

# Severn Skies

The magazine of Bristol and Gloucestershire Gliding Club

Summer 2013



Cadets head for solo...



Cadets “sign on”: The boys who won through the selections process for scholarships, Dan Smith and Will Howitt, met CFI Chris Edwards and juniors coordinator Fred Ballard on their first day at the club. As it was not flyable, they tried out driving the golf buggy while their parents chatted with members. Later the cadets met ex-world champion Andy Davis (above) and their sponsor, Doug Jones (left). Andy showed them the DG 505 and instructed them on ground handling. Then they were given logbooks and progress cards, and Chris showed them how to keep them up to date. They are “progressing nicely” and should be ready for solo during the summer holidays if they continue to show the same enthusiasm, attend the club regularly and the weather is favourable. The club has thanked the Scouting movement for encouraging boys and girls to apply for the scholarships. Dan is a member of the Stoke Gifford Solar Explorers and Will a member of the 22nd Gloucester Explorer group. We have another new cadet, Dorian Bury, who has had his first flight.



## Colin to give up gliding

COLIN McEwen has decided to give up gliding and sell his Ventus. The chairman made his announcement at a committee meeting on May 17. Colin was elected chairman at the AGM in 2008. He reported to the committee that after a recent happening and an unrelated health issue, he had decided to look at de-stressing and added: “The club will definitely need to find a new chairman and replacement Director by the next AGM.” He regretted that no-one had taken on the job of deputy chairman at the last AGM.

## New pilot licensing process starts soon

FROM April 7 2015, all pilots who intend to fly EASA sailplanes will have to hold one or other of the two new EASA Part-FCL sailplane licences – the Light Aircraft Pilot Licence (Sailplanes) – LAPL(S) – or the Sailplane Pilot Licence – SPL.

The BGA has, along with its colleagues within the European Gliding Union, fought long and hard to achieve as proportionate, low complexity and low cost an outcome as possible. To ensure that all pilots will have the correct licences, ratings and certificates by April 7 2015, the BGA has agreed with the CAA that we will shortly begin the process of conversion from the existing BGA pilot certification system to the EASA Flight Crew Licensing system.

Although there are still a few issues to be clarified, the process is sufficiently well established for the BGA to provide details about how the conversion will happen, how it will affect you and what you need to do. Please look at the EASA licensing page on [www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/licensing/easalicensing.htm](http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/licensing/easalicensing.htm)



Andy Davis and his coaching week crew in May. See also Four fun days: page 11

I PLANNED to start writing this while on a week's holiday with Wildlife Provencale and imagined soaking up some sun while doing it. However, we're not the only ones to be having a cold, late spring and, wonderful week though it was with well over a hundred species of birds seen, I was mainly kitted out in the same layers of clothing worn, more often than not, at Nympsfield barbecues!

A look through our Terra Firma Syndicate monthly sheets for the past dozen years does indicate that in some cases our observations bear out the lateness of activity in the natural world, which has been much in the news.

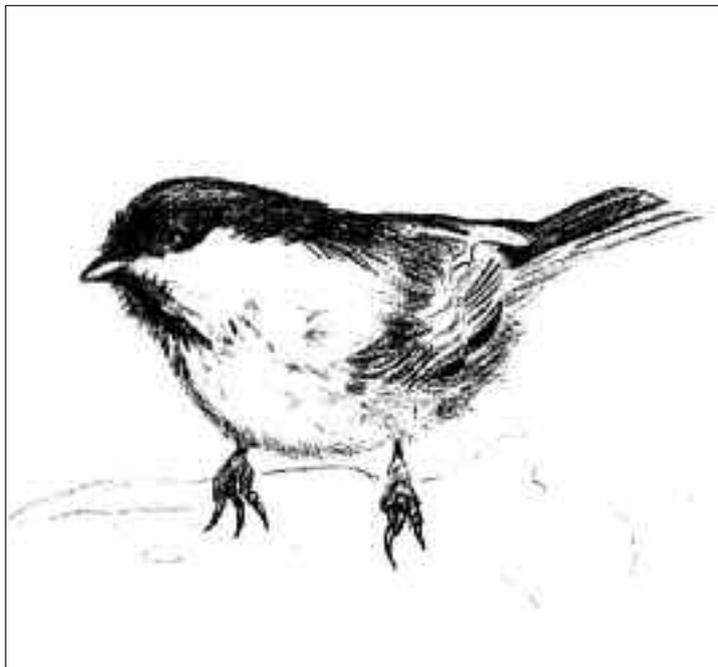
One of the first flowers to bloom, beside the north track west of Roger Targett's and around the private hangars in the southeast corner, the coltsfoot, has usually been noted in March and sometimes even February, but didn't flower until very late in April this year.

I also reckon the blackthorn blossom was late too, but can't find any records from previous years.

Some of our winter thrushes, redwings were also seen somewhat later than usual, having delayed their migration north. This is just a small proof that our observations are interesting and useful. The number of members using the clipboard seems to be diminishing! It's on the Terra Firma Syndicate noticeboard in the old clubhouse – please keep writing up what you see (I'm talking of the natural world here – no time wasters!). Even if you can't identify something, you can describe it as someone else may have seen it too.

Whatever the weather throws at us, the next few months will be the busiest time for nature around the field, many flowers and especially our orchids will be in bloom and visited by all sorts of insects and butterflies. There should be young hares, rabbits and roe deer to be seen, especially at the beginning and

## Our wildlife 'spots' are really valuable



A Willow Tit

by Daphne Malfiggiani

about our sensitive management of the field, leaving the non-operational borders uncut, not using chemicals, etc.

