



FINAL GLIDE

Issue 31: December 2012

Edited by Claudia B. Hill

Contact: 01865 521042

<http://www.oxford-gliding-club.co.uk>

or click on the icons:   

HAPPY 75th BIRTHDAY, OXFORD GLIDING CLUB!

Read about the club's history,
Daisy's trip to Lithuania,
OGC and Social Media,
the story behind this stunning photo by Paul Smith,
and lots of other stuff in this year's Final Glide.



Contents

CLUB LADDER	3
CFI'S REPORT	5
THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER	6
INTER CLUB LEAGUE	7
HAPPY BIRTHDAY OXFORD GLIDING CLUB!	8
A fairly muddled timeline for Weston-On-The-Green airfield and the Oxford GC	8
Further snippets from OGC's history	10
In 1959...	10
Pilot Rating Scheme, April 1969	10
AGM Minutes, 25th November 1972	10
OGC Newsletter Autum 1981	10
AGM Minutes, 28th November 1981	10
OGC Newsletter Autum 1982	11
AGM Minutes (maybe Newsletter) 1987	11
OGC Photos and scans	11
From Dave Weekes' archive	11
Amy Johnson's letter to the club	13
From John Gibbons' archive	15
From John Freymuth's archive	16
From Richard Hall's archive	16
From Claudia Hill's archive	17
Oxford Times two-page spread (1981)	17
What was the club like when you joined?	18
EASA – A PERSONAL VIEW	22
A SUMMARY OF THE YEAR 2012	23
TO THE SEASIDE	25
DAISY DID LITHUANIA - JUST!	27
MY FIRST LANDOUT	29
A PARENT'S VIEW...	30
OGC AND SOCIAL MEDIA	31



Photo of the club fleet: Richie Hale

CLUB LADDER

Nick Hill

Over the years OGC pilots have always compared their flights during the season by entering them on the club ladder. In the old days the flights were recorded in a book in the clubhouse but this is now done via the UK gliding ladder website (<http://www.bgaladder.co.uk>).

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

For many years there were two main ladders but this has been expanded and the primary national ladders for which the BGA awards annual trophies are now:

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

For 2012 a new OGC local ladder was added to better reflect normal club flying in that only flights made from Weston-on-the-Green were eligible to be entered. The club ladder trophy is now awarded to the pilot that tops this ladder.

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

OGC Open Ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Richard Hall	2411	1944	1740	1264	1110	1091	9560
Claudia Hill	2426	2032	1607	1121	944	713	8843
Paul Smith	2080	1488	1129	996	845	727	7265
Andrew Butterfield	1959	1359	1099	1071	963	586	7037
Martin Hastings	1480	1120	1066	939	904	738	6247
Krzysztof Kreis	1077	966	915	876	714		4548

OGC Weekend Ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Claudia Hill	2426	1607	944	713	402	231	6323
Paul Smith	1488	1129	996	845	727	719	5904
Martin Hastings	1480	1120	904	738	489		4731
Andrew Butterfield	1359	1071	963	586	148		4127
Richard Hall	1110	1091	772	770			3743
Krzysztof Kreis	966	876	714				2556

OGC Junior ladder

No entries

OGC Wooden ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Krzysztof Kreis	1007	966	915	876	714		4478
Martin Hastings	939						939

OGC WOG only ladder

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Andrew Butterfield	1959	1359	1099	1071	963	586	7037
Paul Smith	2080	1129	996	845	727	719	6496
Krzysztof Kreis	1007	966	915	876	714		4478
Martin Hastings	1120	939	904	738	489		4190
Richard Hall	772	770					1542
Claudia Hill	944	231					1175

Club Ladder (contd.)**Some notes on scoring and logger files**

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

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

It is therefore always a good idea to upload a logger trace of the flight to both maximise the points that can be scored and to help the BGA and others in on-going negotiations and activities to keep airspace available for gliding. (If you don't want your flight to score any points you can opt out of the scoring and just upload your trace for the BGA's airspace negotiation purposes.)

Comparisons with last year

As the ladder website has information about multiple years comparisons can be made between years. For all ladders a comparison between 2011 and 2012 shows that for 2012 fewer pilots entered flights on the ladder and the overall scores were lower for most pilots. The ladder can also be used to show flight and distance statistics for OGC pilots and again a comparison between 2011 and 2012 confirms the common view that 2012 was certainly a worse cross-country year than 2011.

OCG distance ladders

2012

Pilot	Km	Flights	Avg km
Richard Hall	1894.1	9	210.5
Claudia Hill	1669.3	10	166.9
Paul Smith	1549.3	10	154.9
Andrew Butterfield	1172.7	10	117.3
Martin Hastings	1075.7	7	153.7
Krzysztof Kreis	799.0	5	159.8
Totals	8160.1	51	160.0

2011

Pilot	Km	Flights	Avg km
Paul Smith	2792.1	13	214.8
Richard Hall	2546.9	8	318.4
Claudia Hill	2277.2	13	175.2
Martin Hastings	1540.7	7	220.1
Paul Morrison	1079.1	5	215.8
Andrew Butterfield	804.0	4	201.0
Phil Hawkins	305.1	1	305.1
Graham Barrett	295.0	1	295.0
Jon Christensen	249.9	2	125.0
Gordon Craig	196.4	1	196.4
Raphael Sofair	50.6	1	50.6
Totals	12137.0	56	216.7

Hopefully 2013 will be a better year and if anyone needs more explanation about the ladders, the rules and how to enter flights then please just ask.



(photo of JSX: Peter Boulton)

CFI'S REPORT

John Hanlon



Photo: Paul Smith

Granted: There's a lot everyone takes for granted... I myself have found out the hard way how much I took my wife for granted since she fell over and shattered her elbow(8 fractures and a dislocation)... so I am now wearing more "hats" than ever – from chauffeur's cap, chef's hat, house maid's hat and Florence Nightingale's nurse's hat... I realise now how much she did!

So what else can we take for granted? Certainly not the weather as 2012 turned out to be a very disappointing year with regards to the weather. One thing we can take for granted in the near future is more intervention by EASA which will just cost all of us more money to continue doing what we are already doing! This started a couple of years ago when we all had to put silly letters on the sides and under the wings of all gliders except vintage Annex 2 gliders and register them with the CAA to bring us in line with Europe!

The next stage is pilot licensing due to complete transition in April 2015. Now this transition process has already started with the recent changes to Laws and Rules to allow our younger pilots to solo before their 16th birthday, now there's nothing wrong with that, but the rest of the changes coming in will only cost all of us more of our hard earned than before.

The BGA rather than fighting the changes... probably because they can't... are changing as much as they can to make the way we operate reflect what EASA want to make an easy transition possible... So our beloved BGA will change from being in charge of gliding in the UK, which it has done from before WW2, to being a small cog in a very large wheel and will become an "Approved Training Organisation" or ATO for short.

Are we all to assume that what the BGA have been doing for all those years is flawed and unsafe... certainly not... it's just bureaucracy gone mad!

From April 2015 all pilots will need a pilot's licence. Now the idea is that those with Bronze C and cross country endorsement will automatically become a LAPL(S) pilot. Anyone below that will be classed as pilots in training even if you are already solo.

To hold a LAPL(S) licence you will also need a LAPL(S) medical or EASA medical as the NPPL self-declaration will no longer be acceptable.

With the old NPPL, a self-declaration countersigned by your GP would be valid until your 45th birthday, after which you would need to renew this every 5 years.

The LAPL(S) medical, although thankfully can still be done by your GP, differs in the fact that it needs to be renewed every 5 years up to the age of 45, then every 2 years after the age of 45. Some GPs don't charge currently for the NPPL, some do as they regard it as "private practice", and charges vary from one GP to another, but I expect all of them will start charging in the near future!

So if you are going to be due a medical in the next couple of years depending on your age, it may well pay you to get a LAPL medical rather than the NPPL declaration. April 2015 will require everyone to have a LAPL medical unless you currently hold a JAR medical which will be converted to an EASA medical automatically, if we can believe what we are currently being told. Full up-to-date info on this can be obtained from the BGA website... just follow the links!

What can we look forward to for 2013? Hopefully better weather at least...

We have new Bronze C questions in the form of 3 test papers for the southern region, each paper now consists of 120 questions instead of the old 90 from the CD, and a 70% pass rate is required on each section... anyone failing to get 70% in any section can retake that section off one of the other papers... So you only get 3 chances after which I refer you to Mike Fox for a spanking!

We will have Glider Guiders in both front and rear seats of the DG-505 for next season so everyone can get used to using this new technology without having to concentrate on the actual flying as well to ease the learning process and if my plans come to maturity early next year, we will see more x-country training in the DG-505, which is what it was bought for!

Next year we will see Claudia "take a back seat" from instructing (ha ha, couldn't resist that!) as she is now part of the British Women's Team and needs to concentrate on her competition flying! But this is only as far as being rota'd is concerned, thankfully her slot will be filled by Carole who rejoins us as rota'd instructor in April to balance the load. Claudia will still be instructing on an ad-hoc basis to keep her hand in! So expect to see Claudia back in the back seat when the weather's pants!

Finally, I give my thanks to Garry who retired from instructing at the end of September and welcome Martin Brown to the team.

And indeed thanks to all the instructors for keeping you all safe!

Looking forward to 2013!

John

P.S.: I forgot to mention the introduction of Pilot training record cards which are required as part of EASA and these are being introduced from 1st January 2013, nobody needs to do anything as yet as most will get grandfather rights but others will need to be "tested" and signed off to do various activities including ground handling, rover driving, winch driving, log keeping and even wing tip holding and hooking cables on!

Basically every activity related to gliding needs to be "signed off" on a record card before that person can undertake the various activity... and every member will have a record card kept on the LPV.

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Paul Morrison



Photo: Paul Smith

At this time of year it's only natural that our thoughts become introspective as we consider what the past year has meant to us and what the coming year will bring. For those of us fortunate enough to pursue this wonderful sport this is epitomised to me by the anticipation we feel early in the new year when with the first signs of spring, the old & wise speculate as to what the season will bring based upon their weather observation and the post mortems that inevitably follow at this end of the season when it's failed to deliver.

Whatever you may personally feel about 2012, there is no doubt that this has been a year that has earned its place in history for many reasons including the Queen's Golden Jubilee, London 2012 and what is now widely accepted to be one of the most extreme weather years of all time. As we sit here now shivering it's hard to remember that in early 2012 we were basking in unseasonably high temperatures, sunshine and the prospect of a drought with many predicting a summer to rival that of the famous 1976 provided that gliding was excluded from the hose pipe bans! Unfortunately the deluge of the following months soon dashed any hopes of a good season and looking back now, I recall that the best of the gliding weather seemed to be early and late in the year when we weren't prepared or able to make the most of it. Maybe for next year the message is to get the fettling done early and be ready to seize the good days whenever they arrive.

Despite the best efforts of the weather to spoil everyone's plans, one event that was a remarkable success in so many ways was London 2012. It's a shame that other than the highly successful unofficial 'Wenlock Games', gliding had no part in the official Olympics or Paralympic events although it is interesting to recall that the opening ceremony of the Paralympics did include a spirited display flown by a disabled pilot. However it's also all too easy to forget now the threat these events represented to the future existence of gliding and indeed general aviation in the UK. It is no exaggeration to say that never has this sport been more in the spotlight than during the period leading up to and during the Games and had it not been for a lot of hard work by various governing bodies, then had the government and CAA had its way recreational flying would have effectively been closed down for July & August.

In my capacity as Chairman and Airspace Liaison Officer I attended several Oxford AIAA User Group Meetings both before and during the Games and it was sobering to discuss interception protocols and the very real possibility that deadly force could be used against gliders that infringed the

restricted or prohibited zones. Thankfully the perceived threat did not materialise and as a result of our exemplary conduct, gliding now has enhanced kudos with the CAA with their Chief Executive writing to the BGA and other air sport organisations to state:-

"Establishing such a large airspace security zone for that length of time was unprecedented, particularly as it covered some of the most congested airspace in the world. The fact that it was so successful is in no small part due to the role played by the GA associations and their members."

It is now accepted that other than during the period of a national emergency, never again should such draconian restrictions be proposed or implemented. You have all played your part in this success and for this I offer you my most grateful thanks.

2012 will also be noteworthy for the year when due to the EASA harmonisation, the age of solo flying was reduced to 14. It is a notable first for OGC that George Barrett was amongst the first young pilots in the UK to earn his wings and a place in OGC history in its seventy-fifth year. Like many organisations OGC's past history is complex and it is difficult to pinpoint the precise moment that OGC as we know it came into being however what is known is that the first AGM took place on December 2nd 1937 with the 75th anniversary of the Club's first public flying day occurring at an 'Empire Air Day' on the 29th May 1938. It is intended that there will be a spring event to celebrate this next year and as always volunteers are needed to help organise this. In the meantime, please take a moment to remember the founders of the Club without whom we would not be here now and who no doubt, never imagined what good shape the Club would be in seventy five years later or the type of aircraft we have access to.

Looking towards 2013 I won't attempt to forecast what the weather will be like next year, but I do confidently predict there will be some! What is easier to predict though is that gliding as a sport will have to change. At the recent BGA Club Management Conference it was shown that the number of active pilots is in decline and with the increasing competing demand on people's leisure time and disposable income, gliding will have to evolve and modernise if it is to remain relevant and ultimately survive.

