

FINAL GLIDE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OXFORD GLIDING CLUB

Issue 13: March 1995

Edited by Phil Hawkins

INTER CLUB LEAGUE FINAL

All three days of the Inter Club Final weekend at Husbands Bosworth on 27-29 August were flyable, although somewhat windy, and the Club once again put together a good team effort.

This year there were 7 clubs in the final: Cotswold, Saltby, Imperial College, Bath & Wilts, Camphill, Cambridge and ourselves. On the first day Martin Hastings (pundit) and Simon Hogg (novice) completed their tasks albeit fairly slowly for 6th and 4th places respectively. Andy Barnes (intermediate) unfortunately landed out in the K-6e as did several other intermediates. In overall placings we came 6th with Cambridge last, and the Cotswold team from Aston Down took an early 3-point lead from Saltby and Camphill in joint second place.

Sunday was even windier than Saturday, probably 35kt at flying levels, with scattered heavy showers. The thermals were also good and strong at times especially from mid-afternoon onwards, after the worst area of rain had passed by. Phil Hawkins completed the pundit task in 5th place, again fairly slowly after getting stuck for a long time several miles downwind of the first turning point.

Intermediate John Hanlon set off too soon after the rain and landed out 6km on track, scoring zero in common with several other intermediates on this day. Novice Steve Porat came equal 2nd with five other pilots, but only because they didn't leave the safety of HB airfield. Jim Rodgers from Aston Down, who must be the most experienced novice in the country, actually completed the task at a respectable 72kph.

After the second day we had pulled up to 5th place overall with Bath & Wilts

dropping to 6th, and Cotswold still firmly in the lead. In the evening our hosts had organised a buffet, and a silly *It's a Knockout* contest. Most of the games seemed to involve drinking beer or taking clothes off (or both) and no-one seems to be able to remember who won!

The last day's conditions were the best of the weekend. Lighter wind and good lift most of the time, although pilots did report dull areas of spread out cloud in some places. Graham Barrett (pundit) completed his task at 73kph in 6th place, but the heroes of the day, and indeed the entire weekend, were Cris Emson (intermediate) and Howard Stone (novice) who both won their tasks at 99kph and 69kph respectively. This achievement was only slightly marred by a temporary mix-up with the handicaps which at first gave the honours to other pilots. It meant our lads didn't get to stand up at the front and tell us how they did it, but the organisers found prize bottles for them later when the scores were sorted out.

Our final club placing was still 5th, with Cotswold the clear winners five points ahead of Imperial College. Saltby were third and Camphill who had done well on the first day dropped to 4th.

Whilst browsing through the results it is interesting to compare the number of different pilots which each team uses in the final. As always we used 9 different pilots over the 3-day event, but this is in marked contrast to the other teams:

Oxford	9
Cambridge	6
Bath/Wilts	5
Camphill	5
Cotswold	5
Imp. College	5
Saltby	3

OGC FAX LINE

The Club now has a dedicated fax line. The fax machine has been moved upstairs to the briefing room.

Clubroom phone: 01869 343265

New fax line: 01869 343403

Launch Point: 0836 773210

Remember the fax and launch point lines are for incoming calls only. Note that mobile numbers will not have the extra digit added after 16 April.

ABOYNE IN OCTOBER

"Come to Aboyne in October" they said. Best time of the year. We drove up on Saturday (about 10hrs with stops) and located the cottages. We had booked two between the eight of us, which were cosily picturesque and on the hill overlooking the airfield. At first glance the site with its 5 metre wide runways didn't look nearly as daunting as we feared, but the weather was very still. Sunday was also calm and sunny, and we flew in weak thermals rising off the shallow slopes to the south of the field.

On Monday we visited Crathie church near Balmoral and looked around the Royal Lochnagar whiskey distillery. In the afternoon I flew in reasonable wave conditions reaching 8,500ft and Graham got 9,000ft just before sunset. Haste and the local pundits managed 13,000ft.

The weather remained warm and dry with little or no wind for the rest of the week and I didn't fly again. On Tuesday we went to the nature reserve at Glen Muick, listening to the stags bellowing on the hill and walking along the beach on the loch shore. There were localised areas of wind on the ground and some wave clouds. The local pundits again reached 12,000ft.

On Wednesday we did the forest walks at Glen Tanar looking for blewits and penny bun mushrooms. Next day a trip with Graham and Lynne to the north coast, driving through quaint fishing villages such as Portsoy and Cullen. For the time of year the weather was quite beautiful, for everyone except glider pilots, that is.

On Friday Graham flew again (thermals, not wave) while I took Lynne on a trip through the highlands to the west. Saw and heard red grouse near the Lecht ski centre. Saw a highland wedding at Tomintoul and looked through the little museum of local farm implements. In the evening Haste and myself stayed with Brian Evans and Lorraine just northwest of Aberdeen. Next morning the weather had changed completely. Low cloud, drizzle and easterly wind.

We packed up and drove to Feshiebridge to have a chat with Barry Meeks who was running their annual wave camp. Barry has an enviable life style nowadays, spending the summer months here taking his tug around the competitions, then moving to his other house in New Zealand from November to April.

So I can recommend Aboyne for a nice relaxing holiday, country walks, seaside trips, brilliant autumn colours in the Deeside silverbirch forests, and you don't spend much on aerotow fees either. There were wild stories circulating about 30,000ft climbs and the Pawnee tug soaring in 18kt wave lift two days before we arrived, but most of us didn't believe such idle chatter. Lynne Barrett said it was the best gliding holiday she ever had. If you don't believe me, ask her. *Phil Hawkins*

CFI's TURN...



RAFSPA Operation

Now that the new season is just over the horizon, it is that time of the year again when we look at RAFSPA* starting up and thinking *If only they weren't there!* Unfortunately they are, and we have to live with them. Last year ended with some negative feelings towards RAFSPA, that they were again trying to force us off the airfield.

Well, if that is what you are thinking, then I have good news! Over the past few weeks Steve Evans and myself have been liaising with the parachutists' new Chief Instructor, Nigel Rodoff. These meetings have given us a good chance to air our differences, and what has come from it is the possibility of a better operation for us all. Indeed, over the past few weeks since we started talking, the operation with RAFSPA has been extremely good, with some changes already coming into the way we launch. I believe it will continue to improve over the year as we learn to operate more closely together, with further changes coming through the year.

Details of the changes in the operation will be passed on to Instructors and Duty Pilots at ground briefings to be held shortly. Apart from enabling us to operate alongside RAFSPA more easily, we should also be able to get them to stand down for 30 minutes on the good cross-country days so that we can launch our cross-country pilots as quickly as possible. This has always been a stumbling block and I hope this will ease the pressure on the launch system on such days.

The Skyvan

There have been rumours about the effect which the Skyvan will have on our operation. As far as we can determine at present, it seems to be a direct replacement for the balloon and should not affect us at weekends any more than the balloon did in the past. Indeed, with the greater efficiency offered by the Skyvan operation the weekday drop programmes (which typically begin on a Thursday) are possibly *more* likely to be completed before the weekend.