This year's leader on June 7 is Mike Johnson, formerly of the RSPB. We shall be starting from the clubhouse at 7pm, probably walking in a clockwise direction, that is up past the trailers first of all and taking in the caravan site and round by the south hangar.

Everyone is welcome and, as on past walks, hopefully some members will chip in with their knowledge of plants, trees, birdsong, etc.

Nancy Barrett

end of the long days, and many species of birds, both resident and summer migrants, will be defending territory, nesting and feeding young.

By the time you read this, someone may have even heard a cuckoo – though that is nowhere near as certain as it used to be.

Hopefully everyone will know about our annual TFS walk around the field from the weekly emails and the posters around the club. Sadly, we had to cancel this both last year *and* the year before, because of inclement weather, so fingers crossed that we get a successful one this year.

These walks have been led by various naturalists, all of whom have been complimentary

## Bristol airspace guide updated

**BRISTOL has issued an updated version of the guide to its airspace. Although of interest to glider and SLMG pilots, please note that this is intended as a general guide and in no way over-rides or supersedes the existing Letter of Agreement regarding glider flying within the Bristol CTA.**

The guide is on the Fly on Track web (part of the Airspace Safety Initiative) to be found at [http://flyontrack.co.uk/scripts/MIAB/MIAB\\_ShowAsset.asp?a=-2147483437](http://flyontrack.co.uk/scripts/MIAB/MIAB_ShowAsset.asp?a=-2147483437)

## Welcome to new members

Nick Dolman  
Amy Kohnstamm  
Brian Jenkinson  
Toby Chung  
Tony Hewitt  
Denis Pitance  
Alex James  
Justin Fryer  
Dorian Bury

Adult, Solo & Beyond  
Cadet  
Full flying (rejoined)  
Student flying  
Country flying  
Student flying  
Rejoined as full flying  
Adult (PPL)  
Cadet



## Severn Skies

is the magazine of Bristol & Glos Gliding Club, Nympsfield, Stonehouse, Glos GL103TX

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Sent free to every British gliding club. The magazine can also be viewed in colour or downloaded from the website

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Printed by Arrow Print Services Ltd 01342 844255/01342 844055

# PLEASE look after the club 'chutes

KEN Brown, our parachute man, was disappointed to see that CFI Chris Edwards had been forced to abandon his attempt to introduce a sensible way of dealing with chutes, because the system was being badly misapplied.

Ken wrote: A few years ago, he introduced a sensible system to keep 'chute and bag together.

The bag was to be taken off and immediately stored in the glider. This would keep the bag clean and dry, and ensure that it would not be lost. At the end of flying, the bag was taken from the storage space and used to carry the 'chute to the loft.

Apart from protecting the 'chute, this system was easy to operate. It is easier to put a bag into a space in a glider than to take it to the bus or wherever, where at best it would be mixed up with other bags, and at the worst lost. At the end of flying, the bag would be to hand instead of having to be sorted out from a heap of others (or just taking the first bag that comes).

Unfortunately this message did not seem to get to club pilots in general, and it seems that the instructors have not been enthusiastic about pushing it. This has resulted in chaos with bags getting dirty, mixed up and lost. Hence going back to the system of leaving the bags in the loft and carrying the 'chutes on to the airfield unprotected. This saves the bags from being lost, but at the expense of putting the parachutes themselves at risk of being mishandled.

Considering that the purpose of the parachute is to save your life in an emergency this seems a dodgy procedure. When did you last see a private owner carrying a parachute across the airfield without its bag? They take more care of their equipment.

For a long time I have been involved in trying to keep the club parachutes in good condition. I built the two racks in the loft where to club 'chutes are kept, and for more years than many of our present members have been in the club have been arranging for the 'chutes to be serviced every six months. So it grieves me when this work is undermined. One result of this



**Alison Mulder receives the California in England Trophy (for the best flight by a female pilot) from George Lee, three-times world gliding champion, at the BGA conference. Trevor Stuart was awarded the Manio cup for fastest 500km**

Photo: Paul Morrison

chaos is that usually when looking out a batch of 'chutes for repack I have to look in almost every bag in the rack to find the ones I need, because they are mostly randomly placed in the different bags and rack slots. Sometimes I wonder why I bother.

It would be nice to hope that sometime soon a group of instructors would come together and undertake to re-launch the scheme, and ensure that all the club pilots knew how it worked.

Ken Brown writes: Since a recent repack session, three parachutes have become un-serviceable. Two of the Strong 'chutes have had their top closures released, and one TSE 'chute has had a spring failure in one of the

snap hooks.

The problem with the Strong 'chutes is that if the top of the pack is bent forward when tighten the straps, the top closure releases. The only way to prevent this is not to use these 'chutes with short pilots, or rather those with short bodies. So preferably they should not be used in the two-seaters for trial lesson pilots, who may come in various sizes. The closure can be remade without a repack, and Tim does not charge for this, but it does put the 'chute out of action until the next repack session.

The snap hook spring problem seems only to occur with the thigh hooks, and Tim advises that it is caused by releasing the hook while it is under tension. So when taking a 'chute off please slacken off the thigh straps before releasing the hook. Again this problem puts a 'chute out of action until the next repack session, but in this case costs the club £50 for a replacement – and there is a limit to the number of times a hook can be replaced before the harness is weakened and has to be replaced.