Whether this will in time see the erosion of the traditional club ethos is not yet clear. Personally I hope not and firmly believe there will still be a place for weekend only clubs to sit alongside the larger commercial organisations providing a niche type of flying however there will be no escape from the EASA changes and we will have to embrace these and change the way we have always done things. As demonstrated by the new solo age, not all of these changes are negative and intended to stop us having fun and some such as the new LAPL(S) licence may actually open doors to new opportunities so please keep an open mind about these and do your best to support the implementation of these in your club.

It is also impossible to ignore the changes and evolution in the way we do the simplest things. Take this Final Glide issue for an example. While no doubt some of you will be reading a printed copy, the majority I bet will be reading these meandering thoughts as pixels on a monitor only. The same is true of social media as love it or hate it, Facebook, Twitter and Blogs are here to stay and we need to embrace and maximise the opportunities these afford if OGC is not to be left behind the other clubs who have done so. To this end

The Chairman's Corner (contd.)

the Club now has a new Social Media Officer (thanks Cloudy!) who as well as producing the annual Final Glide is, with the help of other administrators, doing great things to enhance OGC's social media presence online. If you've not yet had a look at this, please do so as I think you'll be pleasantly surprised at how effective this new media can be.

As its seventy-fifth year 2013 will I'm be sure, be a historic and memorable year for the Club. We have a number of young pilots who are keen to develop their skills further and

for the first time we have an OGC pilot (Cloudy) selected to represent Britain in the Women's World Gliding Championships. For a weekend only club this is a remarkable achievement and with your help, the Directors, Committee members and Officers will do their utmost to ensure that OGC remains a great family orientated fun place to be.

Thank you for your continuing support and all that remains is to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful, prosperous and hopefully thermic 2013. Safe flying everyone.

INTER CLUB LEAGUE

Dave Bray

Hello from your club Interclub League (ICL) captain. This year brought a welcome return for us rejoining the Midland section of the national ICL scheme along with Windrushers, Banbury and Shenington gliding clubs. I have taken over the captaincy from Nick Hill who provided support and organisation to members joining in with the ICL flying for as long as I remember, some very large boots to fill indeed!

Although I currently live out of the country and haven't exactly been clocking up the kilometres the last couple of years, I'd missed hearing and seeing members have the experience of flying from other clubs and expanding their knowledge and realisation of what is possible, even in a vintage glider! How hard could it be to organise a team of three pilots, plus a crew on three weekends a year from a club bristling with enthusiasm, friendships and quality pilots I thought. Quite hard, it turns out!

The weather in 2012 has been talked about many times already and without bringing back depressing memories all I will say about it is that it certainly dulled some of that enthusiasm on the run up to the contest weekends, the distractions of the Jubilee and the Olympics also contributed, along with some changing of dates by the host clubs, not an ideal background to our return. However...

The first round was at Hinton in the Hedges airfield, hosted by Banbury Gliding Club. We were able to have Graham Barrett as pundit and Cecilia Craig as our novice represent us on the single contest day, Mark Brooks was also present to assist as crew and observe the routine that pilots go through to ensure adequate preparation. Both pilots flew fantastically given the conditions, with Cecilia flying furthest in the class, taking 1st place, and Graham finishing 3rd. These points meant we were in 2nd place over all!

Windrushers' contest weekend was attended by Paul Morrison, who flew our club DG-505 over with Mark Brooks as the support pilot as the intermediate, and Cecilia as our novice. Unfortunately after some struggling to stay airborne around Bicester, they landed and as the weather window was deemed to have past, the day was then scrubbed. The Sunday weather did not allow any cross-country flying either.

Finally it was Shenington who, due to the date moving several times, meant that we had Claudia Hill flying as pundit as the only pilot from Oxford, supported by Mark, and husband Nick. She came 2nd, behind an open class glider that had made full use of its performance!

Bicester were declared the overall winners and went off to Husbands Bosworth airfield for the national final, I believe the weather struck again though so 2012 had no national club winner. We finished 3rd behind them and Shenington.

Most important lessons from my first year of the ICL as club captain: 1) it's not as easy as I thought, 2) ensure contest date changes are published as early as possible once they are changed then confirmed, 3) take a supply of maps, logger leads, batteries, tyre valves, tools and tape - even the most organised pilots can leave boxes by the door as they leave home in the morning!

With these lessons in mind it brings me great pleasure to tell you that due to our return in 2012 I plan to arrange an OGC leg of the ICL in 2013! Your help in organising this would be much appreciated when the time comes and dates will be circulated for the other contest weekends after April. Fingers crossed for more cross-country weather during all the weekends in the year to come!

My thanks to those that volunteered their services, whether flying or as crew. I hope that next year brings more of those flights that I remember so well from past ICL years.



Photo of trailers in the snow: Paul Smith

HAPPY BIRTHDAY OXFORD GLIDING CLUB!

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Oxford Gliding Club (or the 61st, or the 82nd, depending on what you count as the original Oxford Gliding Club). And the 56th year at Weston-on-the-Green.

Final Glide has received several contributions from club members, memories of what the club was like when they joined, a timeline of memorable events in the club's history, some brilliant photographs, photocopies of old AGM minutes and other paperwork, some newspaper clippings and other things. On the following pages you'll find a selection of those.

A fairly muddled timeline for Weston-On-The-Green airfield and the Oxford GC

Phil Hawkins

(Photos were mostly found here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/whatsthatpicture/sets/72157626881053394/>)

1916: Land acquired northeast of Weston village for a new airfield to be built.

1917: Airfield under construction by Canadian forces using German POW labour.

1918: Airfield in use by the newly-formed RAF with two-seat Avro 504 trainers and single-seat Sopwith Camels.

1920: Airfield effectively closed by this time, advertised for sale by the Government Property Disposal Board.

1922: Land use reverted to agriculture, being used for grazing cattle and sheep.

1930: The 'Oxford and County Gliding Club' visited Weston-on-the-Green airfield on at least one occasion, although as far as we know it is not related to our present club.

1934: In magazines of this date there is no mention of the Oxford GC, so the earlier club seems to have been relatively short-lived.

1936: The futuristic film *Things to Come* was being filmed by Alexander Korda, who used ruined buildings on the airfield as a backdrop for some outdoor scenes.

1937: Our club was born, largely due to the efforts of one man, Captain Robert S Rattray CBE. Born in India in 1881, he was a well-travelled author, a distinguished anthropologist who had published several books on the Ashanti tribal culture of West Africa. 'The Oxford University and City Gliding Club' as it was then known, was perhaps carefully named to distance itself from the earlier 'Oxford and County' club. The inaugural meeting took place in the Old Lecture Room at Christchurch College on 2nd December, but there had been other preparations going on behind the scenes for most of that year. In particular the University statutes had been altered by the official governing body known as the Hebdomadal Council, because until this date both dons and students had been specifically banned from committing aviation of any sort. Apart from Rattray the first committee consisted of: Professor Gilbert Ryle (President), Professor Lindemann, FRS (later Lord Cherwell), Professor H H Price, Wing Commander Hebbert the O/C Oxford University Air Squadron at

Upper Heyford, and Miss Margaret Thring who became the club's first Secretary.

1938: By March the club's first site at Cumnor meadow had been selected, and the Committee had approached Robert Kronfeld with a view to offering him the post of CFI.

April 29: Robert Kronfeld visited the site for the first time, met with members of the Committee, and accepted the offer, although he initially demanded a salary of £400. To finance itself the club had received

a number of substantial donations from well-known local people, as well as a £700 overdraft from Lloyds Bank in Oxford, and applications for subsidy had been made to the BGA. Also by the end of April club members had started to build a hangar, and a local contractor had



been located to build an access bridge over a ditch.

May 7: flying operations began, the first glider being a Kirby Cadet, although the club also purchased two Dagling primaries and a trailer.

May 14: Rattray was killed while flying a Hütter H-17, a small machine with a 9.7m span and a glide angle of about 17:1. This was a devastating tragedy to our fledgling club, but support and enthusiasm continued from all quarters.

May 28: members gave a successful gliding demonstration before large crowds of spectators at RAF Upper Heyford, as part of the Empire Air Day celebrations.

May 29: first public open day at Cumnor meadow, attended by many well-known glider pilots including Amy Johnson.

June: by this time Kronfeld was acting as Manager, CFI, Technical Adviser, Ground Engineer and Flight Engineer, at an agreed salary of £10 per week.

OGC Timeline (contd.)

1939: March: the club's affairs and finances were in a poor state. Kronfeld was dissatisfied with the voluntary organization that was running the club, and his salary had not been paid. In partnership with John McGown, the proprietor of the Lambert Arms pub at Aston Rowant, he wanted to turn the club into a business.

May: at a general meeting it was agreed that the Oxford Gliding Co Ltd formed by Kronfeld and McGown should take over the assets and bank accounts of the club, which by this time were deeply in debt.

The club was therefore re-launched for the 1939 season on a more businesslike footing, with the professional help of solicitor Lawrie Wingfield, who had formerly been a Sopwith pilot in WW1. Two fields at the rear of the Lambert Arms were acquired as the club's new site, utilizing the Chiltern slopes. Kronfeld thought these were the finest soaring ridges in the south of England. During the 1939 season 57 members achieved 'A' badges and a further 22 were issued to Air Defence Cadets. But world events soon intervened. With the outbreak of WW2 in September all non-military aviation ceased, and the club became quite dormant for more than a decade, slumbering in the archives of the solicitor Lawrie Wingfield.



Cutting from the London Evening Standard, 24 July 1939
(<http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/no-opendemocracy-reader-is-alike-a-tribute-to-joan-burchardt>)

1940: August 9: Weston-on-the-Green became the first airfield in Oxfordshire to be bombed.

John McGown was driving one winter night during the black-out when he ran into the back of a lorry and was killed. Lawrie Wingfield was named as the executor of his will and became the legal owner of the Lambert Arms for a short time.

1942: Hotspur military gliders based at Weston-on-the-Green using Hawker Hector and Audax biplane tugs.

1946: First parachute drops at Weston using Halifax and Dakota aircraft.

The RAF No.1 Parachute Training School, initially based at Upper Heyford, later moved to Abingdon and then to Brize Norton, but still retaining Weston-on-the-Green as the DZ. A variety of transport aircraft were used in the 1950s and 1960s including Hastings, Beverley and Argosy before the familiar Hercules took over about 1970.

1948: February 12: Robert Kronfeld was killed whilst flying an experimental flying-wing type glider, the two-seat General Aircraft GAL.56 (picture on Wikipedia). His widow Margaret asked Lawrie Wingfield to establish a memorial to him, and when asked what form this should take, she gave the crucial reply: "re-start the Oxford Gliding Club."

1950: Surplus wartime kite balloons were in use at Weston for parachute training.

1951: By this time Lawrie Wingfield had found Ray Stafford-Allen as ground engineer and Professor George Varley as CFI, and had negotiated with the Goodhew Aviation company at Kidlington to share their site. A member's club was once again proposed, although Lawrie Wingfield drew up an agreement under which the 4000 shares in the OGC Ltd would be held in trust for the members.

November: flying operations began at Kidlington. Within weeks, one of many new and enthusiastic young members was John Gibbons.

1956: July: the club moved from Kidlington to Weston-on-the-Green.

1966: Fatal accident in which a T-21 stalled on approach near the SW corner of the airfield. One of the victims was named Weeks (spooky).

1967: Professor Malcolm Laurie gave the club a brand new Schleicher K-13 two-seat trainer.

1968: The second K-13 arrived, financed by a members share scheme.

1971: The present winch chassis was built by members from a Tost kit.

1974: At this time (when Phil joined) the club fleet featured a Pirat and a Skylark 3 as well as the two K-13s.

1977: The club purchased its first glassfibre glider, Astir DMH, using a members' share scheme.

1979: The Oxford University GC broke away and became a separate operation at Bicester airfield, initially using a K-7.

1985: Increasing pressure from the RAF forced the club gliders out of the north end of the main hangar. For one whole winter the K-13s were stored in the old workshop and one of them was rigged and de-rigged on every flying day.

1986: The present hangar was built with the assistance of the Sports Council and support from Douglas Hurd MP, our President at that time. The old brick-built clubhouse and workshop was subsequently demolished in short order by the RAF.

1988: The T-21 (Daisy) was bought from RAF Syerston in a sealed-bid auction for £725, thanks once again to donations from members.

1993: The club's first glassfibre two-seater arrived, the Acro EZE.

OGC Timeline (contd.)

1995: The last of the kite balloons disappeared from Weston airfield.

1999: Acro written off in field landing. One pilot suffered a cut toe, the other a slightly stiff neck.

2000: Successful Junior National Championships staged at Weston-on-the-Green. In the same year the club acquired the DG-505 Orion JSX.

2010: OGC was approached by Fliegerclub Schönhagen e.V., a gliding club located near Berlin and similar to OGC in size and setup, with a view to starting a partnership to allow pilots to visit and fly at both clubs. By the end of the year OGC and FC Schönhagen were officially twinned, and since then there have been a few visits.

2011: End of sport parachute operations on Weston airfield with the demise of Skydive Weston.

Further snippets from OGC's history

Compiled by Claudia Hill

John Freymuth (who was first introduced to OGC in 1954 and joined in 1958, despite living in Berlin) kindly sent me a whole bunch of AGM minutes and newsletter photocopies and other material. Going through the paperwork I noticed, and this probably comes as no surprise to the "older" members of OGC, how most things have been discussed, tried, complained about, introduced, and abandoned again in OGC's history. Here are a few examples:

In 1959...