Briefings

There will shortly be an Instructor's meeting, but I also intend to continue with Duty Pilot briefings, started by John Hanlon last year. I am arranging three meetings, on Sunday 9 April, Wednesday 12 April and Saturday 15 April (Easter Saturday), all starting at 7.30pm and lasting approximately 1 hour. I will send a reminder to all people I think should be acting as Duty Pilots, and they should all attend *one* of these meetings. If you are unable to do so, contact me specifically, otherwise I shall assume you will attend.

Feeling Rusty?

If you feel a little rusty from last year, especially if you have not done a lot of cross country flying, then this is a good time for a flight in a motor glider. Go for an hour and practice field selection and field landings. It is a great boost to the self-confidence, and is great fun too.

Operating Procedures

You may be surprised to know that somewhere in the Clubhouse there is a folder containing a wealth of information on how we operate the Club – how to tow gliders, how to park them and so on. I have been updating this recently, and it is nearing completion. Although a bit large I think it contains many of the answers to the questions you were afraid to ask. The new version will be available in the Clubhouse soon, but I am also hoping that it can be sent to all Club members – then there will be no excuse!

And finally...

Like everyone else I am hoping for a good season. My aim is to get as much trouble-free flying as possible during the year. Let us now focus our attention on the gliding, and let's have a great year.

CRIS EMSON

* Note for non-members: Royal Air Force Sport Parachute Association

Extracts from STAFFORDSHIRE GLIDING CLUB NEWS

This club have introduced a new method of charging for air experience flights (AEFs or "trial lessons") which merits some consideration. For all temporary members they charge £20 for one month's membership, and all flights made during that month are charged at normal club rates.

This has several potential advantages. The temporary member who gets a longer flight pays more. Subject to demand, weather conditions and aptitude longer flights can be offered. It also simplifies log keeping since all flights are charged at the same rate.

Two exceptions are: the price of flight gift vouchers remains unchanged, as does the price of flights on evening group bookings.

Ian Martin describes flying in wave over magnificent scenery on Hope Mountain at the Vancouver Soaring Association in British Columbia. The club owns four Blaniks and Ian found a friendly welcome extended by the local instructors. He had a flight to 7,400ft above well-defined lenticular clouds.

"Those who have struggled to make sense of the [Pilatus] B4 variometer will be pleased to know that the combined efforts of a mouse with a passion for plastic tubing and a plumber with a sense of humour have been corrected. Pipes without holes (except down the middle) now connect the instruments to the proper orifices..."

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Distributed free to members, ex-members and friends of the Oxford Gliding Club. Contributors to this issue were: Anthony Buck, Andy Butterfield, Cris Emson, Phil Hawkins, Simon Hogg, Mike O'Neill, Barry Taylor, Marianne Williams, Chris Woodcock and Joe Wren, with extracts from Aquila and Staffordshire club magazines.

Contributions are always welcome on any subject, even if only loosely connected with the Club. "How I dun it" stories always wanted, otherwise the editor may carry out his threat to print his own.

Contacts with editors of other club magazines are also wanted, for exchange of information and articles.

If you like reading *Final Glide*, think about how you could contribute. This is your magazine. Don't let other people run it (or ruin it) for you!!

I MET THIS BIRD ...at 4000ft

Who was there on 7 August? enquired the last *Final Glide*. Well I was, although I must confess I wasn't there many other days in 1994.

I was there on 26 March for an 85km o/r in a K8 and 8 August saw me get out to Turweston and back in a K8 within the hour, which isn't a bad hit rate for my half dozen or so visits to Weston this year. Mind you, I got it wrong on 13 August and missed the chance of a 300km in FWA: something that still rankles me!

But I digress. On 7 August, I jumped into K8 Yankee Zulu and flew upwind to see how much ground I could cover into a 15-20 knot wind before turning back to Weston at the end of my allotted hour. I made it almost as far as Brackley before turning back after 45 mins flying, but was surprised to find that another 5 minutes at 70 knots had me back at Weston (should play with my John Willy more often). At 2000ft and a mile or so off the airfield, I bumped into a particularly nice thermal and thought I would use up the remaining time finding out where cloudbase was before I landed.

It was a textbook thermal - almost as unreal as the ones found on Flight Simulator™. Five knots all the way round, no stick or rudder correction required for several turns, and no turbulence. Cloudbase arrived at a little over 5000ft and I decided to practice a steep descending turn; once explained to me by Mike Cuming as the best way of diving off height for wave flyers needing to get down through a hole in closing cloud bars.

S-turns to check what might be below as thermals are a favourite spot for spiralling up in rather than descending. Then brakes full open, trim forward to 65 knots and start a rate 2 turn to the left, keeping a good lookout all the while.

Really good fun which goes on for some time when you are working against a strong updraft. At 3500ft I levelled out and climbed again to 4000ft in the thermal whilst re-assessing the positions of other gliders in readiness for another rapid descent. Still no-one in my thermal (where were all those OGC glidists?)

It was then that I spotted a large gull about 20m ahead and slightly below me. In my model gliding days, I used to have a lot of fun (but little success) chasing gulls and rooks around the sky and I wondered what it would be like in a K8.

So I eased the stick forward again and, using the brakes for speed control, closed on him whereupon he peeled off left into a shallow dive. I followed, keeping a good lookout all the while. He broke right, I broke right; he pulled up, I closed the brakes and pulled up with him, levelling off still 20m behind him. It seemed, in contrast to my model flying experiences, that a K8 **could** keep in touch with the birds. Or was he just letting me?

He dived off to the left again and I followed, only this time I was convinced he was not trying to get away, but was inviting me to follow him. I could see him quite clearly weighing me up by glancing back over his shoulder (do gulls have shoulders?) By careful adjustment of the brakes, I eased the K8 gradually closer to him until he was no more than 10 metres away, tucked in almost between my port wing and the nose of the glider.

We flew then together in formation, both holding in a descending turn to port while the landscape moved around us, each glancing around first at his companion, then around the skies to make sure the way ahead was clear. Finally at 2700ft, it was time to break off and start behaving in a more controlled manner in readiness for entering the circuit, so I waved him goodbye and that was that.

A trivial interlude perhaps, but an unusual and memorable experience for me. Enough to sustain my love of gliding until I can find sufficient spare time to pursue more demanding challenges such as 300km flights.....in a K8 perhaps.

Mike O'Neill

CLUB OFFICERS - 1995

Chairman	Steve Evans	Workshop Manager	Graham Barrett
Vice-Chairman	Brian Payne	Ground Equipment	Chris Buck
Treasurer	Howard Stone	Parachutes	John Hanlon
		Radios	Brian Payne
Committee members	Chris Buck	Instruments	Brian Payne
	Simon Hogg	Instructor Rota	Cris Emson
	Norman Machin	Membership Secretary	Phil Hawkins
		Duty Pilot Rota	Simon Hogg
Chief Flying Instructor	Cris Emson	Inter Club League	Simon Hogg
Deputy CFI	Martin Hastings	Publications	Phil Hawkins
Technical Officer	Brian Payne	Friday Evening Bookings	Peter Awcock
Safety Officer	Graham Barrett	S & G Club News	Phil Hawkins
		Social Secretary	(post vacant)

A MODERN GLIDING FABLE

Young Robert was flying beautifully, and at only 20 he knew he was one of the top ten glider pilots in the world. As he caught the 4kt thermal, perfectly centred of course, in his DG400 above Weston-on-the-Green, he reflected on his first solo on his 16th birthday, when he also achieved his silver height and duration. He had won full gold before he was 18 and all diamonds three months later, and his ultimate goal, the world championships, were only 9 months away.