## Orlando all set



**Orlando waiting for his first flight dressed and ready for action. Note those eagle eyes – lookout is second nature for a pug!**

## Champion signs in...

**George Lee, three-times world gliding champion, visited the club to sign copies of his book, *Hold on to your Dreams*. Here with George are Ken Brown, Corinna Hang, Steve Eyles and Doug Jones**



By Mike Strathern

BACK in 2010, I was invited to assist with the first Youth Glide Development Camp at Omarama in New Zealand, and I was asked again in 2011, and again in 2012!

I've done a huge amount of flying with our youngsters in NZ and got the bug. The YGDC is now the highlight of my gliding calendar.

At the latest camp in December, I flew eight days on the trot and did between 30-40 hours; flew around Mt Cook the highest NZ mountain (12,200ft) and got to 21,000ft in wave a few times; flew hundreds of x/c kilometres, had a few six-hour flights and had some unplanned looks at a few fields and strips when things got squeaky. We threw a few loops, chased each other around like the Red Baron and Snoopy, and I added a few more good friends into my life. Above all, it was just immense fun, and I learned a lot about myself, teenagers and gliding.

Flying with the group is exceptionally hard work. Everything you say and do is soaked up and tested, with lots of "Tell me more, Mike." "Why Mike?" "How do you do that, Mike?" And the most testing one, when we get low, "You have control, Mike. Get us out of here." It's a total blast.

I seem to have a love of teaching young people to fly (and I'm not a teacher), probably as I was a young pilot once at Nympsfield, doing what these guys are doing, so I can draw a parallel to them.

I learned to fly gliders at 14 in 1975 with Tony Gillett, Derek Vennard and Robbie Robertson, to mention a few, and I learnt in our trusty T-21, Bocian and Blanik. Back then (and still now!) I had the same unstoppable passion as I can see in many of our YGDC students. I only wish I could have flown the gliders they get to fly when I was 15: ASH25s, Duo Discuses to mention a couple.

It took me 20 hours solo (lots of three-minute winch launches) in the BGGC Swallows to get into the K-8 (which we still have!) and 50 hours solo and Bronze C to get into the hot ship the Skylark 4! (Now I sound old.) I was lucky to get on the BGA squad training scheme in my K-6E after being recommended by Graham Morris (thanks, Graham), along with G Dale in his Libelle. G now flies professionally at Omarama and has been BGGC CFI, UK Club Class National champion and highly placed in the worlds. G and I had similar experience in the early 1980s to what YGDC is having now and we both gained some fantastic experience from some great coaches. I remember those

days fondly and very well.

Here is a story from the very last flight of this year's camp.

Imagine trying to brief a student from the back of a Janus about how to put on a

## Putting something back is so much fun!



oxygen cannula for the first time, while climbing rapidly through 10,000ft in wave and dodging cloud. Sounds easy? It's not...

It took about 15 minutes of semi aerobatic manoeuvres with the Janus to doing its own thing, as my student attempted to fit her cannula so it wasn't knotted around her neck and it was going click and hiss at the right time. Yes, I know I failed to brief on the ground (I wasn't expecting to go that high), but we managed. We got there and had a great flight but then at about 6.55pm, halfway to Mt Cook at 12,000ft, we realised the final dinner bash and prize-giving was in five minutes so we had better head back! Rolling up 10 minutes late to the final dinner/party, all the students came out dressed up posh and whipped the Janus off so we could get changed out of our flying gear. This just showed what great teamwork there is on these camps and why I enjoy them so much.

In another camp, I was in wave with an Auckland student (he'd never been in wave, never been to 20,000ft, so both those boxes got well and truly ticked) as we passed over Mt Cook, hidden under 8/8th cover. I piped up, "Let's jump downwind and I'll show you how to jump over to the next wave bar. 100 knots, off we go. Yes it's easy. See?" And another bar, and another (no GPS reminding me we probably had a 200+ knot downwind ground speed). We were now getting below the cloud so we needed to make sure we stayed in the wave, but we also needed to see exactly where we were. As we peeked underneath the cloud. "OK," says I half confidently, "That's Lake Pukaki far in the distance" – only to find I was about 50km further downwind than that..! Man that wind was strong! It was a real cross-country, as we had to work out how to get back upwind, wave gap jumping. That was fun. The student had a smile like the Joker.

I'm supposed to show these people how to do it and they end up getting some

REAL experiences of how it's done, complete with in-flight lecture and demo of some true stuff-ups to add to the flavour. They do make great bar stories and I usually end up sharpening my low-level scratching skills.

What is it like being an instructor at the camp? Just brilliant. Crawl out of my bed and into breakfast at 8am (late and I'm last).

Flying starts at 07.30. I head out to the launchpoint caravan. I arrive just in time to see a group of our young hooligans running for buckets of water and looking skyward. Must be a first solo! We all watch from the sideline as someone performs the perfect circuit and textbook landing. Then, about 20 water bucket wielding young people race out to the glider, chuckling and cheering. Quickly, formalities are dispensed with, such as 'well done' from the relieved instructor, a few formal photos, followed by heckling to get the chute off and get their 'reward' of a thorough soaking. Thank goodness this wasn't the ritual when I went solo in 1977!

One final story that stands out from the 2010 course was when a student said, "Mike, I wanna race. I don't wanna mince around sightseeing Mt Aspiring (huge mountain). That's boring. I wanna race, I wanna go fast, I wanna see how to race in the mountains."

