

FIELD LANDINGS

Bronze 'C' plus a few hints

By Sid Smith (with apologies to Simon Adlard)

Preparation

- Is trailer serviceable?
 - Are the tyres in good condition?
 - Do the lights work?
 - Is the derigging kit in it?
- Do you know how to derig the glider?
- Car with tow hitch?
 - Numberplate?
 - Insurance?
- Leave keys where can be found (not your pocket!) and put all towout kit in trailer
- Hitch car to trailer
- Make sure you have a charged mobile
- Make sure you have a a roadmap

When to think about outlanding

- 2000 ft only gives you 10 minutes.....
- When you can no longer stay airborne (too late..!)
- As soon as you stop climbing (better...!)
- Before you launch (much better..!)
- Consider the time of year
 - Whenever local flying watch how field state is developing through the season

In-Flight

- Always be within easy glide of an area that looks to have landable fields – (Newbury area for example is heavily wooded with very small fields)
- If conditions deteriorate, glide towards landable fields at the upwind side of any sunny patches – lift is more likely there

Assessing Wind Direction

- Ripples on standing crop.....!!!!!!? - Has to be quite breezy
- Ripples on water (wind shadow is better)
- Draw forecast wind direction on map
- Smoke - ideal but seldom there!
- Movement of cloud shadows across ground
 - Only shows upper level wind
- Thermal drift (lower down)
- Otherwise assume as when took off
 - but beware sea-breeze local to Nymphsfield or coasts!

Selection

- Height – ignore altimeter! Judge by eye in relation to size of houses, cars etc.
- By 2000ft **AGL** be in an area with potential landing fields and start to look in detail
- By twice normal circuit height, have one or two definite fields identified
- By no later than normal circuit height, make final selection and remain within gliding distance
- Pick sooner rather than too late – a successful field landing means you fly again next day

Considerations

- **SIZE**
- **ANIMALS**
- **WIND**
- **SLOPE**
- **HEIGHT**
- **OBSTACLES**
- **WIRES**
- **SURFACE**

SIZE

- Normal minimum distance 250 yds but may depend on
 - What you are flying
 - What the headwind component is
 - What the slope is
- Landing corner to corner increases effective length (even if slightly out of wind)

Assessing field size

- Use relative sizes of surrounding houses, cars, etc
- Beware of a small field surrounded by even smaller ones
- Is the approach unobstructed?
 - Obstacles on the approach decrease the usable field size by 8 times the height of the object

ANIMALS

- Horses
 - NEVER (Even avoid overflying)
- Sheep
 - Inadvisable as they scatter
 - not in spring (Lambing)
- Cows
 - OK if grouped in one area
 - Are very inquisitive after you've landed
 - One cow may be a bull

WIND

- Landing into wind
 - Reduces landing run
 - Increases approach angle over obstacles
- Landing cross wind
 - Small into wind component
- Landing downwind
 - Vastly increases landing distance
 - High ground speed, don't stall in

SLOPE

- Any slope visible from circuit height is too great
- Ground will tend to slope down towards standing water/rivers
- Lee effect of nearby hills
- If landing up slope
 - Extra speed required for the roundout
 - A large roundout angle is required
 - BEWARE: the perspective into the field may act to shallow your approach

HEIGHT

- Ignore Altimeter!