The glider hit sudden turbulence, and from behind his head he heard something snap. With horror he looked out and realised that the starboard wing was detaching itself! Simultaneously the wing folded up, and Robert jettisoned the canopy as the glider flipped over onto its back. His lightning reactions released the straps in milliseconds and, casting a last glance at the altimeter which read 4200ft he kicked himself clear of the plummeting, doomed glider.

Half of his mind tried to work out what could have caused such an unexpected and catastrophic failure, while the other part counted to five knowing that he had ample time to ensure that he cleared the crashing glider before pulling the ring.

The ring, the final ingredient to his escape, was where it should be on his left shoulder strap. He pulled, there was brief resistance and ... *he was left holding a detached release ring!* Hope turned to despair as his body plunged towards the ground, building up to terminal velocity at 120kt. In the next twelve seconds, Robert reflected on the various failures that had contributed to his certain death: the failure of a proven and tested component on a nearly new machine, the failure of a parachute only tested and repacked two months earlier. The scream in his head turned to blackness!

Robert opened his eyes incredulously. Had he survived? He felt light and strange, there was mist everywhere. A booming voice behind him said:

"Hello, young man!"

He whipped his head round to see a white-bearded friendly looking old

man in long robes holding a large opened book.

"Where am I?" he demanded.

"In the next world, Robert" the old man mumbled. "But I can't find you on today's list."

"But I can't be dead, can I?"

"You most certainly are" said the old man, "but you shouldn't be. I'm afraid there seems to have been a dreadful mistake."

"A mistake! Well, undo it. Send me back!" said the frantic Robert.

"I'm sorry, there's no way back" said the old man.

"But I'm only just starting my life. I was going to win the world championships next year. I was going to manufacture my own range of gliders. I was -"

"Stop! We can't do anything to reverse what has happened, but I can make sure that you have the chance to achieve some of your ambitions, and to make sure you find your time here pleasurable. My name is St Peter, but you can call me Peter. Come with me, and I'll show you what I mean."

The two drifted along, through a huge cloud, and on the other side Robert found himself on top of a small hill looking down upon a huge grass airfield. Lined up were row upon row of gleaming gliders.

"The first one is yours" said Peter, "and you're just in time for our own world championships."

"Really?" exclaimed Robert. He walked towards the brand new, fully instrumented Ventus. "Where's the parachute?"

"No need for one of those here" grinned Peter.

The young man strapped himself in, and miraculously all 30 gliders were launched simultaneously to 2000ft. No-one seemed to care about safety, and 29 planes converged on the only visible cumulus marking a thermal. Robert hung back - he saw heat haze 40 degrees left of the cumulus and headed for it.

Wham! The Ventus bucked and twisted. Robert saw the variometer needle hard against its stop, 10kt + upwards. Within 2 minutes the altimeter showed 7800ft. He looked across and down where 3 miles away 29 gliders were struggling in a



disappearing thermal. Some were starting to peel off towards him, but they were too late. He pushed off on course for the first turning point at 100kt. There was no loss of height - even at this speed he was gaining feet, he was in wave.

One hour and fifty-three minutes later the airfield was 1 mile dead ahead. 300km in record time, and at that moment he knew he was a great glider pilot, the best. But with the finish line only a few hundred yards ahead he instinctively felt the presence of another object.

There was a glint from 50ft directly above him, and another glider travelling at least 25kt faster flashed past him and crossed the finishing line first. He saw that the winning aeroplane was an old glass ship, a Standard Cirrus, far inferior to his own. He viewed the other plane cross the finish line and use its inertia to execute four perfect loops from zero feet, finishing with a chandelle and a sideslip landing.

With disbelief he saw the Cirrus actually land into the hangar, its wingtips missing the doors by inches on each side, and his last view was of the tail disappearing with the identification letters 278. With a sudden chill Robert realised that he knew these numbers, he knew that plane.

Shaken, Robert nearly made a complete mess of his own landing. Head hung in despair, for he knew he could never hope to equal the flying he had just witnessed, he dragged his feet across the short green grass towards St Peter.

"Did you see that?" he asked. "That other glider. I know it. He's not here as well, is he?"

"No, no" laughed St Peter. "Don't worry about that pilot, it was only God. He just thinks he's Cris Emson."

Chris Woodcock

at recipes for HUNGRY GLIDER PILOTS

Why pay Sainsburys/Asda for flavours you can make – yes, even you – can make yourself?

TIKKA MARINADE – Put anything you can grill or BBQ into this:

2 garlic cloves, crushed. (*Not bulbs, they are cloves joined together*).
 ½ – 2 teaspoons chilli powder. (*How hot do you like it?*)
 1 teaspoon fresh chopped root ginger. (*The fawn knobbly bits in the veg section*).
 1 teaspoon chopped fresh mint or ½ teaspoon dried. (*So easy you can grow it in a flower pot. Is this an idea for the BBQ area at the Club? It deters flies*).
 ½ teaspoon dried cumin. (*variations in pronunciation allowed*).
 1 tablespoon edible oil. (*not Castrol*).
 5 fluid oz. (1 small pot) natural yoghurt. (*I also tried banana flavour as nobody likes it in our family and it tasted OK*).

Mix together, put food in and leave overnight, or freeze in marinade. Ideal with chicken and lamb.

HOT CHILI CHICKEN – Col. Sanders eat your heart out – so easy you can do it. *ely do this one.*

2 tablespoons flour
 4 teaspoons paprika
 ½ – 2 teaspoons chilli powder
 ½ teaspoon salt. *You can make the above mixture in larger quantities and keep it in a jar.*
 Boneless chicken meat (*any cut as long as it's boneless*).

Cut the chicken into thick strips. Roll in the dry mixture on a plate and grill for 6–8 minutes, turn once and brush with oil. Serve with oven chips/salad/anything really.

PATÉ – use this to impress someone with a starter, toast topper, jacket potato filler, pitta bread stuffing, cracker topping etc.

1 tin tuna or 2 smoked mackerel fillets or 4oz strong cheddar cheese grated
 8oz soft cheese (*any variety will do, low/medium/full fat*).
 2 tablespoons chopped chives or 2 chopped spring onions or ¼ onion finely chopped.
 Black pepper to taste.
 2 teaspoons horseradish sauce (*perhaps not with the cheddar version*)

Mash the fish, mix in the rest of the ingredients and chill or freeze.

INSTANT PUD – wherever there is a grill, unfortunately not (yet) at the clubhouse.

Any tin of fruit, drained. (*I like peaches best for this*).
 1 carton or ½ pint extra thick double cream (*or whipping cream if you have a whisk*).
 3 – 4 tablespoons demerara sugar.

Put fruit in an ovenproof dish, top with cream and level the top, sprinkle over the sugar and grill until the topping has bubbled and browned.