So, off to the western turning point we raced. Chasing speed, ignoring poor climbs and doing okay. Off around more mountain valleys, doing really well in race mode, exactly as I was asked to do. Halfway down the final mountain range on final glide with some 80km to home I mentioned that we have to be careful that the easterly sea breeze hasn't set up. We'll see it spilling over the mountains.... a bit like that cloud is spilling over the top in front of us, and making the vario fall off the clock and the altimeter unwind and the ground and lake at the bottom of the mountain range getting rapidly closer and adding to my woes – nowhere to land!

We fell off the end of the hills a tad low and started scratching. This was more like the student's customary Auckland flatlands soaring, and grinding around at 1,500ft over the ground, we made it up again. I met up with this young chap again this year and he remembers the flight well, rather too well. For good measure I demonstrated the same effect almost blow by blow with another Auckland pilot (an instructor) this year.

(Note for self: in 2013, don't do it for a third time).

## Obituary

### Ron Barnes

WE were sorry to hear of the death of Ron Barnes, a member several years ago before he moved back to the Midlands.

Many people will remember him and his wife, Mita, for his good humour and exploits around the club. Ron was a good member for many years and loved the club very much.

In the 1970s he had a share in a K2 with Arthur Duke, Guy Harris, Lez Hockings, Brian Woodcock, Frank Dent, Gordon McConville, David Briggs, Mike Davis, and Ted Waterman.

His funeral was at Stourbridge in May. Our condolences to Mita and family.

### 'Amazing' experience

BEN Latham, 10, won a prize of a flight with Tim Macfadyen at the Woodspring Diamond Jubilee celebrations and went up in the club DG 505 for 20 minutes.

He wrote in the local newsheet that he lives next door to the Macfadyens and he was towed up by Geryl "so I knew I was in good hands"!

Ben was taken to see his home and he took his camera to get some pictures. "As we came in to land it felt very bumpy but I'd had a brilliant time. I loved it and hope to fly again within my three-month membership (maybe being winched up next time)." He thanked everyone at Nympsfield for such a generous prize and the Macfadyens "for such an amazing experience".

### Lyndon George McFarlane

WE are sorry to report the death of Lyn McFarlane in March. His name will probably not mean much to our present membership, but it is no exaggeration to say that without his efforts the Bristol club would not exist today and that there would be no gliding at Nympsfield.

Bristol Gliding Club had been founded in 1938, just in time to be closed down by the war. During the war, Lyn had worked at Bristol Aeroplane Company in the same office as Keith Turner, who had started the original club, and infected Lyn with an interest in gliding. But at that time, of course, all non-military flying was banned. With the war being over for a few months, and with Keith in the RAF and all the other pre-war members dispersed, Lyn, with Maurice Chantrill and David Farrar, decided to re-start the club. Starting from scratch apart from a small sum of money left over from the pre-war club, they recruited interest through public meetings, and set about finding the facilities needed to start flying. Also as none of the three had flown at all, they volunteered to be trained as instructors with the ATC, which involved themselves being taught to fly. This was by the solo training method, and they all quali-

# How design can affect handling

By Graham Morris

ONE thing I enjoy about gliding is the opportunity to fly different types. There are more than 250 on the BGA register and we have a good range of club aircraft here.

I find the differences and quirks in handling particularly interesting and in a presentation to members in March I looked at some of the more significant variations in sailplane design over the years and how they affect us as pilots.

Some of these variations we all have a chance to fly, but some of the more exotic we are can only imagine. I looked at examples, why they were tried, how they worked and how they influenced handling in particular.

I also touched briefly on the task of type conversion.

The sub headings under which I spoke are:

- Constructional Materials
- Aerofoil Section
- Fixed/All Moving Tails
- Vee Tails
- Air Brakes
- Nose/Belly Hook
- Undercarriages
- Flaps
- Tailless

- Wingspan
- Centre of Gravity
- Type Conversion

I tried to place some emphasis on how the various design variations affect handling and hence us as pilots.

You know where I am if you have questions.

## Vintage bikes on way to Nym

**SOUTH Cotswold section of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club is holding its Car Park Concours on Sunday July 7 at our club for members to show off their favourite bike and perhaps win a prize.**

**Other local sections have been invited to join in.**

## Flying club moves

BRISTOL Aero Club, based at Filton for 20 years, has had a "mixed reaction" to its move 30 miles away.

It had to leave Filton Airport after its sale to property developers in December. The club will continue to operate but from a new base at Cotswold Airport (Kemble).

from part of a wrecked Waco troop-carrying glider. (You needed a permit to buy wood). He got the club a catering licence, which entitled it to get rationed food so that it could provide meals for the members, did the food ordering and generally ran the canteen aided by the club's wives. He also arranged a coke ration and dealt with the chemical toilets.

The club was interested in getting the use of a hill site, as flying at Lulsgate was largely confined to hops, slides and circuits in its first years. Hill soaring was seen as a way to get pilots more time in the air. In 1948 Lyn used family connections to help persuade the farmer at Roundway to allow the club to use of his fields near the edge of the Marlborough Downs.

Sadly, when Lyn moved to a job at Luton in 1951 he found that the Dunstable club was not welcoming, and gave up gliding.

More recently, Lyn supplied our History Group with numerous early photographs and also gave us a great deal of valuable information about what went on then.

In 1948, Lyn met Joy, and they were married in 1949. Joy was naturally roped in to help run the canteen. We offer her our sympathy in her loss.

KRB

## Obituary

fied to instruct up to the teaching of turns.

Together with an organising committee which they recruited, they set about finding the necessities for operating, with the result that within a year of determination and hard work they had got access to a site in the shape of Lulsgate airfield (now Bristol Airport), a glider being bought on hire purchase, two ex-government balloon winches requiring extensive modification before they could be used and a cut-down armoured car for launching. They also hired the use of a hangar and a block of Nissen huts on the airfield. All this was achieved in spite of post-war shortages, restrictions and red-tape.