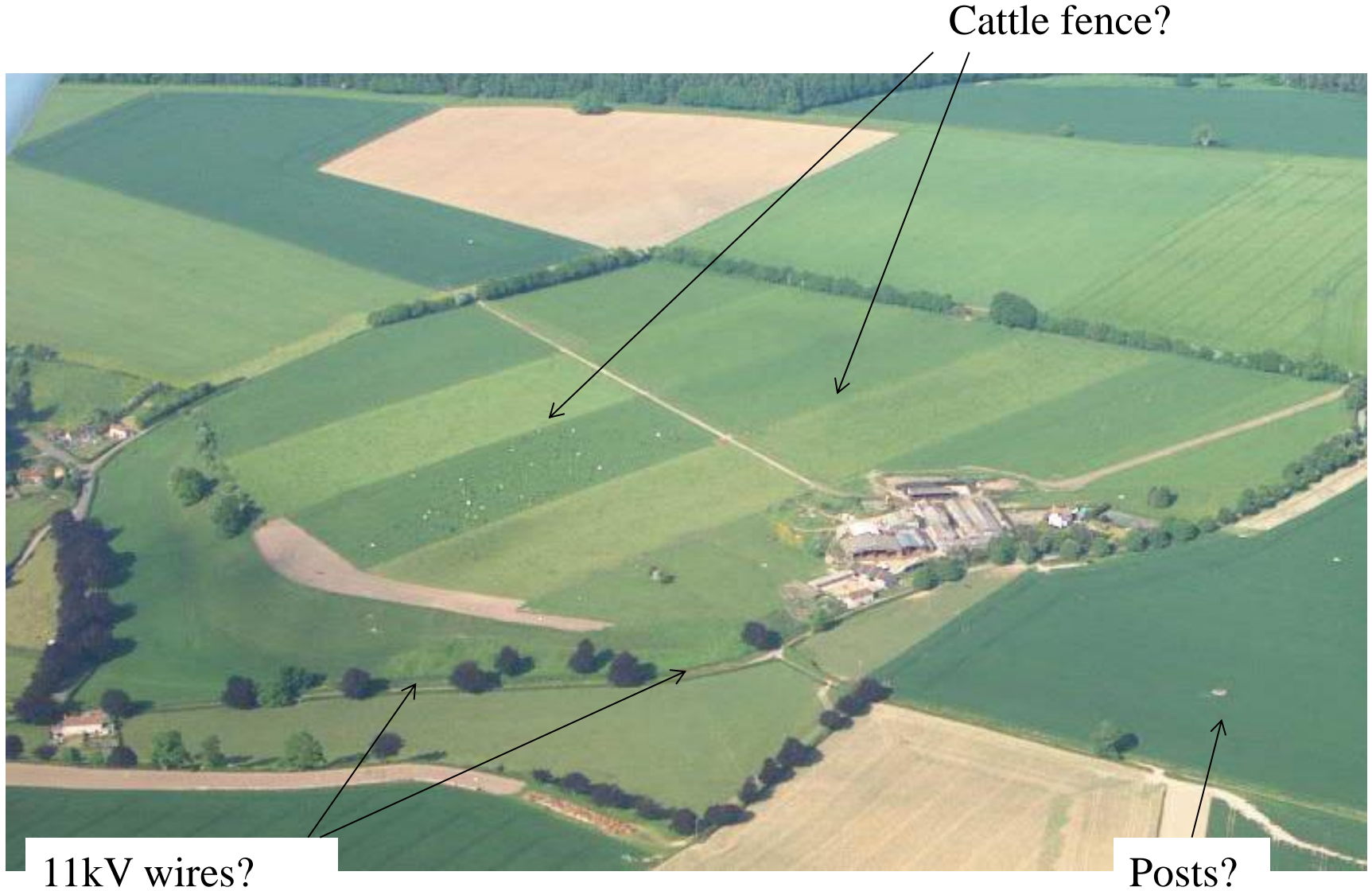
OBSTACLES

- Cattle fences
- Trees on approach
- Cattle troughs etc.

WIRES

- 11kV lines tend to be strung between trees at field boundaries or between farm buildings
- Look for small circular discoloured features in the field – this indicates fence posts
- Look for straight line features with different colour each side (cattle fence)

WIRES



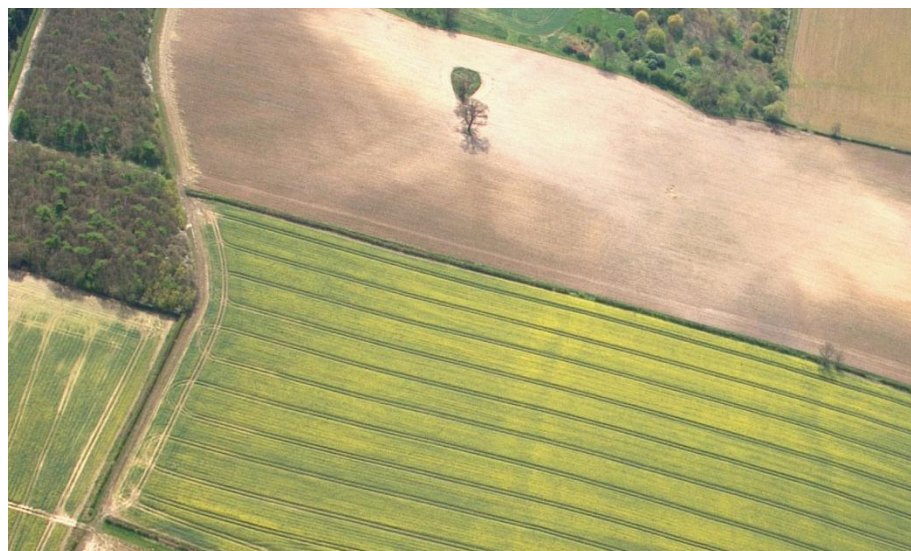
SURFACE

- Consider
 - Time of year
 - Where you are flying
- Undulations
 - Ridge and furrow (more common in Northern UK)
- Have an order of preference
 - Stubble, Silage, Harrowed, Pasture etc
 - Never Oilseed Rape (even when cut)
- Beware of strange airfields
 - May have obstructions on runways
 - Grass strips often very narrow with fences at the side

Spring fields

Oilseed rape – bad.!

Young crop



Pasture



Cut silage (also slopes..!)

Summer fields

Long crop – bad.!



Ridge and furrow
(Very bad..!)



Cutting silage – OK if room, but beware
farm vehicles

Late summer

- Silage
- Stubble
 - Beware of bales
 - Land along tracks
- Pasture
 - can be rough with holes
- Soil
 - Probably ploughed stubble and may be rough

The landing

- Don't lose sight of the field
 - Effect of cloud shadow
 - Changing perspective
 - Don't fly directly over the field
- Don't cramp the circuit
- Don't subconsciously follow field boundaries
- Circuit on downwind side of any crosswind (unlike at Nymphsfield), keeps field in view
- Stop as soon as possible
 - Don't taxi to gate

Other considerations

- Undershoot or overshoot
 - is there an option if you get into trouble? (seldom the case)
 - keep position of a second optional field in mind just in case
- Access to the field is a minor consideration! Get down safely!

After landing

- Secure the glider
 - Hide valuables
 - Take phone, GPS and roadmap (airmap is useless on ground)
- Find landowner and get permission to move glider
 - Beware! Most people cant identify where they live on a map!
 - Get their postcode for crew to Google
- Walk access route
 - Determine if extra help or a 4x4 necessary
- Arrange to meet crew by an obvious feature on main road
 - by Pub, road junction etc. (Sitting in the farmhouse or beside glider is no help if they cant follow your directions)
- Close all gates
- Search field for any debris after de rigging