BARBECUED BANANAS – or what to do when you've finished cooking the meat and there is plenty of heat left in the BBQ.

Put bananas on BBQ unopened and wait until they are blackened and start to ooze! Slit open and eat. Or try this deluxe version – carefully slit the banana along one edge, making a cut in the fruit and put some thin dark chocolate in the split. Wrap in foil and BBQ in the foil until done.

Yes, recipes you can make, from the Oxford Gliding Club home economist (who gives **free** onion chopping lessons). My sister [Fiona Buck] will tell you I can't cook, but who can in someone else's kitchen? [I'm not sure who's kidding who here – Editor]

Marianne Williams

AGM REPORT

The 44th annual general meeting was held on 19 November 1994. Chairman John Hanlon reported a good year for badge claims and competition entrants. Launches were down by 6% but hours were up by 5% and cross country kilometres up by 8%. He admitted that there had also been a number of frustrating flying days due to problems with RAFSPA. They have had a considerable increase in membership due to other parachute clubs closing down. However, there was an extremely poor turnout of our members at operational procedure meetings designed to make the best of the available launch opportunities.

Treasurer Howard Stone described a change which he has made to the cashing up procedure. Site Trust Fund money now consists solely of Trial Lessons and any non-flying income. Our total income was £31,000 in 1993–94, and although the accounts show a net loss of £1270 this does include a depreciation figure of £8,000.

There was some general discussion about depreciation. At present our gliders are depreciated at 12½% per annum but this is very unrealistic. However there could be some very unwelcome tax implications if we change this.

Two motions were considered by the meeting. The first, to increase the annual subscription by £5 to £130, was carried. The second motion required the new Committee to address the problem of missed launches by negotiation with RAFSPA. There are two basic options – either we negotiate with RAFSPA on a daily basis, or negotiate an official procedure to give us a guaranteed minimum level of operation. Official negotiation should include Sports Council representatives since our original grants from the Council were given on the understanding that both airfield operations were mutually acceptable.

Many members were concerned about formal negotiations due to the risk of losing more than we gain, but the motion was carried on a majority vote with a fair number of objectors.

After the formal election of trustees and honorary members, the 1995 Committee was settled. Barry Taylor is the new Club Secretary, and the Chairman's post was taken at the last minute by Steve Evans. Other Committee members are Chris Buck, Peter Awcock and Simon Hogg.

Club trophies were then awarded:

Ladder trophy: Graham Barrett.

Simpson Cup: Howard Stone.

Deep Breath Cup: Phil Hawkins.

Flying brick: Martin Hastings.

Dennis Farmer trophy: Peter Awcock.

Malcolm Laurie Memorial: Cris Emson.

Two-Up trophy: Andy Butterfield.

DIARY

of a 7½ year old

at Sutton
Bank

Saturday: Had a long gerny to Yorkshire. Got to the gliding club, had a game of pool. Went to the house. Unpacked, listen to the radio, had dinner, played battle ship, had corn flacks. Got Eerly Easter present - it was boules. We had lots of people for dinner.

Easter Sunday: Got into bed with nana this morning, had breckfast, went for a walk, had more breckfast. Went to Notingham Castale in Scarborough then robin hoods bay and fished and flu the kite. Saw the golf balls at flylingdales.

Easter Monday: Went to rivaulx abbey and helmsley castle and saw an Ice cream factory. Went to the gliding club and played with lisa and pala. Went home, had dinner. Played cards.

Tuesday: Went to gliding club to get the map book then went to

Catterick camp to see were nana lived when she was a baby, then we went to Richmond to find the Victoria Hospital were nana was born. Wile we were there we borght some walking boots for me and a picnic then we went back to the gliding club and played pool.

Wednesday: We went to pickering to catch thee 11.20 north Yorkshire steem train to grosmont. We just had enough time to look at the sheds where there was a Railway crane taking a boiler off an old engine. Had a long walk to see mallyn spout which is a waterfall. We only just caught the train back to pickering. We went back to the g. club for a cup of tea and a game of pool. Janet cooked Vegi Moussaka.

Thursday: We went to Eden farm and saw lots of sheep. Joanne and I fed a lamb. We had lunch in the

car in a hail-storm looking at a lake in front of Castle Howerd. Back to the club for a cup of tea. Everyone back to our place for curry.

Friday: In the morning we went to the market in Helmsley. I bought a fountain pen. In the afternoon it was raining so we went swimming. Back to the g.club for cup of tea and game of pool. Everyone came back to our house for fish and chips.

Saturday: We went to the gliding club and had breakfast then played pool. We set off on are Journey home. I was daddy's navigator. We stopped half way at buger King for lunch, then I had a picture taken with a dinosaur. When we got back to Weston on the Green I flew in a glider with Simon. Then we washed the mud off the cable parachutes and I got soaked, then we went home and unpacked.

Anthony Buck

UPPER HEYFORD

The local debate about what to do with Upper Heyford airfield rumbles on. In January the District Council produced a report saying that the proposed "new town" would require substantial improvements to existing road networks around the 1200 acre site.

Recently a public meeting was held in Upper Heyford village hall and Council representatives apparently ruled out the new town idea altogether. The local Parish Council have also put forward a plan for multiple uses of the site, which includes using the existing housing; maintaining the existing recreational facilities, hospital and shops; encouraging new businesses but without any new building on the site; and using the airfield for light aircraft.

The Oxfordshire County Council planning department are also involved, and will be examining these proposals in addition to many others which have been put forward. There have even been calls for the site to be returned to agricultural use, but this seems one of the least likely options in view of current farming trends.

NEWS NOTES

A commercial proposal was made recently for a new international airport on land west of the A34 between Marcham and Steventon. The idea appears to have been ruled out in the House of Commons where the plan had no support at all. The same site is also the subject of a Thames Water proposal for a new reservoir.

The RAF recently pointed out that the Oxford Gliding Club is subject to the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) because it is on MoD property which is subject to the Act. It is incorrect to assume that the airfield owners are responsible. They are entitled to pass on this responsibility to the airfield tenants in the form of conditions. This could have future implications for the Club.

The hydrogen-filled barrage balloons at Weston airfield are to be "retired". In April these balloons which have been used for parachute training since WW2 will be replaced by a Skyvan aircraft which will operate for up to 120 days a year for Territorial Army drops.

Extracts from AQUILA FLYER

Eddie Chalk describes flying at Lake Keepit in Australia. The artificial lake, a reservoir for parts of Sydney, was almost bone dry at the time thanks to a four year drought, although Eddie arrived to find massive thunderstorms and cloud bases barely up to UK standards.

The dry conditions had no doubt contributed to a fire which devastated the club last October. The hangar, several aircraft, clubhouse, office and bunkrooms were all burned out.

On an aerotow check flight, Eddie was alarmed by launching into a dense red sandstorm created by the tug. The visibility was nil and the smell of kangaroo droppings was overpowering. Said kangaroos, carefully camouflaged against the dusty ground, also tended to be scattered around the landing areas.

Colin Allender relates sharing a thermal over Croughton at 2000ft with two soaring Red Kites.

