Financial	72
Sydney Charles Aviation	7
Zulu Glasstek	71

Sailplane & Gliding's cover and entire contents are the copyright of The British Gliding Association. Nothing herein may be republished in any medium or format, in whole or in part, without explicit prior written permission from the publisher. Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the BGA, nor of the editor. The publisher reserves the right to accept, reject, discontinue or edit any advertising offered for publication. Publication and/or inclusion of advertising is not an endorsement, qualification, approval or guarantee of the advertiser or of the service or product advertised. Readers are advised to make their own enquiries in respect of advertisers they may use.

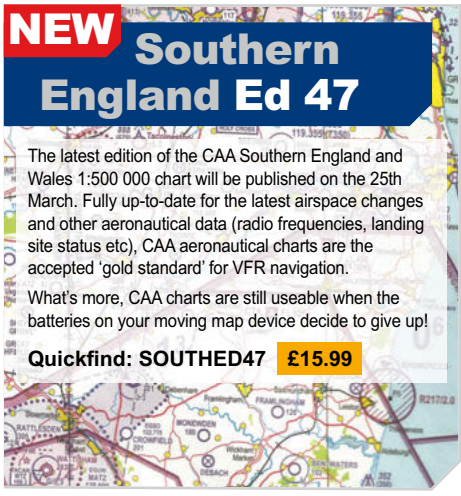
Return to flight, Spring 2021

As the gliding movement prepares to return to flight (currently expected to be 29th March for solo flight; 12th April for flight training), AFE is gearing-up to support its customers old and new in the coming months. So whether you need up-to-date charts, launch accessories, training materials, an oxygen system or anything else from our 3,500+ product range, AFE are on hand to support your flying, just as we have been since 1973.

You can reach us via our website and by phone, e-mail or fax (OK, maybe not fax). However you choose to contact us, you'll be assured of friendly and efficient service from people who know and care about flying.



NEW Southern England Ed 47



The latest edition of the CAA Southern England and Wales 1:500 000 chart will be published on the 25th March. Fully up-to-date for the latest airspace changes and other aeronautical data (radio frequencies, landing site status etc), CAA aeronautical charts are the accepted 'gold standard' for VFR navigation.

What's more, CAA charts are still useable when the batteries on your moving map device decide to give up!

Quickfind: SOUTHED47 **£15.99**

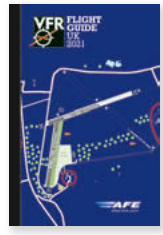
NEW Skyway Code V3



The 2021 edition of the CAA's Skyway Code was published in March. Fully up-to-date for a post-BREXIT, post-EASA, world; The Skyway Code gives GA pilots a 'one-stop-shop' for safety rules, aviation legislation and practical safety advice. V3 includes information on the UK's departure from the EU and updates to all aeronautical information, including radio frequencies and frequency monitoring codes.

Quickfind: SKYWAYCODEV3 **£12.99**

NEW 2021 UK VFR Flight Guide



Fully updated for Spring 2021, our editorial team took the decision to delay the publication of our 2021 VFR Flight Guide from its traditional pre-Christmas printing slot. The flight guide has now been fully revised with an effective information date of 25th March.

Why fly around with outdated or invalid information? This is the most up-to-date VFR Flight Guide for the 2021 flying season.

Quickfind: VFR2021 **£27.95**

TOST launch accessories



Now is the perfect time to replace worn-out launch accessories and safety items. AFE carries a full range of quality TOST launch accessories including:

- weak links
- reserve weak links
- weak link sheaths
- shackles
- hooks and notched rings

TOST recommend that weak links are replaced after 200 starts.

See **afeonline.com** for a complete list of TOST launch accessories

TOST tubes and tyres





AFE holds a comprehensive stock of TOST tyres, inner tubes and wheels to fit all common glider types (and most of the uncommon types too!). So if your tyres are looking a bit the worse for wear, replace them now before they stop you flying on the perfect soaring day.

TOST recommend that when replacing a tyre, you should always replace the inner tube too rather than re-installing the original.

See **afeonline.com** for a complete list of TOST tubes, tyres and wheel accessories

Mountain High Oxygen Systems



Mountain High are the most highly respected name in portable aviation oxygen products and AFE have a comprehensive stock of Mountain High oxygen systems, bottles, masks, connectors and accessories to meet your aviation oxygen needs.

See **afeonline.com** for a complete list of Mountain High aviation oxygen products.

All prices include UK VAT



southernsailplanes

- Supply
- Maintain
- Repair
- Certify

Membury Airfield,
Lambourn Woodlands,
Hungerford,
Berkshire RG17 7TJ

tel_ 01488 71 774
evenings_ 01488 668 484
mobile_ 07774 429 404
email_ office@southernsailplanes.com

Time two Fes up

Schempp-Hirth have been busy working with LZ Design to incorporate a Front Electric Sustainer into the legendary Duo Discus.
If you would like more details or wish to secure your place on the advance priority list, then please get in touch with us now:
phil@southernsailplanes.com

WE NOW HOLD
GROB 109
FORMER RAF VIGILANT STOCK
GROB AIRCRAFT
ORIGINAL SPARES
THREE ZERO HOURS GROB 2500 E1 ENGINES - INCLUDING THE LAST - WWW.SOUTHERNSAILPLANES.COM

G109ABLE

Grob 109B spares for sale.
Their proceeds will go towards Aerobility's fantastic G109ABLE Project. Go to www.g109able.org to find out more.

To see our facilities, or use our ever growing online shop please visit us at: www.southernsailplanes.com

We can maintain all models, from all manufacturers. To find out more or make a booking, please contact Pete Pengilly: pete@southernsailplanes.com

For more information on the: new Duo Discus FES, Ventus-3F, Ventus-3T, Ventus-3M, Discus 2c FES, the new Arcus-M/T or any other Schempp-Hirth masterpiece please contact Philip Jones: phil@southernsailplanes.com

SCHEMPP–HIRTH *Performance without equal.*

SOLE UK AGENTS FOR SCHEMPP-HIRTH | GLIDER SALES, PARTS SUPPLY & SUPPORT | INSPECTIONS & ANNUAL MAINTENANCE | COMPLEX REPAIRS & INSURANCE WORK | APPROVED FOR ANY EU-REGISTERED GLIDER | GLIDER COMPONENT REPAIR | SOLO ENGINE INSPECTIONS | OEHLER PROPELLER REPAIRS | EASA PART M SUBPART G APPROVED | EASA PART 145 APPROVED | CALL US FOR FURTHER DETAILS: 01488 71774

'Fes Up', created by Howard Jones Design © 2021 T 07990 514478