The club has just bought the Skylark IIb. The Grunau Baby unfortunately has been damaged, so all pilots do their first solo in the T21 (not our Daisy but her predecessor), and then convert to the Olympia.

Pilot Rating Scheme, April 1969

Pre-solo students were trained in K13 "Redfin" (now known as CGO), and there seemed to be a ground equipment progress log ("Basic training: Introduction to Tow-car procedure during training. Should have knowledge of: - Morning (starting) routine. Operational routine. Ground handling & Safety Requirement by first solo").

It seems EASA has now adopted OGC's idea from 1969!

Solo training took place in K13 "Elfin" (CCE), but only if they were a "competent winch operator" and "familiar with end-of-day routine".

The first single-seater, a Skylark IIb, could only be flown if you had achieved "Red Card" status, and there were certain restrictions to what you were allowed to do.

Once you had progressed to the "Yellow Card" you could fly the hot ship, the Skylark III, but only after 40 hours P1 and P2 after solo, and again with certain restrictions.

Finally, the Blue Card pilots had their Silver C, had done two 50km flights and some flying from other sites, and also knew a bit about hill soaring. They were able to fly any aircraft available (subject to CFI approval, of course).

AGM Minutes, 25th November 1972

"It is sad to see the Skylark 2 or 3 left in the hangar while pilots prefer to soar the K13's but such is the success of the K13's that the operation of solo aircraft will need some thought by the next Committee."

"The Diesel powered Tost winch is now in full use. Joe Grace and his team completed the winch according to all the drawings [...]."

"At the suggestion of the C.F.I. the National Club Ladder Scheme has been adopted for the first time. We are grateful to Malcolm Laurie for the splendid recording barograph given to the Club."

"A notable event was the entry of our K13, Elfin, at the mid-week flying for fun competition held by the University of Aston in Birmingham Gliding Club at R.A.F. Gaydon in July and supported by the Tug, 460, 169 and 666. On a couple of earlier weekends when Weston was closed to gliding on account of the parachuting competition virtually the whole club operated at Gaydon."

...and the never-ending story: "Instructing and Non Flying Duties of this club depend upon members carrying out numerous off field duties. These are mostly carried out by a small group of willing helpers working long hours. The principle of the Non-Flying Duties Scheme is that a group of people under a suitable member in charge will take over the regular running of a certain duty without continual prompting from the Executive Committee."

OGC Newsletter Autum 1981

"SILVER JUBILEE SUCCESS!"

Nearly 100 launches were made in the day! Plenty of soaring was available and the event turned out to be a good showcase for us. Perhaps this kind of operation could be a regular annual event? What do you think?"

"WINTER FLYING"

Now is the time for AB-INITIO pilots to come out to the airfield and have the circuit practice they require to get to solo standard."

AGM Minutes, 28th November 1981

"It was nice to see John Freymuth, who lives in Berlin, with us during the flying weeks, who I am sure would like to be with us tonight. The three weeks ended with out 'Jubilee Weekend', celebrating 25 years at Weston on the Green. We flew members of the public on Saturday and Sunday and organised an informal social in the Village Hall on the Saturday Evening. We must thank Bee and Peter Baylis for all the work they did providing us with a wonderful buffet and bar service, Martin Nichols, Graham Barrett and Peter Darnborough for organising the bar. The weekend turned out to be a wonderful public relations exercise with an excellent two page report on the 'Oxford Times' for which we must thank Jane Randle."

OGC history snippets (contd.)

OGC Newsletter Autumn 1982

In 1982 the club was looking for a new launch site, there were articles in the local papers, members were asked to check with their local farmers and keep a good lookout to see if "a group of fields may be suitable (say three in a row)".

Other items in the 1982 newsletter were:

"WINTER LECTURES"

"Weather: Mike Randle spoke about Weather for Glider Pilots.

Competition: A fortnight later Phil Hawkins gave a carefully prepared talk about Cross-Country flying.

Fields: At the time of going to press, Richard Hall has still to give his talk. Richard plans to talk about crops through the whole year."

"MIDWEEK FLYING"

"We hope to be able to resume Wednesday evening flying this season."

"LAUNCH POINT MARSHALS"

"What should they do?

On their duty day, arrive early and get everything organised ready to move on to the field. [...] At the launch point he ensures that pilot, instructor, aircraft and launch crew are ready when the cable arrives [...], at the same time ensuring that not too many people jump the queue!

What do they actually do?

Don't turn up. Arrive late. Go home early. Don't hand the duty to another when they fly. Day-Dream. Timidly watch a shambles develop and do nothing. Shout unnecessarily. Order instead of asking."

"PILOT PROGRESS BOARD"

"There will shortly be a chart put up in the bar which will hopefully spur us all on by recording all our gliding achievements. Keep your entry up to date and see if you deserve a gold star!"

AGM Minutes (maybe Newsletter) 1987

In 1987 there were lots of achievements:

John Hanlon became an instructor, and Gordon Craig and Martin Hastings obtained their full cat rating, while Neil Turner completed his Silver C!

OGC Photos and scans From Dave Weekes' archive

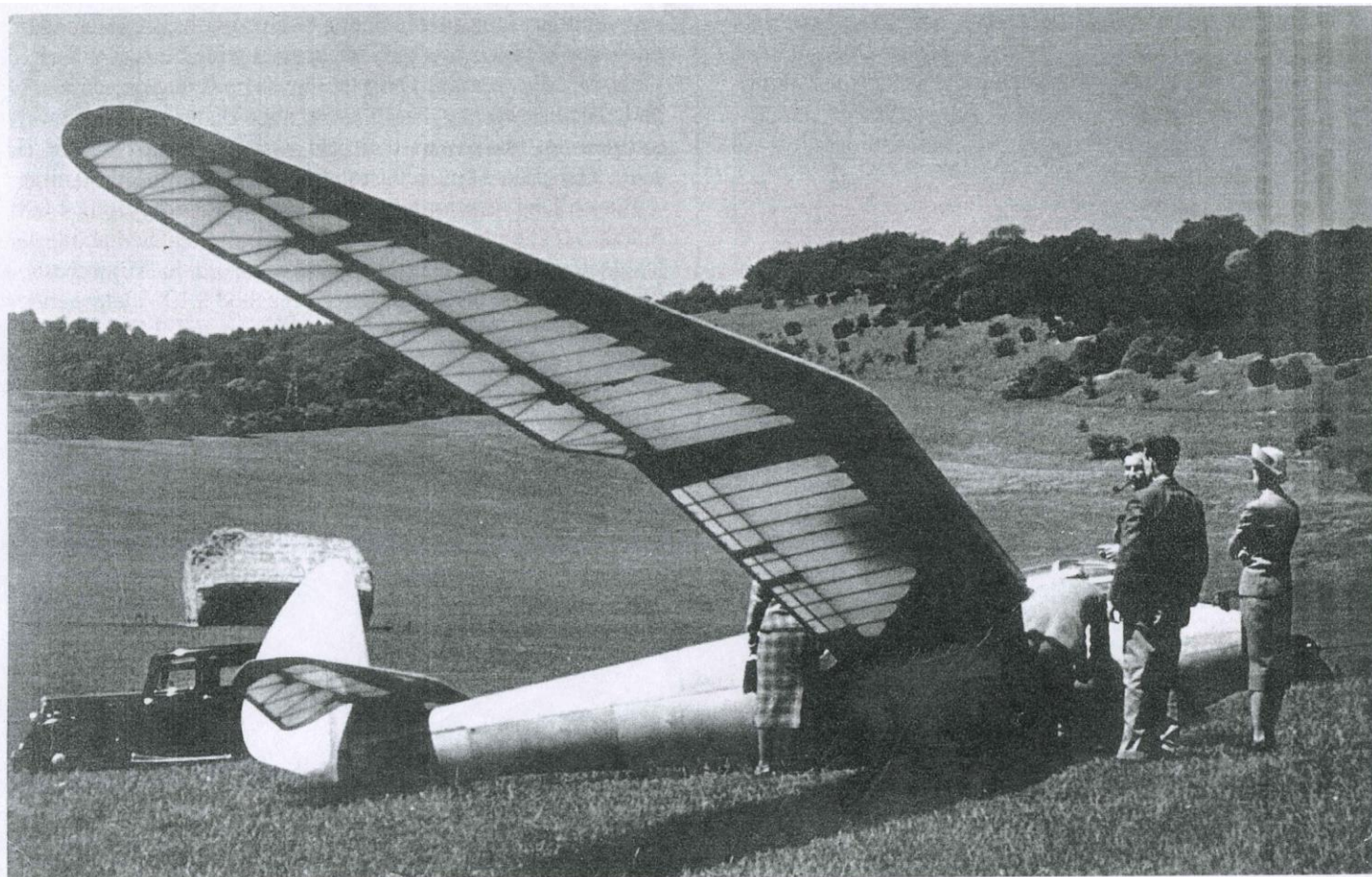


The pioneer Robert Kronfeld and Capt. Rattray play 'silly beggars' as they wind up a bungee rope.

From Dave Weekes' archive (contd.)



Peggy Thring ready for a launch in 1938. The rope around her waist was for hitching the glider on to the drag-line up the Hill.



The Minimoa at the pre-war site of the Oxford Gliding Club at Lambert Arms, Chinnor, Oxford; this site was founded by Robert Kronfeld.

PHILIP WILLS' MINIMOON 1938 or 1939?

Amy Johnson's letter to the club

MONKS STAITHS,
PRINCES RISBOROUGH,
BUCKS.
PRINCES RISBOROUGH 271.

16th May

Dear Mrs. Aspell.

Very many thanks for
sending me the gloves - I should have
hated to have lost them but had never
noticed that they were missing.

Certainly Gerry Edwards can
borrow the Kite if he will be responsible for
it - it is only insured for use to fly it -
& can arrange to fetch it. It is parked here
outside my cottage. My car will also be
here (possibly - will be sure later) & if he
could come here by train he could use car
for towing, so long as he returns it. Perhaps
it's best to ask him to get in touch with
me as I'm not quite certain of my plans.

You must keep the Oxford

**Just after Rattray's crash in the Hütter,
Amy Johnson wrote to the club:**

16th May [1938]

Dear Mrs Aspell

Very many thanks for sending
me the gloves - I should have hated
to have lost them but had never
noticed that they were missing.

Certainly Gerry Edwards can
borrow the Kite if he will be
responsible for it - it is only insured
for use to fly it - and can arrange to
fetch it. It is parked here outside my
cottage. My car will also be here
(possibly - will be sure later) and if
he could come here by train he could
use car for towing, so long as he
returns it. Perhaps it's best to ask
him to get in touch with me as I'm
not quite certain of my plans.

You must keep the Oxford

Club going. I suggest you try to arrange
the Display after Empire Air Day as
suggested & I'll certainly come. Were
you thinking of the 29th, Sunday
because if so, please let me know as
soon as possible as I should have to
break a date - easy if I know soon as I
haven't definitely promised. Gerry
Edwards could then take the Kite
straight to Oxford & I would come direct there
from London probably. He could
fly the Kite as well as me.

Have just spoken to Perrier (?) -
he says the H.17 seemed to be in
perfect order so far as could be seen -
it's a most heartbreaking tragedy.

Sincerely

Amy Johnson

-2-
Club going. I suggest you try to arrange
the Display after Empire Air Day as
suggested & I'll certainly come. Were you
thinking of the 29th, Sunday because if
so, please let me know as soon as
possible as I should have to break a
date - easy if I know soon as I
haven't definitely promised. Gerry
Edwards could then take the Kite straight
to Oxford & I would come direct there
from London probably. He could fly the
Kite as well as me.

Have just spoken to Perrier - he
says the H.17 seemed to be in perfect
order so far as could be seen - it's a
most heartbreaking tragedy.

Sincerely
Amy Johnson

On the back of the second page Hope Aspell has pencilled in a draft reply, which may have been copied or typed out later:

17-May-'38

Thank you for your letter this morning & for offering to come & help here. It has been a terrific shock. It was a most tragic accident in every way. Most of all I am frightfully sorry for Peggy. I do not know what is to be decided about the Club. The whole thing is in the hands of the Proctors.

I telephoned our chairman this morning about your suggestion to do a display at Oxford the day after Empire Air Day, & he agrees that it is the right thing to do. Fox will bring his "Rhönadler" and I have asked Ann Edmonds to come & also Gerry Edwards to stay over. And I expect Kronfeld will be there. You are v. kind to allow your plane to be flown on the 28th. I wrote to G. E. to arrange about his insurance direct with Mr Slingsby. I can come & fetch it either Sat morning or Friday evening whichever is more convenient for you.

The funeral as you know is at Exeter College Chapel at 2.30 tomorrow. I cannot tell you how much we thank you for your help and for your offer to come here on the 29th.

With kind regards

H. A.

17-May-'38.

Thank You for your letter this morning - & for offering to come & help here.

It has been a terrific shock. It was a most tragic accident in every way. Most of all I am frightfully sorry for Peggy.

I do not know yet what is to be decided about the club. The whole thing is in the hands of the Proctors.

I telephoned our Chairman this morning about your suggestion to do a display at Oxford the day after Empire Air Day. He agrees that it is the right thing to do. Fox will bring his "Rhönadler" and I have asked Ann Edmonds to come & also Gerry Edwards to stay over. And I expect Kronfeld will be here.