A cartoon in the December issue puts forward the idea that the DV panel in the glider canopy is intended for *chucking out the GPS when you get lost!*



1993-94

Graham Barrett is the current ladder champion, a decisive win by over 700 points from Andy Barnes in second place with Phil Hawkins third. Last season was better than average with two 500kms being flown, thirteen 300kms and more than twenty other flights over 200km. The total of 15,941 cross country kilometres is 8% up on the year before.

Graham and Phil made the successful 500km flights last year. Graham's flight was on 30 June (while the opposition was on holiday abroad) from Bicester at a handicap speed of 69.5kph in 7hr 40min, a four legged task around Newark, Newbury and HB. Phil's flight on 13 August, exactly a year after his previous 500, was a triangle around Ely and Talybont in 6hr 7min at 80.8kph.

Other flights in excess of 300km were made by Andy Barnes, Graham Barrett, Tony Boyce (3 times), Andy Butterfield, Martin Cooper, Gordon Craig, John Gordon, Alex Jenkins, Brian Payne (twice) and Howard Stone.

The fastest handicap speed was recorded by Cris Emson in the Inter Club League Final at HB (99.1kph) whilst the fastest from Weston was Gordon Craig's 304km around Evesham, Caxton Gibbet and Oundle at 86.2kph.

23 pilots entered flights in the ladder this year, which is 3 more than the year before, but we still need more to take part. The top 10 were:

Graham Barrett	(points)	5,989
Andy Barnes		5,265
Phil Hawkins		5,120
Gordon Craig		4,426
Tony Boyce		3,817
Howard Stone		3,809
Martin Hastings		3,786
Cris Emson		3,781
Brian Payne		3,669
John Gordon		3,257

The leading gliders in terms of cross country km flown were:

DG-202 515	(km)	3,001
Cirrus 278		2,419
DG-100 251		1,895
K-6e 577		1,622
Libelle CLV		1,222
Mini-Nimbus 147		1,121
LS-4 224		1,094

GRUNAU BABY

My affair with this glider started in 1958 at Weston-on-the-Green, after initial training to solo standard in the Sedbergh (T21). The Sedbergh had spoilers which helped the pilot to land the aircraft more or less where it was wanted, but the Grunau had no such aid. It had to be landed at the correct speed and in the absence of spoilers it was necessary to side-slip in order to lose any excess height.

When the great day arrived to be sent off solo in the Grunau my briefing was preceded by a check flight in the two seater, including a demonstration of side-slipping. The briefing for the Grunau was very thorough as far as the speeds for circuit, approach and landing were concerned. Soon I was off on my first flight during which my delight with this machine started. For the first time I felt as if I had sprouted my own personal wings from my shoulders.

The height achieved on the winch launch was never very great as the cable hook was a long way forward of the C of G. A winch launch of 700ft was considered to be good.

My first landing went off very well. I had remembered the instructions on speed and side-slipping, making a spot landing. *Off you go again* said the instructor. Once more that thrill of having wings on my shoulders, then when side-slipping on the approach I allowed the speed to build up by just a few knots. Consequently although my height above the ground was OK my speed was too high and the machine continued airborne for more than half the distance between the launch point and the winch. However the eventual touchdown was satisfactory and mistakes like this are in any case all part of the learning process.

The Club secretary asked if any member would be prepared to take the machine to Lasham for its annual C of A checks, and I volunteered. I had just acquired an old shooting brake from a farmer. Fitted with an usually sturdy towbar, it had obviously been used to tow farm machinery on many occasions and the hole through which the securing pin was placed had been worn into an irregular oval shape. This was in the days when tow balls were only just making an appearance, and none of the Club trailers had ball hitches anyway.

Arriving at the hangar on the appointed day I discovered the glider was still airborne. Eventually it landed and was brought to the hangar, where four other volunteers and myself proceeded to de-rig it. Not one of us had ever carried out this task before. We found someone who had put the glider in its trailer some

months before and under his hesitant guidance, in about an hour, we got the Grunau safely stowed away. By chance the electrics connection fitted and we never thought to test the system.

Somewhat later in the day than intended we set off and made reasonably good progress until we came to a small country town which was in the process of being rebuilt if the roads were anything to go by. In spite of carefully negotiating many half filled trenches, the safety pin in the securing link pulled through. To my horror, viewed through the mirror, I saw the trailer separate from the van and start to swing towards the pavement.

My immediate reaction was to try and stop the trailer by letting the left hand corner of the van catch the right hand corner of the trailer. Thankfully this worked, particularly since there were a lot of people around who we later found were mainly residents of an old peoples home.

Viewing the results of the impact revealed the damage to the trailer was nil. The glider fuselage had moved and the nose of the machine was sticking out through the front door, which had obligingly opened, so there was no damage so far. Further examination of the remainder of the aircraft showed that by sheer good fortune the only damage to the whole glider was a small triangular tear in the fabric of the tailplane. What a relief that was!

My vehicle had not been so lucky. The rear corner which had taken the impact was quite severely damaged and uncovered some wood rot which had only needed the slightest knock to disintegrate. However that was a problem for next day.

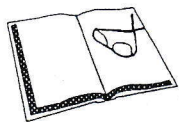
We loaded the trailer once more, assisted ably by the elderly onlookers, and after making sure the securing pin could not come adrift again (by winding a length of rope around it) we moved off towards our destination.

About half an hour later it was time to switch on the lights. We stopped to re-connect the electrics, and found that all the bulbs on the trailer were 6 volt whilst the van supplied 12 volts. Result - blown bulbs all round the trailer, and the few spares I carried were not suitable for the rear lights.

We decided to press on and take a chance, as we had only another 15 miles to go. Fortunately the traffic was very light and we had no further problems. Our first visit to Lasham had certainly given us something to remember.

The Grunau is still in pristine condition thanks to John Smoker and Ken Harris who rebuilt it and fitted spoilers. I have occasionally flown it from Hinton.

Joe Wren



EDITORIAL

I'm not yet convinced about GPS, not enough to go out and buy one that is, but the arguments for and against are gradually stacking up.

To begin with, I certainly wouldn't want to see it replace traditional navigation skills altogether. For ordinary cross country flying in reasonable weather, there is no substitute for looking over the side and following railway lines etc. If you have a choice of solutions to any problem, the low technology solution is usually best. To read a map you don't need a battery.

The only time I ever tried to use a GPS, which was last October flying Graham Barrett's Libelle at Aboyne, it beeped at me and said its batteries were running out. Fortunately, being the cautious soul that I am, I was only playing with it, being within full view of the ground at around 8,000ft. But this highlights one

possible disadvantage of GPS – if you are depending on it to find your way home (above cloud for instance) then two independent power supplies are pretty essential.

Apart from power supplies, GPS also relies on lots of external technology over which you have no control, i.e the satellites themselves. Originally placed in orbit by the USA for military purposes, they are now used all over the world for a large number of non-military applications, of which our sport is only one. The Americans are basically stuck with providing the world with a free service. They are not likely to ever let it lapse, but on the other hand they don't guarantee it is 100% accurate all the time.

There are celebrated tales of the day when the entire GPS system ran upside down for a few hours, suggesting that pilots soaring in the UK were actually over the Southern Ocean several hundred miles off the coast of New Zealand (whether this story is true or not I have no idea).