Once the club had got the use of Lulsgate, Lyn took on the domestic side. Tasks included turning the dour-looking Nissen huts into a clubhouse with kitchen, club room, workshop, bar and bunkhouse. With furniture unobtainable, Lyn equipped the clubroom with seats recycled from reject Bristol buses and anything which members could donate. He built a fireplace and chimney in the bar room and constructed the bar itself

# Obituary

## David Barker

ELEVEN gliding people attended the funeral of former club treasurer David Barker at Cheltenham in March. Dave died on March 1, St David's Day, aged 83.

He was an active member, flying LS 3 EGE, and was club treasurer from 1979 to 1992. His wife, Freda, who used to work in the club office, survives him. One of his three sons, Ken – also a former BGGC member – flew for the British Team in the recent Club Class World Gliding Championships in Argentina. Ken was working aboard a cruise ship up the Amazon when he heard of his father's death but managed to get home the night before the funeral.

Before the war Dave gained a scholarship at Lord Wandsworth's college Hampshire – (fortunately near an airfield – later to become Lasham gliding club!).

During the war he witnessed the daily air sorties by American bombers – which remained with him as a vivid memory.

The packed chapel heard that David, a Portsmouth-born lad, studied Russian at Cambridge during National Service and went into accountancy later.

He married Freda in 1954 after they had met in an accordion band and they had three sons, Graham, Kenneth and Jonathan, who are all musical and played at the funeral.

Dave was runner-up in the world accordion championships and appeared on Opportunity Knocks on the radio.

He spoke fluent Russian and Ken recalls how he once asked a Russian musician – 'Does he REALLY speak Russian?' Ken said: "He looked me in the eye and said: 'Your father speaks better Russian than I do – he can speak Shakespearian Russian.'"

There was an unusual instance in 1965 – which Ken vaguely remembers when a Russian glider pilot landed at Keevil during the world championships. Dave approached the pilot and introduced himself, starting talking and asking questions. The guy was so startled to hear fluent Russian – that he kept turning his back and ignoring him, walking around the glider. He later apologised, saying he thought Dave had been infiltrated here by the KGB.

Dave was a founder member of Bath and Wilts club at Keevil and later joined BGGC, where he became treasurer for 12 years and obtained three diamonds. As a Musical Director, Dave wrote/played music for numerous local theatre productions and always played in hospitals for the sick whenever able. He often used to play

the accordion or piano for members in the bar.

Among his many achievements, Ken says David hand flew a four-engined jet – a BAe 146 – from Belfast to Stansted one night on raw data and compass.

In 2001 Dave was presented with the Jim Webster plate when he retired from instructing.

The family scattered his ashes on the airfield in May.

### **Ken sent this piece about an enjoyable flight with his Dad from Aston Down in a Western Regionals:**

There was a well-attended field of competitors with one or two top pilots, including a future world champion. Dad and I were there flying the most wonderful two-seat glider – a Duo Discus comp number 802.

The weather briefing did specify 'some' overdevelopment and competition director David Roberts set alternative turnpoints. This often means if one area was covered in showers we could then select another area – also covered in showers! The task was set to the west in Wales (where the dragons live) and we declared a start ahead of most people around 1pm.

Out across the Severn Valley we tiptoed towards the Malvern hills and beyond into the Welsh countryside. We enjoyed some patches of good weather but could quickly see the sky filling up both ahead and behind us – I was glad that we set off when we did.

The first turnpoint was rounded quite low in messy weather, so I decided to track back east where we knew it was soarable and then hopefully south. In certain conditions some of the most exciting flying in all of England can be enjoyed when convergence lines of energy parallel the Severn Valley.

Conditions were perfect for this scenario and it wasn't long before we hooked up on the 'wonder ride' conveyor belt heading SW. Holding a straight line, we climbed to cloud-base and cruised along at 60, 70, 80, 90, 100kts trying to keep clear of cloud. As we flashed along I was mindful of the fact there was no time for Dad's beverage service.

We left the convergence line, headed in land rounding the next turnpoint then begun the last leg towards home. By now, the Severn Valley was flat grey with cloud at all levels and the convergence line began collapsing in rain. Our horizon looked bleak.

I switched on the artificial horizon hoping for a climb somewhere in the sky ahead – that would give us some chance of getting back. Indeed there was a climb and



Dad took the controls to 8,500ft whilst I drank tea. Confidently we set course for home with 50km to run – thinking we had it in the bag!

WRONG! Once clear of cloud and in the Severn Valley our altitude fell away and the sinking air became a permanent feature – minus 800, 900, 1,000ft per minute. Quickly it became obvious we were not going to make it home let alone to the other side of the valley so we turned downwind in the south-westerly to cover as much ground as possible and headed towards Cheltenham.

The heavy sink disappeared and we tiptoed along not sure how far we might get. At about 200ft with the wheel down and approaching the racecourse, I opened up the turn to fly very close to the hill – and, as if by magic, the vario came alive and we began climbing. Above us were houses, gardens and even a few garden gnomes were spotted as we flew up the side of the hill, observing people waving from their gardens and bedroom windows. Within minutes we drifted past the top of the hill and climbed 300ft above it.

'Now what?' Dad asked. 'Another cup of tea please,' I replied.

It was grey and a little cold as we clung to our small piece of rocky ridge and took turns in flying the hill, discussing our possibilities. We needed another 2,500ft to get back and just one climb might provide it.