You are v. kind to allow your plane to be flown on the 28th. I wrote to G.E. to arrange about his insurance direct with Mr Slingsby. I can come & fetch it either Sat morning or Friday evening whichever is more convenient for you.

The funeral as you know is at Exeter College Chapel at 2.30 tomorrow. I cannot tell you how much we thank you for your help and for your offer to come here on the 29th.

Always - with kind regards

H. A.

Empire Air Day was held at RAF Upper Heyford on Saturday 28th May 1938 and the Club had been invited to take part in the flying activities, being allotted one hour for their display. Next day the Club held an Open Day event at Cumnor meadow, attended by many well-known glider pilots including Amy Johnson. Robert Kronfeld clearly knew of the Club at this time but did not become CFI until the following year. Ann Edmonds, mentioned by Hope Aspell in this draft reply, later became Ann Welch.

(Transcriptions and notes by Phil Hawkins, January 2011)

From John Gibbons' archive



Slingsby Gull 2, club Tutor and T31 with Ron Simpson's Olympia (Simpson Cup) next to the Gull.

Squadron Leader Jamieson with me in the RAFGSA Olympia probably at Halesland in 1957.

Jamie was an OGC instructor in the early days.



Gull 2 two-seat glider

From John Gibbons' archive (contd.)



My wife and I in our original T21 with the privately owned Gull 3 in the background

From John Freymuth's archive



Ed.: I think I recognise an ever so slightly younger looking John Freymuth leaning against a Grunau (?) wing, Richard Hall in front of a flying garden chair, John Gibbons pushing a tractor and Gordon Craig driving it – all photos look like they were taken at Weston.



From Richard Hall's archive

(all photos from 1972)



Skylark 3 (168)

Skylark 2 (120)



The new winch



From Claudia Hill's archive



The Acro EZE and the old Caboose in 1998 or 1999

The grid during the Juniors in 2000
(I nicked someone else's photo here, possibly Peter Russell's.
Apparently Neil Swinton was flying the aircraft.)



May 2000: K13 CCE being hooked on by Tony Hoskins, Cris Emson in the back seat. Possibly Nick Beloff checking if he's dribbled some ice cream onto his trousers. In the background FWA the Ka6 CR and BNK the Skylark 4. Another trailer just arriving. And of course the ice cream van.



Oxford Times two-page spread (1981)

In 1981 we even made it to the Oxford Times (apparently thanks to Jane Randle):

Can we achieve the same again next year?

GALLERY
THE OXFORD TIMES, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1981
IAN SMITH

Gliding's golden year may bring bad tidings...

Oxford Gliding Club members are celebrating their 25th anniversary since moving to a new base at Weston-on-the-Green. But the celebrations are somewhat dimmed by the knowledge that, just as happened in 1956, they are again faced with eviction from their airfield home.

Their move to Weston was forced upon them when their hangars were taken over for industrial purposes at Kidlington airfield. Their 25-year tenancy at Weston is now threatened because it is gradually becoming one of the busiest sites in Britain for parachute-training and sport-parachuting, under the auspices of the RAF.

The Oxford club, although celebrating a 25th birthday, is in reality much older than that — but the war intervened to break the continuity. In fact, the club is probably one of the oldest in the British Gliding Association's membership.

Today, with 100 members, and a fleet of four club gliders, plus all those owned privately and by consortia, the club enjoys looking back to those early days — which represented not only an embryo club, but an embryo sport, when gliding was not quite the refined activity it has become.

The man who started the club was a legend in the gliding world as a whole, not just in Oxfordshire. For Robert Kronfeld, responsible for founding the club at Aston Rowant in 1934, was the first man ever to glide across the English Channel.

Three years after the Second World War there was a vain effort to revive the club, but it was another two years before it became properly active again, with a base at Kidlington airfield.

In 1951, thanks to financial assistance from the Kemsley Trust, the club was able to buy its first gliders — a two-seater T31, a Tutor, and an Olympian high-performance machine. That same year they began the dual-control training which has since become the club's biggest strength.

Among the men who agreed to be trained as instructors in those early days were Professor George Varley, former Hope Professor of Zoology at Oxford, and now a vice-president of the club, Mr R. C. Stafford-Allen, an engineer, and Mr Marcus Goodall, an Oriel College undergraduate at that time, and member of an aviation family.

By the following year, 1952, the club boasted 70 members. But only three years later came the setback which is now being repeated 26 years later. They lost their hangars at Kidlington.

For a time the members tried to carry on by camping out at the airfield. But this enthusiasm waned. Then Group Captain Griffiths, the officer commanding at RAF Abingdon, was instrumental

Chairman of the Oxford Gliding Club
John Giddings

In obtaining permission for the club to move in to the airfield at Weston-on-the-Green.

In fact, it was something of a blessing in disguise. At Weston they found they had far more room for using a winch-tow.

The club has also concentrated more on hours of flying, and less on the number of launches achieved. In 1952, there were 2,378 launches for a total of only 153 hours. Last year, there were 2,559 launches — but a total of 814 hours.

The club has just completed its two-week annual "summer camp" at Weston, culminating in a special open day and celebration dance in the village hall. Among those celebrating were Prof. Varley and the oldest member still flying, Mr John Gibbons.

Also among those recalling the early days of the club, at Kidlington, was a man who travelled from his home in Berlin specially for the fortnight's flying, just as he has done regularly since joining as a member while an undergraduate at Oxford.

Now a judge in Germany, John Freymus tells an anecdote which does not illustrate too well the club's dedica-

tion to safety, but it does show rather graphically how resourceful glider pilots can be when looking for the so-called thermals which will help them to soar for long periods.

The story goes that during a violent thunderstorm, the winchman abandoned his post for fear of being struck by lightning — as he was launching a glider.

The pilot released the winch cable, which fell across a power line between Oxford and Woodstock, causing widespread power cuts.

Meanwhile, the other half of the severed winch cable fell in flames, and started a grass fire. The intrepid pilot, determined to make the most of it all, promptly headed for the artificial thermal caused by the fire, and soared happily above the chaos on the ground.

A similar resourcefulness has helped members who have been flying during the last few weeks. For, although wide blue skies might be what the doctor ordered for most of us, they don't hold the sort of thermals — usually "marked" by clouds — which make for good soaring conditions (soaring can also be achieved, often dramatically, by the "wave" motion of air trapped in the lee of hills or mountains).

The saving grace was the stubble fires which farmers all over Oxfordshire have been lighting following the harvest, and which provide "express lift" that can sometimes take gliders up at a breath-catching 5,000 feet a minute.

All this is gliding, 1981-style: a long way from the days of those early pioneers, like Kronfeld himself, when the pilots were slung precariously below the broad, flimsy wings of their machines; when the full efforts of thermals had yet to be understood; and when the winch was improvised by fitting a special drum on the axle of an ordinary car (even earlier, gliders were actually hand-launched).

But though gliding itself may be safer and more efficient today, the problems are of space — both on the ground and in the air.

Weston has been an ideal home for 26 years, but the threat of being squeezed out by increased RAF activities has for some time hung over the club.

Now, as a quarter of a century ago, the RAF is committed to trying to help the club find a new airfield. But at present, the only option is an amalgamation with other clubs. And there could then be not only a crisis of identity, but an unwelcome membership which could cut down individual flying time, and also threaten the facilities for training new pilots.

All the way from Berlin to fly gliders in Oxfordshire... John Freymus, former Oxford undergraduate.
(Picture Athar Chaudhry)

Back in 1952, on a snow-covered Kidlington airfield, in an Eon "Primary" Glider, is Eric Stow, of Oxford Gliding Club.

In the early days of gliding this would have been the scene as the intrepid flyers prepared their makeshift winch by replacing the wheel of their car with a special cable-drum.

Doing it quietly

"We do it quietly" is the gliding enthusiast's response to the "we do it standing up" car sticker of the windsurfing fraternity. And the Oxford Gliding Club has been doing it so quietly that they feel it is time to shout about their 25th anniversary.

Although the club is facing the possibility of having to move out of its home on the airfield at Weston-on-the-Green, there is no crisis of identity. It is one of the oldest and most active of clubs in the British Gliding Association. And it has built up a reputation for looking after the interests of those who want to learn to fly.

The members are just not willing, but anxious, to encourage others to enjoy the sport of "silent flight" — to introduce them to a communion with nature which usually produces a heady intoxication in those who sample for the first time the peace and the adventure of powerless flight.

In practical terms, the club offers newcomers free tuition. Club subscription is £40 a year, with a £25 joining fee — but only half the subscription is due until the new member has decided after a six-month trial that gliding really is for him or her. An initial trial flight will cost you just £3.

Fees for each launch of the glider are also among the cheapest of any club in Britain — £1.20 plus £3 an hour after the first ten minutes.

The club's own gliders include two K13 two-seaters, a K8 "first-solo" machine, and an Astir medium-performance single-seater.

Several members of the club have qualified for the annual national gliding championships.

Housewife Jane Randle, from Cassington, is the national 300-kilometre "triangle" record-holder for women.

She also has a Gold "C" certificate (300-kilometre flight with a gain of 3,000 metres in height), and her husband, Michael, is a coveted "Diamond" "C" (500 kilometres and a "gain" of 5,000 metres).

There is a wide range of occupations represented by the membership — the chairman, Mr John Giddings, is an industrial manager, Mr Randle is a computer expert, and one of the club's most adventurous flyers, Richard Hall, is an artificial inseminator.

Now we can open your eyes to greater transport profits

One of the Oxford gliding club's own machines, an Astir, photographed by Richard Hall during competition.

What was the club like when you joined?

John Gibbons, 1952: A friend had shown me a cutting from the Oxford Mail reporting on the activities of a gliding club at Kidlington airfield and shortly afterwards on a Saturday afternoon in February 1952 we went to investigate. Then as now we received a very friendly welcome and in no time at all I was being strapped into or rather onto an Eon Primary glider (which was the only club aircraft) with an instructor moving the wing up and down to check if I had mastered the correct control response. There was also one private glider, an Olympia owned by a syndicate comprising Professor George Varley (CFI), Ray Stafford-Allen, the other instructor, and Marcus Goodall. After two successful 'ground-slides' that day and having completed the required exercises over a period of a few months I was given a full launch to about 800 feet and flew a circuit to gain my 'A' and 'B' certificate.

George and Ray had been on an instructor course at Dunstable before starting the club at Kidlington. They were both very enthusiastic and were responsible for the club building up quickly so that in 1953 we were able to buy a T31 two-seat trainer aircraft and abandon the solo method of training much to the relief of the BGA as this exciting way of learning to glide was now officially frowned on!

John Freymuth, 1954: In August 1954, shortly after I had left school in Berlin and come up to Oxford to prepare for a university course, I was met by a girl named Belinda who happened to live in a flat in the same house. She returned from one of her weekend outings full of laughter, describing how she had scrambled from the ditch into which her boyfriend had driven them in his sports car.

A weekend later, and ready for more fun, she took me along cycling to Kidlington Airport and introduced me to the Oxford Gliding Club where she had recently started her ab-initio training in a fairly new open Sedbergh T21.

The club had been refounded at Kidlington in 1951 with a few dozen enthusiastic members who used to come to the airfield by bus or bicycle. They started with three gliders and very basic equipment. Ground operations were often hampered by the soggy soil, and the only service vehicle, a roofless van chassis called the beaver, was liable to get bogged down in the mud. After a wet day, launch cables would therefore be retrieved along the peri track by guiding them through pulleys held by the Club President, Professor George Varley, and other volunteers. With launches normally below 1000 feet, cable breaks and snarl-ups were frequent, and the second winch drum, devoid of a pay-on gear, needed a human "winder on". Launch signals were given by bats, only years later to be supplemented by a hand-held Aldis lamp connected to a loose battery. Owing to the lack of any other communication between winch and launch point, any unforeseen delays caused anxious minutes of suspense and fostered mutual suspicion between the crews at either end and against the tow-car driver from both sides - a messenger could be dispatched to resolve the mystery. But all these incidents, and the constant need for improvisation, added to the sense of fun and adventure, causing curses and laughter in equal shares and leaving nobody without a self-chosen task.

After a few more weekends, I had scraped together enough pocket money for a day membership at five shillings and a single launch at the usual rate of one shilling for my first-ever, short but fascinating air

experience flight in the T21. The pilot was Ray Stafford-Allen, the winch driver John Smoker.

Lack of time and money, and my return to Germany in the following year, restricted me to only occasional visits to Kidlington.

It was not until 1958, and under the reign of Arthur Speechley, the powerful new Club Secretary, that I joined OGC as a full member and started gliding in earnest, if only during my student holidays. Two years before, the club had moved from Kidlington, where its hangars were taken over for industrial purposes, to its present site at Weston which soon proved to be a far better location. The only disadvantage was its greater distance from Oxford and the unsuitability of the narrow A 34 - then one of the most dangerous stretches of road in Britain - for cycling. A common and easy remedy was hitch-hiking, provided that you wore a sports jacket and tie and carried a shopping bag suggesting short-distance business. This was a normal attire anyway for well-groomed flying instructors and winch drivers.

My early mentors were Dave Roberts, Roy Collins, John Gibbons and John Ellis, who sent me solo, again in the much-loved T21, during the flying weeks in August 1959. For this decision, John had to pay by having to collect me and the heavy aircraft from the middle of the airfield, grumbling "This wasn't much like the one you did before!". In my log book he entered mildly: "Realised too low on downwind leg - strong sink - turned in early with normal landing".