But GPS can be varied in its accuracy or even scrambled without warning by its American owners, again for military reasons. The scrambling takes the form of random errors superimposed on the radio signals, which are varied at rapid intervals. For marine users there is counter-technology springing up to combat this. Scrambled signals from the satellites are received by ground stations in fixed positions. These ground stations compare, second by second, the difference between their own fixed position and the position as

For those who don't know, GPS means Global Positioning System, a method of navigation using radio signals from orbiting satellites. The position is worked out using triangulation techniques and a lot of complicated mathematics. With micro-chips being what they are these days, the whole thing can be packed into a black box small enough to fit in your pocket. With early models only latitude and longitude positions were available, but the more recent ones will display your position in terms of distance and direction from some previously programmed point.

broadcast by the satellites, in order to filter out the scramble factor. This scramble factor is then continually broadcast on a different frequency, and marine users with the right equipment can then combine the two signals to arrive at an accurate position second by second. The secondary broadcasts can only be received by those in range of the transmitter, but coastal lighthouses were thought to be likely locations for these.

At present I don't think this option exists for aviation users of GPS. In any case our GPS units have to be quicker than the marine ones since we move faster. The marine ones are said to give up the ghost if you move them faster than about 80 knots.

Another obvious disadvantage is the cost. For the price of a GPS you can buy a brand new CAA chart every season for the next 30 years or more. Also there is the complication of finding room for the GPS unit itself on your crowded instrument panel.

Now let's look at the good things. If you got lost, wouldn't it be nice to push a few buttons and the machine tells you that Weston airfield is 14.2 miles away on heading 210 degrees? The heading information could be invaluable in poor visibility, and the distance information would be useful when doing final glides too.

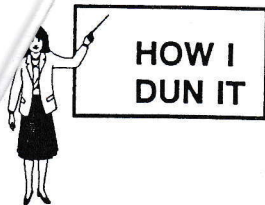
GPS also gives wave pilots more confidence to explore wave systems above total cloud cover, which is the main reason why Graham and myself took a borrowed unit to Aboyne last October. During the same week,

Haste introduced me to another novel use for GPS when flying in wave. Whenever he finds a "hot spot" in the wave he saves an instant position in the GPS so that he can get back to it easily, from the other end of a wave beat for instance. This wouldn't work too well for thermals due to the wind drift, but the idea is that wave doesn't move over the ground.

Before long GPS will be mandatory in competitions, which means that I will eventually have to buy one, or else my contest flying days are over. It also seems the "in" thing nowadays to report your landing-out place in terms of GPS co-ordinates. But does this work in practice from the ground crew's point of view?

At Enstone last year I hitched a ride with Maureen Jordy to rescue husband Mike from a field at Chipping Warden, armed only with a string of Lat/Long figures. I soon hit a major snag. The CAA charts only have these figures around the edges, and the lines are not parallel to the sides of the map. You need a big flat space to open out the map and a long straight edge to go from one side to the other. Without these we found it impossible to find our pilot until we got some outside help from another crew on the road.

The answer is, of course, for all competition pilots to buy **two** GPS units, one of which is for the use of the crew!



The year before, 6 August 1993 was forecast to be a great cross-country day, but it never happened and it was Friday 13 August which delivered the goods with a crop of Silver distances by OGC pilots, a 300k in 3hrs by Martin Hastings and Hawkeye Phil Hawkins flying 500k on the Magna Carta Run. 1994 confounded the odds and provided an exact repeat.

Despite a noncommittal forecast on 13 August the day looked promising from the moment I surveyed the skies from home. On arrival, my feelings were confirmed by finding that one of the tasks set for the day was a 304k triangle - Aston Down, Long Mynd.

For those who don't know, I fly a K6e wood and fabric glider, callsign 577. The K6e is a lovely machine to fly, but she does not go into wind as well as more modern glass sailplanes and 300k is a very difficult task in other than light wind conditions. A northerly wind of 5-10 knots was forecast so today was looking good.

After rigging, smoking the barograph and making my declaration I got away at the second attempt into a 6 knot thermal which took me straight to cloudbase at 4500ft. It was after 12.30 and already late for starting a 300k, so I headed off straight away for Aston Down in company with Brian Payne flying DG-100 251. About 1hr ahead of me Steve 'Tulip' Porat was going for his 300k in the Pirat. Conditions were excellent and I made good progress on the first leg.

I Rounded Aston Down at about 1.45pm just behind Brian and took 3 photos before setting off northwest across the Cotswolds towards Gloucester, whilst Brian headed in a more northerly direction keeping over the hills. At this point I found that I was getting rather low and so, not wishing to push on over the built-up area of Gloucester until I could be sure of clearing the other side, I picked a landable field on top of the ridge. Down to 600ft agl, I couldn't believe I had blown it just 1½ hours into the flight, but luck was on my side, and I

There were those among us who didn't think Andy had a hope of getting around this 300km in a wooden glider with such doubtful weather in the task area. Another OGC pilot had already landed at the Long Mynd earlier in the day. Perhaps we don't train pilots to soar at Weston, perhaps we train them to scratch. It made all the difference on this occasion.

found some weak lift which developed after a few minutes into 5 knots and took me back up to 3500ft asl. My spirits had also soared but I was annoyed at having lost time.

Crossing over the River Severn, best conditions appeared to be west of track and I gradually worked my way up past Hereford where I heard Brian on the radio turning at the Long Mynd. Conditions seemed to be weakening and inevitably my track took me over higher ground between Shobdon and the Long Mynd. Good climbs were proving hard to find and I had come down to 2000ft asl several times west of Craven Arms. Because of this I decided to take a 2kt climb to 4000ft asl before pressing on over the hills.

It was 4pm when I reached the Mynd and I managed 6 photos for safety in the time it took to get round it. Turning very wide, looking for lift that was harder than ever to find, I quickly flew out of range of the Midland GC and decided I could just get over the north end of the ridge to find lower ground in the next valley.

I was now heading homewards, flying east into a completely dead looking sky. Small areas of zero sink got me to Wenlock Edge where a booming ½kt on the averager gave me time to think as I drifted south east from field to field. Resigned to an eventual field landing, I maintained an easterly heading to allow for drifting south when circling in lift: by doing this I hoped to avoid meeting higher ground on track.

Just south of Bridgnorth, 2kt took me to 2500ft, but then following the river Severn, my navigation seemed to go awry. Drifting in zero to 1kt at 1500ft asl....*was that Kidderminster or Worcester?* Deciding the latter, I drifted further south towards the M5/M50 junction. At one point I was joined by a lonely Pilatus struggling northwards at the same height who seemed to overload my feeble thermal. I left him and headed east again at 2000ft asl, taking any lift available. I realized with some dis-

may that I would have to fly over the Cotswolds again instead of going around the northern end.

It was now about 5.30pm and I heard on the radio "147 in cloud at 7000ft". *How did he do that?* Then "251 landing at WOG and conditions still reasonable". *Maybe - if you are already home.*

Continuing to fly east and drifting south in weak lift, I was able to stay between 1500 and 2000ft asl, so I flew over the 800ft ridge south of Broadway to pick yet another field. By now I was cold, exhausted and my nerves were somewhat beyond frayed, but I managed to find 1kt of lift from a group of farm buildings which lifted me back to 2000ft asl over Moreton-in-Marsh.