At about 7.30pm a patch of sun opened up some 15 miles down valley and we could see it slowly heading towards us growing larger as it approached. With intense anticipation we were soon bathed in warm evening sunshine and remarked upon the high angle of the sun. Within minutes we had located and centred on a wonderful 3-4 knot thermal that gave us both THE most joyous feeling and we climbed skyward.

We chased it up to a ridiculous 4,000ft and headed back towards Aston Down.

At 10km out and 100kts ground speed – we radiod: 'Aston Down Finish – 802 five minutes' but were puzzled not to hear any reply.

I checked the frequency – and tried again – but heard only a carrier wave of white noise. We considered doing a tower fly-past but as no one was seemingly there we thought better of it and quietly rolled up in front of the clubhouse.

Shortly after opening the canopy a number of people rushed up and hastily we were taken upstairs to the bar, which was celebrating the only finish of the day. Understandably there was so much noise that their radio response was totally inaudible.

In the bar, Dad's face was a picture of delight as people queued up to find out how we did it. Among the hubbub he turned around with a huge smile, shaking his head saying 'Unbelievable!'

The best flight ever – AND it was fathers' day!

By Greg O'Hagan

April 30 2013, LS4 264

A GOOD day had been forecast for a day or two and was confirmed by the Lasham forecast the evening before, which predicted it could be the best day of the year and would enable fast 500s and potentially 750km flights, whilst Sid forecast 'excellent' conditions.

I spent a bit of time the night before with Steve Eyles (490) discussing John McWilliam's suggested task to the northern edge of the chart in Lincolnshire (Kirton-in Lindsey). It looked a very long way indeed, landing out would clearly involve a very long wait, hence a note was made of gliding sites en route, just in case. I have been known to "land out".

I arrived on the site at 08:15 to find Steve, Dave Jesty (EZ), Trevor Stuart and others already rigging. I am not sure that my confidence was really that high, my speeds have never been great, so a long day was expected.

Not only was this to be my first 500 declaration, it was also to be the first time I would fly with water. Whilst using only two barrels, it was another complication when getting ready. The loading practice, valve checks and dump timings of the previous weekend proved useful. Although I did learn that the sound of running water is 'not good', indicating the need to shut a valve quickly.

Then it was time to think again about the task. The forecast was now such that conditions in the east would not be good due to North Sea air. Hence John had suggested a trip to Dorchester (DOR) followed by Stratford (SFW) and Welshpool (WNE). The legs all looked long in themselves, never mind flying them all in one go. Declarations were completed (FLARM and Nano), a brief chat with David Jesty, my trusty OO, lines drawn on chart, NOTAMS considered and I was ready, almost. A fast trip to the clubhouse was required to fetch my parachute. Final check, hat, water, food, chart...

My aerotow followed 490 and EZ (both doing the same task). They had dived through the line and set straight off. Despite the apprehension, the launch was uneventful. At 2600', 2km behind the line and 600' above cloudbase I released, pointed in the right direction, and set off at 10:45. 16km later after just a couple of sniffs I had the chance to appreciate the Castle Combe track from 1300' AGL and wondered whether the day was going to

end very early! It didn't, and gradually things improved. The cu thinned closer to the coast but I turned DOR high at 12:01, a leg average of 88kph, good for me, but due in part to the 15-knot north-easterly.

Leg 2, 168km into wind. The first part was OK, but life got difficult at Trow-

# My first Diamond distance flight

bridge, not sure why, but failed to find climb after climb, it seemed to take ages to sort myself out, before a series of better climbs allowed progress north. Passing Aston Down it was over-developing and quite murky. About now my PDA sent me a friendly low battery message and switched off, it appeared not to be charging properly. Since confirmed at home, it's definitely dead. With no awkward airspace issues, and the Garmin III having an up-to-date waypoint list this wasn't a good enough reason to give up, so I didn't. I was however doing some sums on progress. It was slow. I reckoned I might not be finished until after 19:00, which felt very late. I decided to review things at Kidderminster. However, things were about to look up. On clearing the Cotswolds the sky cleared, the vis improved and the climbs kept coming.

I turned SFW at 15:30, leg average 48kph, yuk. 223km to go, still things were getting better. I realised at some point that I was passing Kidderminster – what to do? I would address the situation passing Bridgnorth. This bit was really fun, 30km glides, unheard off on my own. Passing Bridgnorth, the sky looked good in front and it was only 50km to WNE. A late finish was guaranteed, if I bailed out I would never know what might have been, so I carried on. I did however make a point of staying fairly high, not something I am usually good at. I turned WNE at 16:50, leg average 76kph, I did say I was slow, perhaps the water wasn't making that much difference.

After WNE I stayed west of track. Good sun on the ground, and a reducing north-easterly were resulting in good climbs on the downwind, sunny, edges of the clouds. The return trip was relatively painless until Shobdon. Here I recognised that the sky ahead was looking much less active. Find-

ing it harder to climb, the water had to go. Two good climbs resulted! Hereford was passed after a small deviation for Credenhill. Until now this leg

had been about reducing the retrieve, now I really thought the distance was on and I was looking for the Diamond climb! It came north west of Ross, putting me 1400' above glide with about 10 knots from the NE, it should be easy. The final glide was smooth and uneventful until the end. I was pondering on why the margin was being slowly eroded, whilst flying at best L/D as commanded.