Richard Hall, 1972: In 1972, I was a 21 year old farm worker. One of my friends in the local Young Farmers Club was Andrew Henderson, an instructor at OGC. He knew that I was aviation mad and had done an ATC gliding course. He suggested I came and had a look at OGC.

The rest is history! In those days, we had the two K13 that we still have and they were quite new. The other club gliders were a red and white Skylark 2 (120) and a green Skylark 3 which had one red wing and one orange wing (168).

The winch was basically the same one we have today. It was brand new and I was the first student to be sent solo using it.

The cables were towed out with a little grey Ferguson 20 tractor. It did all of 10 MPH and took as long to get back to the winch as it did to bring the cables out.

The paras were using a Dragon Rapide which was often out climbed by us. There were no radios to winch or paras.

Mike Randle was CFI and most of my pre solo flying was with Pete Brooks. Mike sent me solo after 17 launches.

There were several privately owned gliders including a Phoebus, one of the first glass gliders. Our four club gliders were kept in the north end of the big hangar and we had an old RAF hut as a clubhouse/workshop.

Launches were 30p.

Phil Hawkins, 1975: The RAF gatehouse was manned at all times day and night. You had to show your membership card to get in. If you were first in, you had to sign a book to get the Clubhouse key.

What was the club like when you joined? (contd.)

The Clubhouse was an uninsulated brick building with an asbestos roof. We had no bar, no toilet, no showers, no kitchen and no hangar. But there was a small workshop.

There were four gliders in the Club fleet. They were kept in the northern half of the RAF hangar. The two seaters were the K13s, both less than ten years old at this time. The single seaters were a Skylark 3 and a Skylark 4.

The hottest privately owned gliders were a Phoebus C and a Kestrel 20. There were no BGA trigraphs or CAA registrations. The K13s were known as Elfin and Redfin for identification on the log sheets. Which were written by hand. Gliders did have BGA numbers, and some had competition numbers as well.

All flying was paid for in cash at the end of each day. Using different coloured tickets for launches and soaring time. And someone had to do a daily reconciliation of the log sheets against the cash. The takings were posted into a locked wooden box bolted to the clubhouse floor.

Smoking a Winter barograph was a routine part of the DI on all Club gliders. All Club gliders had basic audio varios but the K13s had no radio. Most, but not all, privately owned gliders did have radio.

The launch point vehicle was a two-wheeled wooden box trailer with small windows. Known as the caboose, it was usually towed out to the launch point behind a car. It was painted with red and white squares for maximum visibility. It had no radio. Some members had Pye Westminster radios in their cars. A Pye Westminster radio set is about twice as big as a shoe box. Mostly they had only three gliding channels.

At the launch point, the preferred landing spot was marked out with white tapes. Known as "the strips" they were actually flattened and whitewashed fire hoses. There was rarely any voice communication between the launch point and the winch. On good days a wire link was laid to the winch from a drum on a little trailer. But the telephone handsets at each end didn't always work. The signalling light on the launch point trailer was unreliable. When it wasn't working, we used a hand-held Aldis Lamp. Unless the battery hadn't been charged. Then we signalled by swinging a white painted bat like an oversized ping-pong bat. The winch driver usually had no idea what type of glider was being launched next. Until it rose into view against the sky.

The parachutists were seldom active, and there were only a few of them. They flew a purple De Havilland Rapide. We had virtually no communication with them at all. The RAFGSA "Chilterns" Club operated their winch run about 100 yards from ours. They had a K13, a single seater K18 and a Kestrel most of the time. Occasionally they also used a Kranich, K4, T31 Cadet, Doppelraab and Cobra. The Doppelraab had two seats but only one control stick. The instructor had to reach over the pupil's shoulder to grab an extension to the stick. The K4 once did an entire circuit with a tyre resting on the tailplane.

Communication between the two launch points was by shouting. The Chilterns club had two single drum winches mounted on high trailers. Our winch (built in 1971) looked superficially much the same as it does now. But it had a somewhat under-powered Leyland diesel engine. And no radio. Cable breaks were mended with aluminium ferrules in the Talurit press. The cables were towed out by a little grey Ferguson T20 tractor with no cab.

All gliders used the same type of weak link. Which was made from rope, just a bit thinner than the strop rope. Aerotows were occasionally available from a farm strip at Middleton Stoney. The tow plane was a Beagle Husky, registration G-ATCD. It was sometimes piloted by John Gibbons.

The latest glide path computer was a circular device made from two bits of plastic. It didn't need batteries. The latest CAA half million map was issue number 6. The Amber 1 airway above the airfield didn't start until 12,500ft. Duty Pilots were called Launch Point Marshals (LPMs). There was no published LPM rota. All LPMs were volunteers, and wore an armband to signify their status. You just passed on the armband to someone else when you went flying.

There was no published instructor rota either. Apparently because there were "too many" instructors. And virtually all of them could teach you cloud flying if you asked. It was fairly routine in the summer for one K13 to be flown across country. And retrieved as necessary with the open trailer.

Nobody had ever heard of GPS, WinPilot or TomTom. Nobody had ever heard of mobile phones. If you landed out, you walked towards civilisation until you found a phone. Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) was a relatively new concept in the phone network.

The Club phone was not on STD. Which meant you couldn't dial it from outside the local area. You had to be connected manually by the operator. If you were using a public phone, that meant inserting 42 pence into the coin box. That is, if you had been thoughtful enough to carry enough change with you. You just hoped that some kind soul was in the Clubhouse listening for your call. If they weren't, you were stuck.

And yet:- Launches were as high as they are now. We flew as many hours as we do now. We flew as far across country as we do now. It was just as much fun as it is now. So how did we manage it?

Dave Weekes, 1987: 18th August 1987. I'd recently moved to Oxfordshire after having done a one week course with Cambridge GC at Duxford the previous year. Sharing airspace with Spitfires & Corsairs was interesting, but that's another story.

The new OGC hangar had just been built (thanks to Douglas Hurd!) and it was just a bare shell inside. The glider workshop and the bar were still in an old RAF shed which has since been demolished.

The glider fleet hasn't changed much to this day! Then it was the two K13's, two K8's and one Astir. Plus Daisy of course. One of the K8's had to be replaced, (which was mainly caused by some inept winch driving on my part) but the rest of the fleet has kept going!

Early instruction was by Richard Hall, who was then CFI, Gordon Craig, Graham Barrett and John Gibbons - those names seem familiar! Other contributors to the learning process have moved on - Mike Nichols, Steve Evans, Nick Porat, John Giddins and Cris Emson.

Colin White and Colin Shepherd have unfortunately both gone to the great gliding club in the sky.

Other than learning to fly, the early experiences with the club revolved around building it! Putting down the upstairs flooring, plasterboarding the ceilings and fitting all the doors are jobs I remember being closely linked with. The plumbing was done by a couple of pre-solo pilots who were

What was the club like when you joined? (contd.)

in the trade and the clubhouse as we know it today came together fairly quickly – fortunately, because the old RAF shed was not exactly sophisticated.

The winch – well it's still the same frame and back end now but then it was powered by a Ford straight 6 diesel out of an old building supplies truck. It was probably at best 120 hp and at worst a lot less. It had a standard truck clutch and gearbox and "up slack" was by slipping the clutch and launch speed was very directly controlled by the winch driver! The transition between "up slack" and "all out" was like doing a hill start in a car and could be "abrupt" if you got it wrong. That's how we ended up needing a replacement K8.

And the cable towing was by diesel Land Rover – "up slack" again by clutch slip. I got pretty good at changing Land Rover clutch plates. Range Rover Automatics are much better!

Neil Swinton, 1988: When I joined the club we had much the same fleet (barring the big DG and the second Astir) as we do now, but one of the Ka8's was different. This was a red aircraft – DSD – and I can well remember that as an early solo pilot I found it a real handful. If the wings were level, then I could not get the yaw-string straight. If I set the yaw-string straight, then the wings were not level. After several months like this, I timidly asked one of our God-like instructors what I was doing wrong. 'DSD?' He said – 'It's bent like a banana'. Luckily the twisted Ka8 was replaced by first a Ka6, and then by HFW, our current Ka8.

Claudia Hill, 1998: I joined in May 1998, about a month after I had moved to the UK from Germany. I had obtained my PPL-C (glider pilot's licence) in Germany the previous year and was desperate to find a club here. OGC looked like the kind of club where I would feel comfortable: A fleet of 2 K13s, 2 Ka8s, an Astir and the Acro for cross-country flying, as well as Daisy of course.

I phoned to ask if I could pop over on a very showery day and took the train from Slough to Bicester and a taxi from there. One of the guards (the military still had guards at the gate in those days and we needed to show our club membership cards) gave me a lift to the Tost winch, from where I was picked up by the cable retrieve vehicle, an old Land Rover.

I vaguely remember John Gibbons being there as even though they were thinking about packing up due to the rubbish weather he wanted to get me flying as I'd come all the way from Slough.

I flew with John Hanlon. Quite a serious-looking but probably nice enough bloke I thought. And then I felt obliged to join on the spot as everyone was so nice and bent over backwards to accommodate me without a trial flight booking.

The chairman at the time was Pete Brooks I think, Nick Hill was the treasurer, Barry Taylor the secretary and Cris Emson the CFI.

As I hadn't flown for about 8 months and didn't know the local procedures I did about 15 launches, with Graham Barrett, Howard Stone, Coops, probably also Cris Emson, and Steve Evans, before I resoloed. Dave Weekes suggested shortly afterwards that I should convert to the Astir, and I was put on the insurance as a named pilot as I didn't have a BGA Bronze C but a German PPL-C.

We had the Caboose as our launch point vehicle – apparently an old ambulance. The current bus was bought in 2000 I think, and Carole Shepherd painted the big yellow smiley face on its roof.

We shared the field with RAFSPA, the RAF Sports Parachutists' Association, led by a very shouty bloke who didn't understand the concept of how to talk to people who were not his subordinates. We had one memorable Dawn to Dusk flying day where the duty instructor (Neil S) and the duty pilot (me) lost the will to live as it was a very busy day, with lots of private owners, lots of parachuting, and a very angry DZ controller as breakfast was served at the launch point (with the wooden tables from behind the club house, and I think even the two BBQs, brought to the launch point). Now you know why Neil and I are never keen on Dawn to Dusk flying days.

I spent the first few seasons learning to do loops and chandelles and driving the winch, flying cross-country as P2 with Phil Hawkins in the Acro, doing my 50km in HFW and then using DMH for my first few longer cross-countries, before I eventually joined Nick Hill's Ka6 CR (FWA) syndicate, and later bought the DG-100 251 with Nick.



(Photo of Petrel landing at WOG: Peter Boulton)

EASA – A PERSONAL VIEW

Neil Swinton

Over the past three to four years, we seem to have suffered a constant stream of rumours, regulations, and rumours-of-regulations that can easily lead one to believe that EASA are a body that are doing nobody any good and exist solely to spoil the enjoyment of flight by glider pilots.

So, who are they? The European Aviation Safety Agency is part of the EU structure and came into life nearly ten years ago. Initially all was quiet, but over the past couple of years we are seeing the effect of some of large changes that they are bringing in Europe-wide. EASA look after pilot licensing, aircraft regulation and – to a lesser extent at the moment – airspace regulations. As an example, when our club aircraft are inspected and maintained, they are now done so under EASA regulations and paperwork. Most of EASA's work is on 'big' aeroplanes where it concentrates on ensuring aircraft maintenance in all European countries is to a similarly high standard (one thing to bear in mind next time you fly on a charter flight to Spain and see an engineer looking inside the engine!). However EASA also control 'small' or General Aviation (GA), and in particular interest for us, they now regulate gliding.

So before we had EASA how was gliding managed in the UK? The answer was – without being too unkind to the BGA – in quite an amateur manner. The BGA looked after training, licensing, airworthiness, type certification etc. The CAA (the controlling body for aviation in the UK) basically delegated all responsibility about gliding to the BGA, and gliding sort of bumbled along, in a little unregulated bubble of its own.

In one way, this was great. Provided we didn't upset anyone, we could do as we pleased inside our little bubble. The BGA told us which mods we could do to an aircraft, it issued its own little pilot license and it worked with the CAA to introduce a self-certifying medical system.

However in issues outside the little bubble of gliding, the BGA had almost no say whatsoever. Although the BGA tried to show gliding as being a responsible and professional sport, the view in the CAA and in General Aviation was that gliding was a different world, a bunch of weirdos doing their own thing. Why did they need to listen to the BGA about anything? The CAA did get involved when things went badly wrong, such as when competition low flying 'beat ups' became severely restricted after a very public accident, and also in glider registration when the CAA observed two aircraft carrying the same tail number, but in general they kept their distance.

But in terms of consultations about aviation, rule changes, airspace changes etc. the BGA never had the status of more than an 'invited observer'.

I personally feel that UK gliding would have become increasingly insular and defensive of its own little rights and privileges and that we would have inevitably lost out as airspace and regulations became more restricting.

In addition, attempting to use BGA regulation paperwork outside the BGA world was almost impossible – our licence and medical would not be recognised overseas, or even by the UK GA world. Buying and selling gliders overseas was a lottery of examining log books and cross-checking which mods were mandatory in country 'a' but not 'b'.