That must have been the last thermal of the day, I thought at about 6.45pm. "Keep going 577 - we're waiting to lock up!" mocked Brian over the radio. *Maybe I might just creep home.*

Heading east again I found 1kt growing to 2kt just east of Barford St John, which took me to 3000ft asl (just to make sure). Finally, I was able to call final glide and put 577's nose down to 70kts over Upper Heyford, minutes later streaking around the DZ at Weston for a 100kt beat up, witnessed only by a few rooks, before landing at 7.15pm.

After a couple of minutes letting it all sink in, I pulled my cold and aching body from the glider and that was that - 577 had got me home again! The suspense continued for another 6 weeks whilst I waited to hear that my TP photos were OK to give me my diamond goal, but all turned out OK in the end. Next? Gold height from WOG I think.

Footnote: If I had known that the glider landing at the Mynd in one of my TP photos was Tulip in the Pirat, I think I would have gone in and landed as well, but thinking he was still ahead kept me going. Better luck next time!

*Andy Butterfield
(interviewed by Mike O'Neill)*

NOTES FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Compiled by Barry Tay

Despite valiant efforts from several dedicated members, the number of outstanding maintenance jobs continues to grow. To deal with this a Club 'Maintenance Day' is planned. This will take place either on a Saturday or Sunday, and no flying will take place on that day. All members would be expected to participate and those unable (or unwilling) to assist would be asked to donate £10 towards the cost of materials.

Two new sub-committees have been formed. The first is the RAFSPA Liaison Sub-committee which will be chaired by Steve Evans, and will re-negotiate operating procedures with RAFSPA and the RAF. The second is the Recruitment Sub-committee, chaired by Peter Awcock, which will be investigating ways of increasing the public profile of the Club, including static displays of Club gliders at local shows. This sub-committee requires additional members, and anyone interested should get in touch with Peter Awcock.

The RAF will be removing the balloon in April. It is to be replaced by a Skyvan which will be operated by a private contractor for up to 120 days a year. This could have serious implications for the Club if the sub-contractor decides to operate at weekends, as launching would cease while the Skyvan was operating. The committee are currently discussing this situation with the RAF.

The Weston-on-the-Green village fête will be taking place on the airfield on 13th May, from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. The committee will be contacting RAFGSA at Bicester to arrange tugs so that the Club can fly celebrities and (time permitting) village residents during the afternoon. It is likely that normal Club flying could take place in the morning, with members manning a static display at the hangar entrance during the afternoon.

It was discovered during January that a small number of RAFSPA caravan owners had been pilfering the Club's electricity. A mains cable, wired to a socket inside our

hangar and terminated in caravan type connectors at sites occupied by caravans was unearthed. The cable had been cut and the bare end hastily wrapped with tape when the caravans were recently removed from site. A meeting with the RAFSPA Chairman was quickly arranged to ensure that the Club will be fully reimbursed for the electricity, and to obtain an assurance that there would be no repetition in the future.

Wheatley Scouts have approached the Club regarding setting up an air camp for up to 15 scouts between the ages of 11-15 years. The scouts aim to camp on the airfield for 4-5 days during the second week of the flying fortnight, and have air experience flights.

A favourable quotation has been obtained from a local builder for repairing the fence, and building the bottle store. It is hoped that work will commence soon.

The Club has purchased a petrol strimmer, which is to be used for keeping the grass tidy around the hangar area.

PERLE

4/5 berth Caravan

Perfect condition throughout. Two gas bottles, oven, grill, double hob, Electrolux fridge, toilet. Brand new awning, fitted carpets, curtains and seat covers. Good tyres with spare wheel. Electric lighting from battery. £1000 ono.

(Phil Hawkins)

INTER CLUB LEAGUE

This year there will be five clubs taking part in the League. These are Bidford, Hinton, Shenington, Stratford and ourselves. All five clubs will be hosting a meeting. Dates have been agreed, although the Shenington weekend and our own weekend are subject to final confirmation. The dates are:

Hinton-in-the-Hedges	6/7/8 May
Stratford	3/4 June
Weston-on-the-Green	24/25 June*
Shenington	22/23 July*
Bidford	5/6 August

*Subject to confirmation

I will be putting together teams nearer the dates. Not only do we need pilots, but equally importantly, we need people to crew. The League is intended to be a fun event and the meetings are usually quite relaxed affairs. Besides the flying they are usually an enjoyable social event. So if you haven't been involved before and would like to support the Club by visiting one of the above sites to help out, please let me know.

Simon Hogg

AUGUST FLYING WEEKS

It looks safe enough to book your holidays for the last two weeks in August starting Monday 21st.

However there is a snag. It is extremely likely that there will be a major parachute competition over the bank holiday weekend 26-28 August.

There is also a possibility that the airfield may be available during the week of 14-18 August, but we will not be sure until nearer the time.

STARTER PACKS

Starter packs to be given away free to new members are again available. The latest batch, which are worth up to £9 each, contain:

Pilot's log book
Pre-solo exercises chart
Laws & Rules for glider pilots
Club Rules and Constitution
Modern elementary gliding (book)
Two sample copies of *Sailplane & Gliding*
BGA sales room price list

Any member recently joined who did not receive a starter pack please claim yours from behind the bar in the clubroom. PLEASE DO NOT BREAK INTO THESE PACKS AND TAKE ODD ITEMS OUT OF THEM.

CFI's TURN...

I would firstly like to take this opportunity of thanking our previous CFI, Steve Evans, for his "tour of duty," and for making the hand over as painless as it was. I would like to continue these Newsletter articles following the lines of Steve, and bring to the attention of our membership a few points of interest in this short note.

Circuit Planning

Most importantly from my point of view as an instructor, we have started to introduce the new BGA required circuit plan, which is no longer square, but is (as Graham Barrett called it) the "three-penny bit" circuit – hopefully referring to its shape. If in doubt about what this actually means, and our front-page article does not help, ask an instructor to explain it on a blackboard.

Post Solo Check List

You will find attached to this Newsletter a copy of the Post-Solo check list (*full members only* – Ed.). This is aimed at all (or any) post solo pilots who would like to continue their aviation education. You will notice that some items are marked compulsory, although if you can give a very good reason why any item should not apply to you, we may be lenient! It is intended that if all the items are checked off, you will be in an excellent position for safe and enjoyable XC flying. For example, taking dual flights in a motor glider is the best way of learning about field selection and field landings. A number of "attempts" can be tried in an hour's session, as well as demonstrations of which fields NOT to land in.

So saying however, it is important to remember that although field selection is important, and a lot of emphasis is given on the nature of standing crop, be aware that wires can kill you, fences will seriously hurt you, but standing crop (even 6ft oil seed rape) will generally only cause a lot of embarrassment and hurt pride to the pilot (although the glider may be seriously damaged). I know this for a fact! I strongly recommend John Hanlon's forthcoming talk to

emphasise the possible pitfalls with various types of field, but there is nothing as good as trying it yourself, in a motor glider.