I was concentrating really hard, I thought, on looking for the home ridge and flying carefully towards it. But something wasn't quite right. I was getting closer, but not quickly, and that margin was down to 500'. With 8km to go I noticed the Nibley monument, out on the right, but closer than it should be. Alarm bells, a quick look to the left, and a smart 45-degree turn, I had been pressing on purposely for the Stinchcombe ridge! Perhaps the brain was starting to run out of steam? Now I was flying direct to the site, 7km away, with a 12-knot headwind and a 400' arrival height. B\*\*\*\*\*s, I might have blown it yet! Had to take up field watching until, gradually, the picture corrected itself and I was able to make an uneventful straight-in approach. I passed the clubhouse, rolled up the hill to the trailer, and cheered quite loudly. It was 18:55.

I was met by Steve and Dave with my car ready to put on the trailer, demonstrating, I thought, a complete lack of faith. I was the last person back, later even than Farmer Fred! They had finished two hours earlier. My average of 64kph over 8hrs 9mins will certainly rank as one of the slower 500s.

I presented the FR files to Dave, who has since said: "Go ahead with the claim!"

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# Retrieve just went on and on...

**Sunday, June 23 2012, a good ridge day, the only glider to fly**

GREG O'Hagan and I both thought that five runs of the south ridge with a remote finish at Bath, for maximum distance, was the task to do. Initially it went well, holding 100kph, while Greg was flying it. About 5km from the finish line a single drop of water fell on the canopy. It's pretty much a golden rule with ridge running that you turn back on the first drop. Greg uttered those three little words 'You have control.'

Several more drops fell but the air was still good so we kept going. The droplets began to multiply and we were soon in proper rain. But the rate of descent was still OK, the numbers were good and we could see the finish line in sunshine. Then, just before the final spur, the altimeter unwound. The spur we needed to clear moved up the canopy. So, after 1½ hours flying with the finish line 2km away my bottle went and we did a 180.

It's pretty much a golden rule not to do 180s in bad air but Hobson's choice this time. We were now below hilltop height. It was still raining with no chance of soaring away or getting the engine out. I told Greg we had a field landing coming up and lowered the undercarriage. The good news was we were returning to drier air and even better news, a landable field presented itself. Unbeknown to me Greg had chosen the same field so two of us were willing the glider into it. There was a herd of cattle in the far right corner but with their backs to us.

It wasn't a big field. The cattle felt our arrival through their hooves, those that didn't heard the wheelbrake go on. They turned in unison and started heading for the same corner we were at about the same speed. We got there first; a few trailer lengths short of the boundary. Greg was out like a shot, said he'd deal with the cattle. Greg became half man, half bird and half four legged beast . . . if that's possible. A technique that worked well, I don't know where he learned it.

Meanwhile, I rang the club and within minutes Martin Greathead and Kevin Neave were on their way. I left Greg to manage the cattle and went to find the farmer. As so often happens with outlandings I walked to the wrong farmhouse, but no problem because the wrong farmer had a telephone number for the right farmer and we soon had permission to tow a trailer into the field. I hadn't been back



**Prizegiving: Chairman Colin McEwen presents the crew with won the Meyer trophy for the best retrieve story, Trevor Stuart, Kevin Neave and Martin Greathead. Inset: Bernard Smyth receives the Parry-Jones trophy for outstanding services to the club**

Photos: Bernard Smyth and Christophe Mutricy long before that trailer arrived. Blimey, this was going to be a quick retrieve.

Very quick until we wanted to take the wings off. No derigging tool. I rang John McWilliam. "Ei," he said, "it should be in the usual place . . . in the plastic bag." But where's the plastic bag, John? The drive back to Nympsfield was a quick one. A round trip of 1½ hours. I arrived back in the field at 7:30 exactly the same time I was due to sit down with John and the other syndicate members for our annual dinner. Martin, Greg and Kevin were on sentry duty. Either sheltering within the large double doors of the Nimbus trailer or walking around the glider dealing with those cattle still interested in a Nimbus 3DT. It was raining heavily.

Armed with the derigging tool, things progressed smoothly with almost Royal Tournament speed. We were soon on our way to Hunter's Hall, Kingscote. An excellent venue providing good food and hospitality with an enormous car park. Ideal for those completing their flights by road.

Whilst parking the trailer back at Nympsfield Martin noticed we were missing a Perspex indicator/brake light cover. Oh well, it could have been worse.

The next day the same group of people plus others were kind enough to help rig the Nimbus. Martin started twittering on about his certainty that all the light fittings were in place when they left. So certain was he that he went through the retrieve in his mind and believed the missing cover came off whilst exiting the side gate of the Hunter's Hall car park. He'd driven down early that morning, retrieved it from the

grass verge, and handed it to me. Amazing – thanks, Martin!

So, lessons learned from that day? Don't cut it so fine when towing out of the side gate of Hunter's Hall car park.

**Trevor Stuart**

## Other cup winners

**St Catherine's Cup** – Matt Davis was last to turn lighthouse on September 19.

**Cyril Uwins** cross-country trophy: Andy Davis in Arcus, 527km at 94kph.

**Shaun de Salis** trophy for faster or best closed circuit flight form NYM: Tim Macfadyen in ASW 20; 507km at 79kph.

**Club Ladder** trophy: Trevor Stuart with 16,349 points.

**Macfadyen** trophy for winner of weekend ladder: Alison Mulder with 14,672 points.

**Malcolm Gay** trophy for winner of junior ladder: Matt Davis with 12,079 points.

**Guinness** trophy for best flight in club glider: Jon Meyer and Mark Parker, 507km in DG 505.

**Rex Young** trophy for best progress by a novice; Katrina Ash.

**Evening World** trophy for best gain of height from NYM: Kevin Neave with 14,015ft gain.

**Parry-Jones** trophy awarded by chairman for outstanding services to the club: Bernard Smyth.

**Jim Webster** plate for most deserving instructor: John Timpany.

**Doug Jones** sponsorship for cross-country flying: Mark Lawson.

**Meyer** tankard for best retrieve story: Trevor Stuart, Kevin, Martin.

# Juniors coming back for more!

THE Juniors' Winter Series consists of three rounds through the off season. The first one at Sutton Bank, the second at the Mynd and the final round at Nympsfield. The aim is to give Junior pilots a focus throughout the winter so they can improve their flying and friendships.