The introduction of EASA has changed a lot of that. Glider pilots will now operate under the same Europe-wide licenses, medicals and certification system as all other small aircraft – this will bring gliding very definitely into the 'main-stream' of GA. We will no longer be viewed as weirdos flying aircraft with no engines, and no licenses and no regulations, instead we will be qualified LAPL holders with glider endorsements. We will be a recognised part of GA, and be able to be represented as such when changes are negotiated. Gliders maintained in all European countries will be use the same paperwork and systems, and be using the same list of faults and modifications. And of course we are all aware of the welcome change which has let 14 year-olds fly solo, a change which would never have been sanctioned by the CAA.

If you follow the gliding newsgroup 'uras', or read the BGA newsletters, you will see that the BGA – together with European Air Sports - has been working very hard and at a very high level to achieve a sensible level of regulation. For example both the CAA and EASA wanted a single PPL level medical for all pilots, the BGA negotiated the new (to Europe) concept of the GP medical for simple light aircraft and gliders. In another example the BGA lead the way with some new cloud-flying regulations which are very simplified versions from what was originally proposed by EASA.

On the down-side, I would be the first to recognise that EASA has tried to over-regulate all GA and in the UK gliding has certainly suffered with increased costs and paperwork. In addition, some manufacturers have used the EASA regulations to try to get money out of us owners of older-gliders! However EASA now recognise this and organisations such as International AOPA, Europe Air Sports and the BGA are currently re-negotiating areas such as the part 'M' maintenance for 'small' aircraft, and hopes are very high that simplification should be on the cards.

In summary – do I like what EASA have done to gliding? No, of course not. I would like gliding to be like it was back in the 80's when it was all simpler and easier. It has now become more documented, more regimented, more controlled and as a consequence more expensive and more time consuming than it was when the BGA ran it. However if you consider that change WAS inevitable (either via EASA or the CAA) to make UK gliding more a mainstream part of GA, then things could have been a lot worse.

A SUMMARY OF THE YEAR 2012

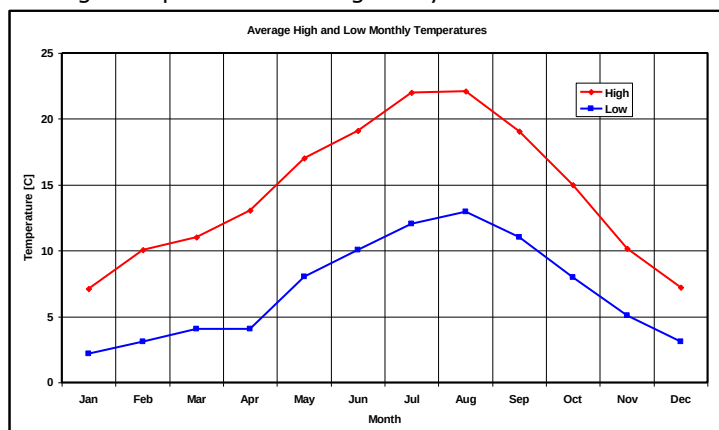
or **It's the Weather Again!**

Keith White

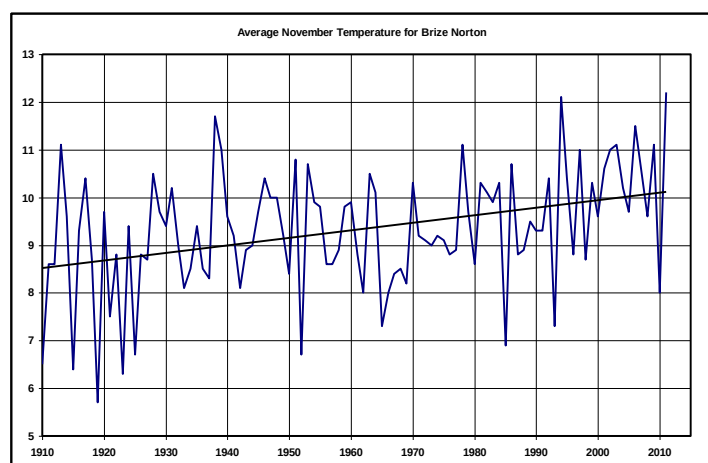
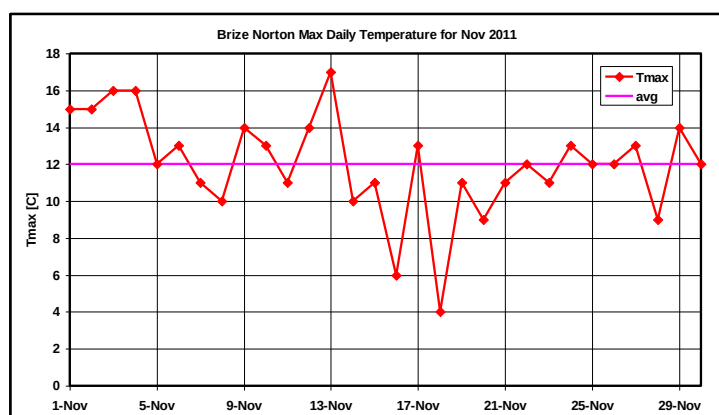
November; still hardly feels like late autumn - cool and damp, but not freezing yet, and some reasonable days for being on the airfield. The RAF up to their usual tricks on AGM Saturday, and then again on Sunday.

Sunday 20th, low cloud early and the opportunity to practice cloud flying, and then it cleared up into a pleasant day. Average temperature throughout November well above average.

Average temperatures throughout year:



Actual maximum in November 2011 - 2 °C higher than the long term average:

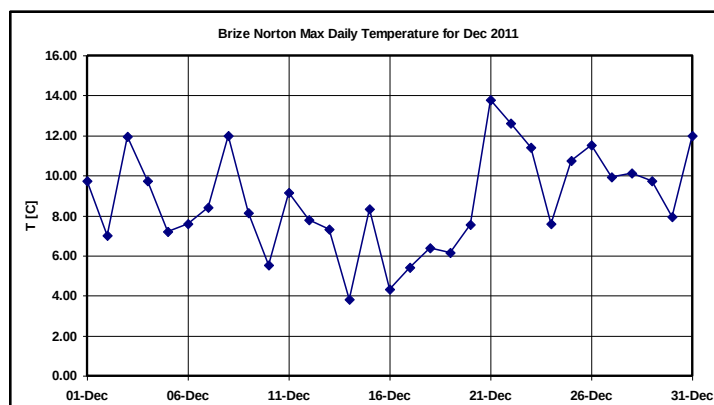


Above is the average November temperature since 1910, with 2011 being the highest: if the increase continues at the same rate, in 100 years the average will be 26 °C, and cross country flights will be done throughout the month!

December continues the same fair weather – are we going to pay for it later?

“December 2011

A persistent Atlantic airstream brought changeable,



sometimes very stormy, weather and generally mild conditions, especially to southern areas and in the last 10 days. There was rainfall on most days, particularly over the northern half of the UK where some hill snow also occurred. Southern and western areas were mild with few frosts.

The mean temperature was 0.6 °C above the 1971-2000 average. It was the mildest December since 2006 and over 5 °C warmer than December 2010. Over England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the number of air frosts was significantly below average. Rainfall amounts were over 75% above normal in much of western and northern Scotland and parts of Northern Ireland, north-west England and Kent. Elsewhere, they were generally close to normal. Northern and western Scotland had one of the wettest Decembers in the last 100 years (and in western Scotland and Northern Ireland the number of days with rain was among the highest for December in the last 50 years). Sunshine amounts varied from well above normal over the Midlands and eastern England to well below in Northern Ireland, western Scotland and the western fringes of England and Wales.”

In March, the IGC decide to throw the cat among the pigeons by declaring that EW-D loggers will not be usable for badge flights from the end of March, only to change their mind a few days later [as Nick says “... no doubt in response to numerous complaints ...”] and postpone it to Oct 1.

March 24 brings the last of the winter lectures [Garry's snowed-off Weather] and the long awaited result of the questions competition. Mark Brooks is the winner with Lukasz and Barry G in hot pursuit - congratulations to all, and many thanks to all the speakers.

15th April, and with a 10 kt surface wind from the north, the forecast is for a 500 km day. The first day of the year that I have seen so many of the shiny white things at the launch point. By 11:00 the sky is full of fluffy white Cu and the adventurous spirits are on their various ways. Unfortunately it is all down hill from there, as the fluffy Cu turns into heavy 8/8 cover. Oh well, it was exciting whilst it lasted.

A hosepipe ban was imposed in the South on Apr 5th - it is now Apr 29th, and it has hardly stopped raining. Across the whole of the UK 97 mm of rain has fallen up to the 28th -

A Summay of 2012 (contd.)

well above the average 70 mm, and getting on for the record 120 mm in 2000.

May seems to have slipped past without too much excitement. Lukasz & Krys both managed their 2hr flights - congratulations, and Krys arrived with a Dart late in the month. The 25th saw the first of the Friday evening flying sessions.

June, and the expedition to Talgarth is a rather damp affair with some activity on Monday and Wednesday, but the best day being held until last - the Saturday. Pretty damp at Weston for the start of the month also, with lakes on the long run.

The side path has been magnificently renovated by Phil Pratley, despite the best efforts of the bunnies, badgers, foxes, and many other burrowing animals - thanks Phil.

July 1st, and the rumours about the weather are confirmed - it has been the wettest spring drought since records have been kept [more than 100 years]. From Apr 1st to June 27th, the UK rainfall has been 323.4 mm, beating the previous record of 296.5 mm set in 1931, and rather above the long term average of 208.4 mm. It has also been the coolest June since 1991, with less than 2/3 of average sunshine.

Daisy visited RIAT on the 7th/8th. Saturday rather damp, but Sun an improvement. Thanks to all the crew.

July 21st and summer has arrived at last - only two months late!. Krys got to Aston down for his 50 km, doing 5 hours at the same time; and James did his 5 hours as well.

Weather improved a bit at the beginning of August, with the arrival of Eckhard and Carmen on a visit from our sister club, Fliegerclub Schönhagen e.V. On the 3rd, Paula did her 2 hours, on the way to her cross-country endorsement.

And on the 5th, despite torrential showers and thunder, our president was given four flights in the DG505 and K13.

Overall, the flying two weeks could be considered a success despite the weather, with only two non-flying days:

		Flights
Sat	28-Jul	29
Sun	29-Jul	20
Mon	30-Jul	22
Tue	31-Jul	0
Wed	01-Aug	23
Thu	02-Aug	11
Fri	03-Aug	57
Sat	04-Aug	16
Sun	05-Aug	9
Mon	06-Aug	18
Tue	07-Aug	13
Wed	08-Aug	0
Thu	09-Aug	33
Fri	10-Aug	53
Sat	11-Aug	21
Sun	12-Aug	22
Total		347

Thanks to all who made this possible.

21st should have been the Fly to the Past at Kidlington, but it was called off owing to lack of interest. However, Daisy and the DG-505 went to the Sywell LAA Rally on the first weekend in September and generated interest in the club.

In July the winch differential was sounding rather sickly. A temporary repair was done to keep the winch going for the flying two weeks, and eventually a full bearing replacement in September. A fantastic job by Andy and Jon with assistance from various others.

Despite the damp year [the weather men said it could not happen, but, there has been enough rain throughout the summer to completely saturate the ground] our treasurer reports at the AGM that we have done slightly more flying, although slightly fewer launches, so it could not have been that bad after all. Cannot be wetter next year - can it?

FINAL GLIDE is produced using Word. This year, for the second time, it has not been printed but instead is only available as a PDF. Distributed free to members, ex-members and friends of the Oxford Gliding Club, and available in the members' area on the OGC website.

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

Some contributions are also available on the OGC blog: <http://oxfordgliding.blogspot.co.uk>

TO THE SEASIDE and a bit further this time

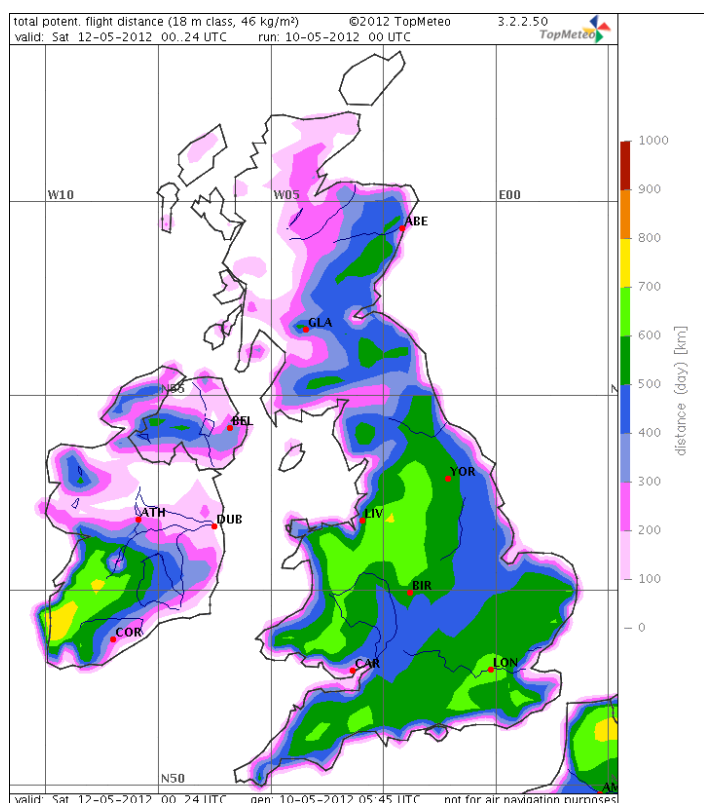
Text and photos: Paul Smith

In September 2010 a gang of misguided club cross-country pilots were foolhardy enough to join me on a flight from Weston to Chichester just for the fun of going to see the sea. It was a great day out. At the South Coast I stared out across the Channel looking at the cloud shadows clearly visible on the water below. In the distance beyond Hayling Island and the ferries crossing the Solent stood the Isle of Wight. At 4000ft above Chichester the 25km glide across to Bembridge looked achievable as the sky was working well. I could hear the locals on the radio making the crossing, I was tempted, however that wasn't the task so I turned my back on the sea and headed for home.