Morning Briefings

As you will have read, I am starting the (novel) scheme of morning briefings. These will be at 9.30am every weekend morning (even if just to say it is raining), but the intention is that a met. briefing followed by description of some XC tasks will be given.

It will be important that the airfield is actually set up by this time. As an encouragement to come early, we are starting the "11 o'clock rule." This means that at that time we go back to the top of the flying list, so the first person to arrive is guaranteed a flight at 11am (or when the next glider becomes available after 11am), when the thermals have started. This will only apply to those arriving before 9am, so if you arrive too late, you may have a long wait for a flight. If you arrive early, you may well get an early circuit or two in, before getting your next flight in the best part of the day after 11am.

Finally...

This is turning into a long "short" note, but I would just like to remind ALL pilots that the Acro is there for XC flying, with one of the following instructors sitting with you: any Full Cat. instructor, Chris Putt, John Gordon, Tom Lamb, or Phil Hawkins. If you want to learn about XC flying, navigation, or just have some fun, get hold of one of the above, and make use of the glider.

Cris Emson

MORNING BRIEFINGS

Start 9.30am

Saturday
16th April



INTER CLUB LEAGUE

There will be no fewer than seven teams in the local Inter Club League competition this year, although the number of meetings will be kept to five. We are up against Enstone, Aquila, Cosford, Bidford, Stratford and Edge Hill (Shenington). Dates have been agreed as follows:

30 April, 1/2 May – Aquila.

4/5 June – Bidford.

18/19 June – Stratford.

16/17 July – Weston, subject to RAFSPA co-operation.

30/31 July – Cosford.

Would you like to visit one of the above sites, and do your bit to support the Club at the same time? We usually have more trouble finding sufficient support crews than pilots. You can probably get a lift there and back with somebody so it won't cost you much in petrol. There is always the chance to fly in the host club's gliders, and you might learn something new.

Captain Chris Reynolds will shortly be putting together a team for 1994 so if you are interested in competing, or the equally important crewing jobs, please see him as soon as possible. If you haven't been involved in the League before, even just as a social event, why not give it a try?

NEW MEMBERS



We welcome the following new members since the last issue of *Final Glide*:

Mazen Makari from Grandpont, Oxford.

Kenneth Coble from Rose Hill, Oxford.

Michael Baker from Carterton.

Heather Glover from Bicester.

Nicholas Bown from Wolvercote, Oxford.

Anthony Gaster from London N12, formerly a member at Turweston.

If any of you are missing your membership cards, car passes, or free "starter packs" please ask a Committee Member to point you in the right direction.



This isn't so much a "How I dun it" as a "How I nearly dun myself in" and you won't be surprised to hear that it was submitted by A. Pilot. Exciting but sobering stuff, this. It's easy to say to yourself: "I wouldn't have done that." However, it is also very easy to get yourself into a situation where there isn't a good way out, if something goes wrong.

This incident occurred one winter many years ago at the newly formed gliding site at Talgarth in mid-Wales.

It was cold, cloudy and windy. A brisk southwesterly had been blowing all night with a cloudbase of 1500 to 2000ft. As we rigged at 9am the CFI said "The back bowl will be working, we'll aerotow round to it. 1000ft should do!" I eyed the low scraps of cloud with some suspicion but finally launched 40 minutes later.

A mile or so upwind of the back bowl lay the imposing sight of Mynydd Troedd, a 1900ft hunk of rock renowned for its ability to generate turbulence. The tug pilot, the sort of chap that believed that aerotows should last the minimum amount of time, turned immediately behind Mynydd Troedd whereupon we were both given a good shaking. As our wings clawed at the turbulent air for height, I realised that this was not a stable situation as I was having difficulty keeping the tug in sight! Just short of 1000ft things became completely divergent and I was forced to release.

On a normal day this height would have given one an easy glide into the bowl for a pleasant day's soaring. Today I was having great difficulty keeping the wings anything like level and both varios were on the negative stops. I increased speed to max rough air and arrived at the nearest arm of the bowl about 100ft above it. From here the bowl sloped steadily

upwards to the centre about half a mile in and 1000ft higher. Confidently letting the speed reduce to gain height I moved into the bowl, along the arm, awaiting the sudden reassuring surge of lift I knew must be there. *It never came.* Instead there were just patches of zero with mostly sink.

Confidence turned to horror as I banked sharply around the bowl still 800ft from the top and still descending. I knew that from this point there was little chance of leaving the bowl and I desperately needed to climb. I looked at the bottom of the bowl, a couple of hundred feet below and saw only a stream with large rocks everywhere.

The sheep saw me coming and ran for dear life as my glider, almost touching the ground, sent them scattering!

I dodged around a small grassy knoll with sheep on top to reach the far side of the bowl and as I reached it I was tipped into a right hand bank by a massive surge of lift under my left wing. This wasn't hill lift, it must be a thermal climbing up the side of the bowl.

It is difficult to think clearly in these situations. The thermal was between me and the ridge and I was being banked out of it into the sink. The pressing need to climb had become all important and I banked into the thermal and towards the ridge. The first quarter of the turn went well as the vario screamed out eight knots of lift but then I realised that the ridge was directly in front of me and very close. It's strange how things appear to happen slowly under these circum-

stances. I could see every minute detail of the rocks and grass in front of me and felt myself instinctively increasing the bank to turn away from the rocks. Suddenly there was a blur of grey and green and I was hurtling away from the rocks in heavy sink. I realised that I was heading towards the small grassy knoll with the sheep and with no room to manoeuvre. I looked at the ASI, if airspeed was low it was disaster. I saw 50 knots, not much, but just enough to climb a little. The sheep saw me coming and ran for dear life as my glider, almost touching the ground, sent them scattering.

Over the knoll, I could again increase speed back to 50 knots and head for the exit to the bowl. As I looked up at the top of the hill, still 1000ft above me, I saw another glider slowly turning. It must be another thermal! This time I tacked back and forth, in and out of the thermal until I had gained just enough height to be able to clear a small depression in the exit arm of the ridge. I left the bowl as I had entered, low and fast.

On landing the CFI said: "Strange, the bowl wasn't working today." I said nothing but had a lot to think about. The decision to enter the bowl low was reasonable given the circumstances but just didn't work that day. The real lesson was that you NEVER turn towards the hill no matter how pressing the need may be.

I left Talgarth a much more chastened and educated pilot.

Anon

SPRING LECTURES

The first lecture this year will be at 7.30pm on **March 26** by Derek Seers, CFI at Dunstable, who compiles the fax forecasts which we receive each weekend day. He will cover two main areas of practical interest to cross-country pilots: sources of weather information, and how to interpret the information to give a clue to the cross-country prospects. It is particularly important for all members to attend John Hanlon's **Operational Procedures** lecture on **April 9**, which will include arrangements with RAFSPA for this season. Phil Hawkins will cover **Task Setting** including the use of the Club computer to plan tasks on **April 23**, and John Hanlon will give a highly educational slide show on **Field Selection** and crop recognition on **May 7**. A lecture by Graham Barrett on **Aerobatics** is also planned, but this is unlikely to take place until about September.