With Juniors (and some former Juniors) arriving on the Thursday night, the spirits were high in the bar with the weather forecast dropping into shape nicely for the weekend.

The promise of good cross-country weather mixed with the coaching from various pundits such as Andy Davis, Jon Meyer and Trevor Stuart meant things were looking good.

The aim for this weekend was to get every pilot attending to push themselves and learn new skills. Flying from a ridge site, flying with cross-country coaches, flying a new type and flying for the first time – all of these were achieved by various pilots.

Will Ellis (Ka6e) and Oli Barter (LS8) whizzed around a 190km triangle on one day, whilst the Duo, Arcus, Nimbus 3dt and DG 500 were in regular use throughout the weekend on training flights for cross-country and ridge. Although we didn't have the north westerlies that make Nympsfield buzz, the north easterlies meant that the Malverns were working well.

It was a fantastic warm-up for some of the



Saz Reed, centre, won both Cock of the year and the main prize at the Juniors' winter series visit to Nympsfield in March. She did her first XC, her first land-out, first wheels up and had had her glider at every event in the series. The award was presented by Steve Pozerski, right, left is Kevin Millar. Saz is studying for a BSc in Marine Biology and Oceanography at Plymouth uni and is from Usk. She flies a Libelle. Dave Hallsworth commented: "They brought lots of enthusiasm with them and had a lot of fun. Easter Monday was the only scrub day of the whole series, so even the Sky Gods were on their side. A good event for gliding. I hope they do it again." The event was a precursor to the Junior National Championships at Nympsfield from August 17-25.

Juniors that will be flying at the Junior Nationals at Nympsfield in August.

Huge thanks to the club and its members for hosting a fantastic long weekend of flying. Especially thanks to the teams on the launch point, the members that kept the bar

open, and the very kind members who let us fly with them in their two-seaters!

I know for one that there are some seriously excited young pilots, chomping at the bit to get back to Nympsfield and fly at one of the top sites in the UK. **Steve Pozerski**



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SEVENTEEN pilots enrolled for the first cross-country coaching course in April, an initiative the club must thank Dominic Conway for organising and which boosts activity and cash flow for all our benefits.

The weather forecast was so dire for the first half of the week that, as course leader, I postponed the start until a groundschool day on Wednesday, hoping to fly on Thursday.

Long-distance travellers were told not to come, but one wife answering the phone let her husband carry on to collect his glider at the Mynd and trail it here. She had been promised a holiday in a Cotswold cottage and wasn't about to miss out!!

First flying day Thursday dawned with Bristol Lulsgate cancelling flights in the howling gale but the wind had dropped to 25 knots by mid afternoon and the Nimbus set off down the Bath run to the delight of those P2s who couldn't believe so small a "ridge" would keep them airborne. Thanks to Dave Hallsworth, who took four pilots up to sample the delights of the west ridge.

Friday saw lots of good flights. Star of the Day – and of the week, was Stuart Lees in his Cirrus. He achieved his first 300km flight, an epic effort in difficult conditions. Rounding Craven Arms, he flew over the hills of mid Wales, wondering occasionally about the land-out op-

tions, but got safely round the far west TP, scenic Carreg Cennen Castle, near Swansea.

To his insurance broker's horror he then went straight for home over the even more

## Four fun days – from no-hoper of a week

daunting coal mine slag heaps of South Wales, spurning the soft ride of hill soaring the Brecon Beacons' north slopes.

Anyway our hero got home in fine style and was applauded after a fine speech at met briefing next morning.

Saturday was an epic day, more good flights despite the Purple Airway and Zone that in fact never did get used by Royalty.

Dodging it was Steve Noujaim, London to Capetown World Record Holder, who flew 300km in the Nimbus fast enough to get back from Telford SW and south of Nympsfield before the dreaded Royal Airspace shut off the route – though as we cleared it Brize admitted that the a/c was still on the ground in Edinburgh! The day got better and better and ended only at about 7pm.

Sunday started with cirrus overhead from an approaching cold front but several pilots flew anyway and had good flights in the sun to the east.

**Carreg Cennen Castle**

On returning under the clag they found it still working but the airfield quiet.

Overall we had four fun days flying, a decent outcome from what had looked like a no-hope weather pattern. God loves the tryer!!

Your club benefitted from a lot of extra activity, including X? extra launches, and Y? extra aerotows. That's about £ extra income.

Thanks to those involved:

**Dominic**, whose idea it was.

**Steve Eyles**, who entertained, and skillfully flew some tyros where they would never willingly have been.

**Tim Macfadyen and Jon Meyer**, who kindly offered to fly P2s but the P2s were happy to go it alone – next time.

**Martin Talbot and Graham Morris**, who aerotowed at the drop of a hat. Much appreciated.

**Dave Hallsworth**, who flew guys on a blustery day and helped on the field and in the groundschool. **John McWilliam**



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