The cross-country conditions were good for September with a fairly light NW holding back any sea breeze effects. The whole experience stayed with me for months as I looked for another opportunity to repeat the trip and perhaps take the next step.

In May this year the forecast looked great with a large area of soarable weather to the south and most importantly a light northerly. On Wednesday 9th I put the word out to the soaring email list:

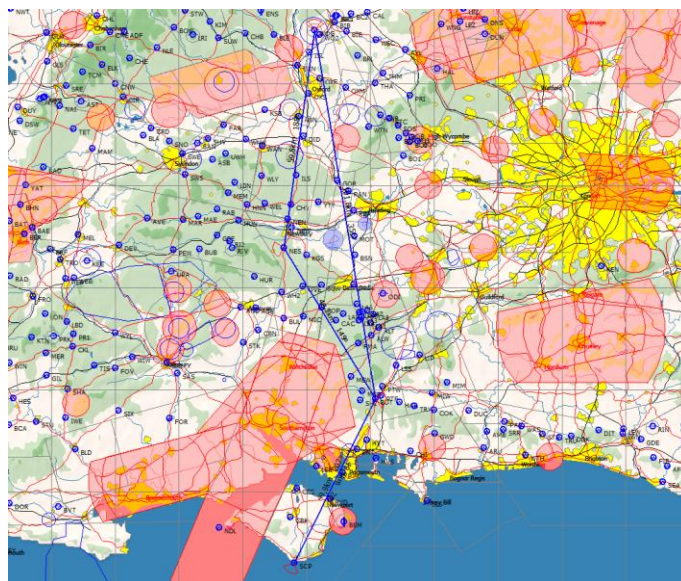
- **Isle of Wight anyone?**



Back came an immediate reply from Paul M saying he and Jon had a NAVEX booked, so no need to negotiate for the glider, 277 and 902 would be mine and Haste's.

Saturday came and I sat at home in front of the PC planning the task; weather forecasts, NOTAMs (no Olympics yet), route, everything still looked good and Lasham were predicting a good day but a risk of overdevelopment.

I arrived at Weston task sheet in hand – St Catherine's Point out and return, with control points at Newbury South and Butser Hill to avoid the Southampton control zone, 310km in total.



The task – gulp!

It soon became apparent the military wanted the airfield with sorties planned for 10:00, 12:00 and 14:00. Haste and I hitched our trailers and decided to go to Bicester.

A quick rig, retask and chunk of money later found us at 4000ft on glide out from Bicester at 11:45.

The run to Newbury South was good passing at 12:30, we were getting a reliable 4kts and working 3-4500ft staying together. Before too long I was working my way around the Southampton zone although the closer I got the fewer cumulus paved the way and bluer it became. Typically the best looking weather was in the zone.



Looking S towards IoW, not many landing options from here on!

By this time I'd lost Haste and was turning the Spinnaker Tower at 13:20 using the few bits of cu as they came and went.

To the Seaside (contd.)



In lift out over Solent looking down on Spinnaker Tower

Looking across to the Isle of Wight with a perfectly blue sky I waited over Portsmouth for the weather and Haste to catch up, taking a few snaps and trying to pluck up courage. For what felt like ages I flew in and out of some quite reliable lift considering what a horrible retrieve this could become!

Some 20 minutes later Haste arrived along with some cu. He called on the radio to comment how inconsiderate it was for HMS Ark Royal to park crosswind, then took a climb and declared he was going for Bembridge!



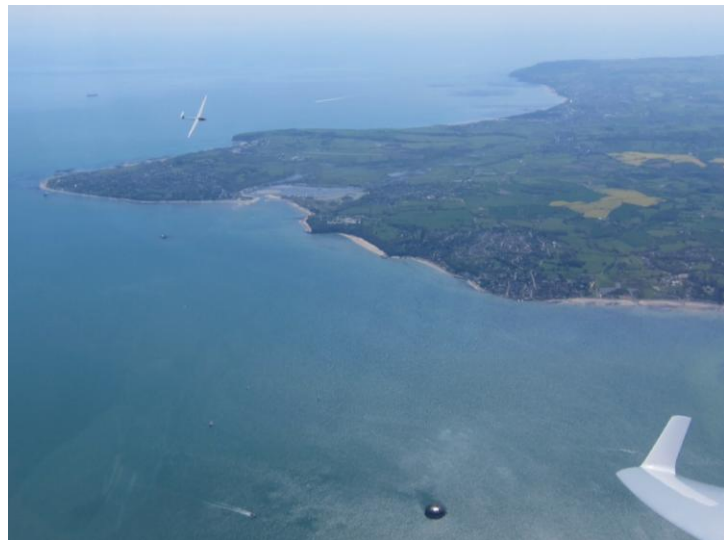
All looking too blue for comfort

Hang on! Time for indecision was over and I pointed the nose towards Ryde. The only cu far in the distance on the south of the Island probably 30km away!

Surprisingly the lift continued well over the water with the Spithead Sea Forts kicking off their own source of thermals.

The radio was beginning to get busier with locals talking about making the crossing. A couple of 18m ships we were climbing with earlier had already reached the other side and were reporting a distinct lack of any lift. Haste flew on ahead reaching land and also calling out no lift!

In my mind I was trying to calculate the height required to get to the island, back across the Solent, clear Portsmouth and find a landable field. Although the crossing is less than 10km, there is nowhere to land outside Lee-on-Solent until a considerable way inland. In hindsight this was perhaps a mistake as I was already focusing on failing, but still I pressed on. I had come this far and was determined to at least put a trace over the Isle.



Climbing with 902 half way, Bembridge in the distance

Gliding for what felt like an eternity I reached Ryde, Haste was making a bid for Bembridge, we had both made the jump. I decided to take a look back across the water so made a turn. The Ark Royal was now a dot.

No one had reported any lift, the sky ahead looked dead and the fear of landing out with a nightmare retrieve was becoming harder to ignore. If only there was a decent cu in sight or another glider turning...

I decided to abandon St Catherine's, turn tail and make for the mainland even though I still had 4000ft to play with.

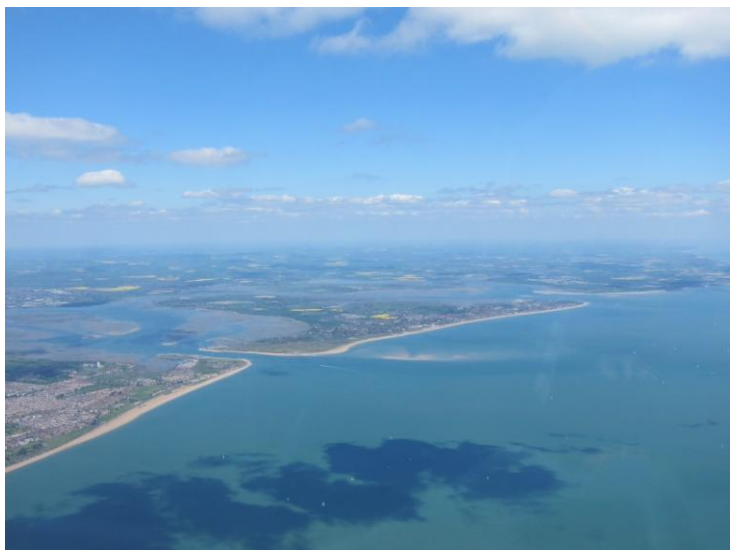
Haste turned just short of Bembridge and we were soon making the journey back across the water together.



Half way back towards Portsmouth and reliable lift

To the Seaside (contd.)

Fortunately the Ark Royal was not needed that day for Team Glasflügel. The vario perked up even before we reached Southsea and it was a relief to be climbing again.



The view on the way back to the East

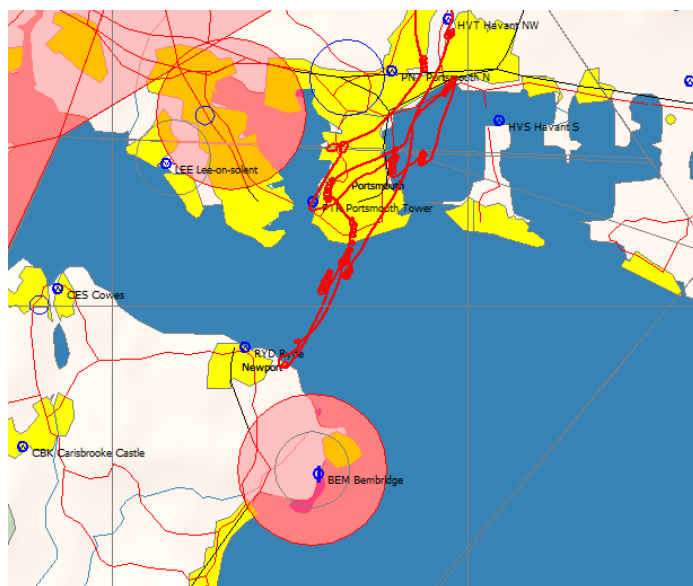
I relaxed and started to enjoy what is such a spectacular view. In March I made a trip to the top of the Spinnaker Tower on foot where I dreamt of making the crossing. Now I had made it!

Although the task was abandoned there was a feeling of joy having overcome the slightly irrational fear of flying

over such a huge body of water. The next time will be easier, the cu fuller and St Catherine's Point in reach.

As it turned out the Lasham forecast was spot on. Not the day-of-days after all and by the time we reached Newbury the sky had already overdeveloped and lift was becoming scarce. Nonetheless we persevered and tiptoed back to Bicester. Not a completed task, but still over 300km flown, at around only 65kp/h with all the faffing, and a mean L/D of 47.

Another great adventure made all the better for having shared it with a mate. Roll on 2013, Snowdon anyone?



DAISY DID LITHUANIA - JUST!

Text and photos: Dave Weekes

It's getting to be a habit – loading Daisy onto her trailer and heading far into Europe. In fact I suspect that Daisy now qualifies as the UK's most travelled T21!



But this year the International VGC Rally was at Pociunai in Lithuania – 1300 miles each way. Clearly we were not going to make that in one day, or even two. And it's tricky finding somewhere to park two glider trailers overnight. Again the German gliding clubs came up trumps and we were offered beds at Gifhorn gliding club near Brunswick and we'd decided to go to Olsztyn in Poland, the site of the VGC Rendezvous Rally for the second night.

So off we set, Pete Brooks and me with Daisy following behind Rob and Peter Boulton with BNK. It was the first time I'd towed Daisy with my Bongo van and it was a foot flat to the floor going up Stokenchurch cutting, which believe it or not is about the steepest hill between Oxford and Lithuania. By the time we got to the top, Peter and Rob had vanished and there was a smell of burning rubber, which had me worried. The worry about the Bongo evaporated as we saw BNK pulling onto the hard shoulder, emitting clouds of blue smoke. One trailer tyre had disintegrated completely, ripping off the mudguard in the process. We'd started off with three spare wheels between us and fortunately the mudguard had landed on the hard shoulder and was retrieved.

Following the usual worrying delays on the M25 we arrived at Dover where just before boarding, someone pointed out that one of Daisy's tyres was

Daisy did Lithuania (contd.)

pretty soft. It was hurriedly pumped up but when we got to France and were allowed back on the car deck it was completely flat. We'd still got the jack & spanner to hand from the first puncture and startled the people in the surrounding vehicles by a tyre change so rapid that they hadn't even got the ferry doors open before we'd finished! But we were down to one spare between two trailers and nervous. Despite a careful lookout we didn't pass a tyre shop all the way to Germany.

We found Gifhorn and one of the members very kindly led us to the local tyre supplier who sold us two new spares and we bolted the mudguard back to the trailer. Naturally we didn't have a moment's trouble more with tyres during whole trip.

Going to Olsztyn for the second night had seemed a good idea as it was in a fairly direct line to Pociunai. However we hadn't reckoned with Polish secondary roads, which clearly hadn't been built with large modern trucks in mind and have developed ruts like cart tracks. We bounced along for what seemed endless hours. Peter and Rob got caught out by satnav, found an unmarked piece of new motorway and ended up nearly in Gdansk before they could turn round. And I finished off the day by trying to wrap Daisy's trailer round the airfield gatepost!

The last day we endured another 200 miles of Polish secondary roads (it's a biiiig country) before crossing into Lithuania, where the main roads were measurably better. We got to the huge Pociunai airfield and after setting up tents etc decided it was time to rig Daisy. That was the point at which we discovered that the trailer drawbar tubes had completely broken across the top and down both sides – caused by the upwards bouncing rather than the downwards forces. The trailer was only hanging by the bottom faces of the square tubes. Scary to put it mildly! We'd been very lucky that the whole drawbar hadn't broken off somewhere along the road.

After those adventures we had a great rally. Because of the long haul there were only about 40 gliders instead of the usual 100+. OGC's two gliders formed half of the UK's entire contingent! But it was a distinguished crowd of the



The two Peters and drinking partner

vintage rally. On the International Evening OGC served steak & kidney pudding and Scotch. After a couple of days one of the Pociunai staff helped with welding up the

VGC "hard core". Graham Saw from Booker had done an incredible solo drive with his Petrel (which has since then been to OGC to the enjoyment of several more pilots) and there were a couple of guys representing Lasham, the site of next year's international



BNK and small English speaking Lithuanian

drawbar and we could relax and get used to being aerotowed by corrugated iron sheds.

The weather was pretty good but one day the sky looked really stonking and I headed off in BNK for some big lakes about 50 k away. Despite looking good, the clouds were a bit peculiar (probably just my flying) and the sink was much easier to find than the lift. Anyhow I turned the lakes and headed for home, at which point my grasp of the lift totally vanished and I ended up in a field 25 k short of the airfield. Lithuanian is a very impenetrable language! I had just texted my position to the lads and was wondering what to next when a small boy appeared on a bicycle. "My mother is English teacher" was his welcome opening statement. Result! He took me to meet his mother, who



Another small Lithuanian teaching himself to fly!

directed me down a long dirt track to the main road where I sat and waited for the lads. They pitched up pretty quickly and picking up the boy on the way, we treated him to a demonstration of how to derig a Skylark 4. His mother showed absolutely no concern at all about sending him off in a car with four strange foreigners!

The Lithuanians are definitely (so far) affected by paranoia about child protection as they also start teaching kids to glide at 8 years old. They are whizzed up and down the airfield at 30 feet in a Lak 14 – an updated version of the old solo learning system. All organised by one instructor who drove the winch and had the odd word with the pupils about their piloting. I think the kids mostly taught each other.

Certainly they knew how to fly! We flew a lot of the kids in Daisy and they were pretty good. Coming off the top of the winch I gave one of them control, directed him round the circuit and let him land – perfect! Well I did the spoilers because they don't have them on their little Lak. He must have been about 10. Watch for more Lithuanian World Champions in the future!

Daisy did Lithuania (contd.)

We drank a lot of good (cheap) Lithuanian beer, flew some (very) strange gliders and had a great time.

Having seen the error of our ways we went home the long way round via Warsaw on the better Polish main roads, partly to nurse the repaired drawbar. Past various interesting sights like the Forest of a Thousand Harlots – apparently a popular truck stop!

MY FIRST LANDOUT

Text and photos: Krzysztof Kreis



Weather this day (30.06.2012) was not great. At least not for cross-country. First launch, and 5 minutes later I was back at the launch point. The second flight was more successful. Nevertheless I struggled for quite long time at 1000-1200ft QFE, slowly climbing to 2500ft. That was quite hard work. Wind this day was quite strong (20kts) from direction 200-220. So when I got to 2500ft I was over Bicester. Then I tried to get to Weston, climbing if possible. Finally I managed to get decent lift to 4000ft and turned my heading to Weston. When I reached my home airfield I was again pushed over towards Bicester in a weak thermal. This game I played 3 or 4 times that day. In the meantime conditions improved, with cloud base up to 4000ft and more reliable thermals. There were rain showers visible W and NW from Weston. I hoped that SW wind would push those showers away from Weston.

After 2 and half hours of this struggle I finally managed to get over north Oxford at 3500ft QFE. Unfortunately thermals were quite whimsical so I couldn't get back to cloud base again. Instead of that I was constantly pushed with the SW wind, and slowly losing height. Eventually I gave up and turned towards Weston. I was getting close to the A34/B430 junction leading to Weston and I found some lift. I had about 2000ft on the clock, but thought to myself there is no such thing like too much height, so I stopped and circled. The lift was getting stronger and after a while I realised I didn't have to circle to gain height! I had been in a similar situation before, but that time in the Ka8. The wind had been blowing from the west, cloud was moving south and I was in front of this cloud and experienced strong lift along this cloud. That time I had quickly descended and had landed on the airfield.

This time I was near the cold front again and I didn't want to land quickly. I wanted to explore this kind of lift. Somewhere north, deep inside the front I could see rain showers. Wind was SW, but the front was moving SW. In the meantime Peter Boulton called me on the radio and

Since we'd made better progress on the return trip, we overshot Gifhorn and went to Achmer airfield to ask if we could park the trailers while we looked for a hotel to spend the night. We were immediately offered beds at the club and guided to a very nice Chinese restaurant. I do like German gliding clubs!

Next year's International Vintage Rally is at Lasham – It's the 40th anniversary of the VGC. The first week in August. Why not come?

informed me that they were going to pack up, and he wished me a good flight. I was expecting that flying along this cold front would push me away from the airfield, but firstly I decided not to stay too long and secondly 3000ft should be more than enough to get back from over Oxford. So I did my first lap to Oxford along the cold front. I was fascinated. Lift was hitting 10kts and flying at 80kts I was constantly gaining height! I had to open the airbrakes a few times so I wouldn't get sucked into a cloud.

When I got over Oxford, I checked to my left before turning and changed my heading towards the M40. I reached the M40 and turned back to Oxford again. All this time in lift, flying at 80kts between 3500-4000ft QFE. Brilliant. When I got over Oxford again I decided not to push my luck too far and I took the decision to go back home.



I dived under a cloud (yes, under a cloud because I was flying along a wall of cloud!) and I headed towards Weston. Sink was quite strong and also my quite excessive speed was adding to a rapid height loss. I saw there was a rain shower over Weston airfield so I decided I would prefer not to land in the rain. I thought if I could get back to the cold front and regain 4000ft, then I could try again 10-15 minutes later. Perhaps this plan would have been successful if I had managed to find this lift. Unfortunately I turned a bit too much west instead of south. When I was beyond the cold front again I had 1800ft QFE and I was about 10km away from the airfield. Theoretically with a slight tail wind I could manage to get back home in my Dart 17WR. However, I expected strong sink again and no chances for lift. Besides the Otmoor swamps didn't offer many good fields to land in; at the end of June there are generally not too many good fields. I decided I should get more height before I tried to glide home. I should have at least 3000ft to feel comfortably. That's the reason why I headed into an area where I expected some lift.

I flew towards an area where I could expect some lift, and in the meantime I was looking down for a field to land in. I was flying into wind (yes, I know flying downwind gives more opportunity to find landable fields). I was a bit terrified, because I couldn't spot any good field. I was reminded of fragments of Richard Hall's winter lecture

My first landout (contd.)

about field landings and about field selection. Size, slope, stock, obstacles, wind direction. Damn, it is difficult to find the ideal field. Either too short or with a slope, or with crops or tram lines. The adrenaline level in my blood was rising constantly. Eventually I found a strip of field which looked like grass. I wasn't delighted, it wasn't too long, there were power lines and it was quite narrow, but with no obstacles, and it was still better than any others I'd seen before.

When I was at about 1300ft QFE suddenly I found quite strong lift so I stopped and circled in it. First full turn and I was in lift. Yay! My soul was cheering up, hope was back! Second turn and I had a whole 100ft more on the altimeter! Unfortunately stress meant that I was not flying



accurately. After the next two turns I had lost 100ft. Normally I would be trying longer, this thermal looked quite strong (at least 1m/s) but I was quite nervous and I couldn't centre it. Now I think I could have tried two more turns before giving up, but that's now, not then. Wind was 220, 20kts, and it was quickly blowing me away from my selected field and towards the Otmoor swamps. If I made a mistake in this thermal and didn't gain enough height then I might not be able to find another field or find the one I had already selected, and then I could be in serious trouble. Besides I was facing my first field landing and I preferred not to stretch my luck. So I decided not to struggle on in this thermal and instead focus on a good



landing. I flew around this field, having a good look at it. On the next field there was some spraying machine, which confirmed my wind direction, and I knew there would be a cross-wind from the left. It all didn't look too bad. On downwind leg I did the pre-landing check: trim for 60kts, gear down and locked. Then diagonal leg, base and I was on finals. I flew over the power line with fully opened airbrakes and rounded out with 60kts. When I touched the ground I kept the airbrakes fully opened, which activated the wheel brake, and after 50-60 metres I stopped. Both I and my Dart came out of this landing without a scratch.

This was a very exciting day after all. Flying along a cold front, first land out and great pictures of a double rainbow at the end. I learned quite a lot that day. First of all you have to mentally prepare yourself that sooner or later you will have to land out: Richard Hall's lecture regarding outlandings and the relevant chapter in *Bronze and Beyond* were very helpful. Spot landing exercises on a small strip on the airfield cut for this purpose by John Hanlon were also essential in building up landing skills and confidence. Another useful exercise is to do field selection even if you are local soaring and to check after flying what this field really looks like. Think ahead and don't get caught out!

Finally, I would like to quote Paul Morrison: "Good decision and outcome but always remember a superior pilot uses his superior judgement to avoid having to use his superior skills!"

A PARENT'S VIEW...

Peter Turner

Photo: Paul Smith

Freddie has always been very interested in all things aeronautical and couldn't wait to learn to glide.

As his 14th birthday approached at the end of August 2012, and having learnt that the age to go solo might be lowered to 14, he couldn't wait to get started. As I learnt about gliding at OGC and was a member for several years, it really didn't take long to decide that OGC would offer a great club environment.

It was also very reassuring to learn that there were other young people in the club and that the instructors didn't seem daunted by young enthusiasts, in fact positively welcomed them.



Freddie was keen to make progress as quickly as possible and weekend mornings brought a mix of weather checking and hastily packed lunch creations in order to get to the club as early as possible. After 64 launches he became one of the youngest people in the UK to qualify as a solo glider pilot.

To me this was not just a case of a solo flight, but a statement of independence – the person who a

few weeks earlier seemed quite young was now trusted to use the radio, drive a tractor (briefly!), and generally take a responsible role within the club.

The instructors have been fantastic, encouraging where appropriate and constructively critical when performance is lower than required, but never discouraging.

Thanks OGC!

OGC AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Claudia Hill



In the beginning we had the listserver. The listserver is like an email group, it's meant for internal communication between club members, and announcements from the committee and other "officials" to club members. Over the years there have been a few attempts to replace the listserver with something else – a Yahoo group, a Facebook group, a blog – but none of these ever really took off, so the listserver is what we still use for communicating with other club members.

For advertising the club to the outside world of course we have the website, www.oxford-gliding-club.co.uk (which is maintained by Barry Taylor, so any requests for the website should go to him).

At some point earlier this year it was decided that OGC should also have a Facebook page. Jess Taylor kindly agreed to set it up.

It then lay dormant for a while. As I had been involved in my employer's Facebook page and the Women Glide (UK) Facebook page I asked if I could maybe be one of the admins, to start populating the page and using it for advertising the club.

So that's what we've been doing over the past few months, and at the AGM this year I was asked whether I wanted to look after all social media advertising channels for the club.

There are several Facebook admins who more or less regularly post items, photos and videos that might be of interest to the public, fellow glider pilots and/or club members.

You might be relieved to know that *you don't need to register anywhere or log in to anywhere* to see any of the OGC Social Media channels.

We welcome contributions from club members, so if you have any good photos or other things you want to share with the public, please either post them on the Facebook page or send them to me and I'll post them as OGC.

Just always remember that the main purpose of the Facebook page is to advertise the club. It's not meant as a channel for internal communications, so things like "can Bob swap their duty pilot stint with me" or "Daphne, can you please let me know if you'll be at the club on Sunday" should probably be sent to the listserver instead – you are much more likely to reach the desired target audience through the listserver anyway, i.e. your fellow OGC club members.

At the moment anyone can post things, the admins obviously need to keep an eye on what's being posted. So far we've only occasionally had to remind posters that everything on this page is 100% public and will be associated with OGC.

Even if you are not registered with or logged into Facebook you can still read the posts, and look at all the photos.

Recently I have also set up a Twitter page. All posts from Facebook are replicated on Twitter, and vice versa. I have to admit I still don't quite see the point of Twitter myself, but lots of people use it, and it helps with advertising the club.

Finally, we now also have a blog page, again for advertising purposes and to show the outside world what we get up to at the weekends and why we love it so much.

The idea is that anything that's a bit too long for Facebook or Twitter will be posted on the blog. If any of you want to write guest blogs you are very welcome, please do let me know. To start with, a few of this year's Final Glide contributions will appear on there (not the whole of Final Glide as some of it is not really of interest to the non-OGC public).

We have already had some trial flight bookings from people who contacted us via the Facebook page, and the BGA regularly re-posts OGC photos and news items on its own Facebook page – which gives us a much bigger profile in the UK gliding community as a lot of glider pilots are not aware that the Oxford Gliding club exists and is based at Weston-on-the-Green.

So, even if you hate Facebook, Twitter, and all social media with a vengeance, let's use it to our advantage and advertise our club through it. Steve is going to put the Facebook page address on all new vouchers, both Facebook and Twitter are mentioned on our website (though only on the contact page at the moment), and feel free to ask visitors to post something about their flight on the Facebook page (maybe only if they enjoyed it!).

<http://www.facebook.com/OxfordGlidingClub>

https://twitter.com/Oxford_Gliding

<http://oxfordgliding.blogspot.co.uk/>

P.S.: those of you who have sent friend requests to your new mate Ogc Weston – well, Ogc Weston is only really meant as a transit account for installing Apps as I don't want to use my private FB account for that.

As it's now dawned on me that outsiders might be misled into thinking Ogc Weston is indeed the OGC Facebook page, I may change its name and/or not accept any further friend requests (and feel free to "unfriend" poor old Ogc).

