

# LASHAM

Rising Air Magazine

July 2019



**Three national parks**

**Tale of the condor**

**Season so far**

*Photo: Peter Masson*



### Introduction

This season started off with some very good days in April and early May, and some of the flights that were done certainly ticked all the boxes when it came to adventure. Most notable amongst these was Ed Foxon and David Masson's flight to Lake Vyrnwy in North Wales, and then straight down through South Wales, and then across the Bristol Channel to Devon. Well done guys on a stunning flight.

### What Lasham can do for you during the rest of the summer

As I write this the longest day is here, and if you are a glass half-empty person you may think is all down hill from now on. There's still lots to play for in July, August and September, and I know that there will be plenty of good days to come. We still have lots happening on the training front and below is just a small part of what's going on.

### Advanced courses

There are still a few places available on our advanced and cross-country courses in July, August and September. So if you fancy doing one of these, check the dates on our web-site and give the office a call to book.

### Competitions

This year we are running the Open, 15 metre and Standard class Nationals 3-11 August. Alongside this we will be running the Lasham Regionals competition. There are still places available for both competitions, and if you want to enter go to <https://www.lashamcomps.co.uk/>

For the duration of the competition we will be running the club operation from the North side grass area, and, as there will not be a winch operation, we will be offering reduced-price aerotows to 1500ft.

### Compass flying

Lasham has for many years offered its members the opportunity at the weekends of cross-country coaching in one of its high performance two-seaters. (*Ed: Compass stands for "Competition Pilots Association".*) For most of the season the Duo Discus XLT is allocated to this role. The pilots who fly the glider as P1 and carry out the coaching are all very experienced cross-country pilots who are happy to give something back to the sport by passing on their knowledge and experience to others.

If you want to book a cross-country flight, it will need to be done through the Lasham on-line booking system. Click the Compass admin button and this will bring up the booking slots. Once you find a free P2 slot, input your name and experience level and then press Save. If there is no P1 booked in, then still put your name down, as generally nearer the time someone will fill the slot, or we will find a P1 for you.



Wave at Aboyne

### Aboyne

We are again running the end of season trip to Aboyne in search of wave. The expedition is running from Sunday 29 Sept to Friday 18 Oct. It is always a popular expedition and books up really quickly. The list will be open in the Lasham office on Saturday 13 July at 08:30.

### Bookable training.

For many years we have been running bookable pre- and post- solo training for club members, and I thought it would be a good time to remind everyone about some of the changes that have taken place with it recently.

Due to some recent issues with the booking slots, we have now changed the way that members can book the training.

- 1) The training slots are only visible on the web-site, any bookings now need to be made by calling the Lasham Office.
- 2) You can cancel the booking up to 4pm on the previous day.
- 3) If you fail to turn up for your booking slot, £20 will be debited to your account

The system should only be used by members who want pre-solo training, post-solo training and check flights. If you want to do any of the flying below, then please follow this advice:

- 1) **Bronze flying test** Contact the CFI, who will allocate a full rated instructor to do the test.
- 2) **Guests.** Put their names on the casual list and we will allocate an instructor when their turns comes up.
- 3) **Motorglider training/tests** Again this needs to be booked through the office, and they will need enough time to find an instructor.
- 4) **Solo flying without a daily check** If it's a single seater then either you need to be in the 8am ballot, or put your name on the casual list during the day.

We still run a casual training list every day, and we try to ensure that there are two instructors covering this.

### K21's for training.

We now have five ASK 21s on the club fleet and from the beginning of July we will start to use these for the training of pre- and post- solo pilots.



There are still five ASK 13s in service and these will be used for trial flights and all spin training on the pre-Bronze syllabus. A number of pilots

regularly fly the K21s solo and we will be encouraging these pilots to convert onto the Grob single-seaters at an early stage after solo.

### EASA licensing and training.

The subject of EASA licensing has been part of my newsletters for the last six years or so, and many of you will probably have either acquired a license or given it some thought during that time, The deadline for implementation of EASA licensing has been moved forward a number of times over the last six years, but it is unlikely to be moved again and the latest deadline is 8 April 2020.

If you are thinking about transitioning over to an EASA License ,I would suggest that you start the process sooner rather than later. It is also worth looking at what extra BGA rating you might want to acquire before applying for the license. The two that spring to mind are the cloud flying endorsement, and the aerobatic rating.



Under EASA all training for the issue of a license and the addition of ratings and endorsements has to be carried out under a Declared Training Organisation approval. The plan going forward will be for the BGA to act as the DTO and all of the gliding clubs to be on their approval. This system is already in place and it is already

possible to add a Towing and Touring Motor Glider rating to an EASA license.

### Touring Motor-Glider Rating

For many years the only option of acquiring a license to fly motor-gliders was through the NPPL route, and over the years we carried out the training that enabled a number of members to get this rating. This is only a national license, and so you will not be able to fly EASA-registered aircraft when EASA licensing becomes fully adopted.

The BGA have already recognised this issue and so they have added a training syllabus to their DTO approval. So what does this mean? If you hold an EASA Sailplane license or LAPL(S), then with some further training in a motor-glider you can get a TMG rating added to that license. The syllabus and training requirements can be found on the BGA web-site.

<https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/training-organisation/bga-dto-spl-lapls-tmg-extension-course-programme/>

If you are interested in adding this rating to your license, then come and have a chat with me.

### Airspace

And now for the usual reminders about Airspace. I would like to say that I have saved the best bit until last, but unfortunately that's not the case. This year we have the usual crop of flying restrictions that make our lives as glider pilots more difficult when flying cross country.

All of the info on Notams and airspace can be found in the NATS website: <http://www.nats-uk.ead-it.com/public/index.php.html> . For info on the restriction listed below and others that are further away, you will need to look at the Aeronautical Information Circulars (AIC's) and then click on the mauve section. This will allow you to click on the link to the PDF file giving the full information on the display, its dimensions and duration.

Below are the dates for the displays that will have an impact on us at Lasham

- Royal International Air Tattoo (Fairford) 17-22 July

Red Arrows restricted areas (RAT's)

- Silverstone 14 July
- Goodwood 5 - 7 July
- Yeovilton 13 July

A number of Red Arrows displays are planned for August, but as yet the dates and times have yet to be confirmed. Once we have sight of these, we will let all members know.

Let's hope for a good second half of the season and you achieve the goals you have set yourself.

*Colin Watt*

**CFI Lasham Gliding Society**

# BHPFC 2019 Icarus Cup competition

20<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2019, Hosted by Lasham Gliding

For rules and regulations

Entry forms

Visit [www.bhpf.org.uk](http://www.bhpf.org.uk)

[www.bhpf.org.uk/icarus-cup-2019](http://www.bhpf.org.uk/icarus-cup-2019)

[www.facebook.com/bhp.flyingclub](https://www.facebook.com/bhp.flyingclub)

[www.twitter.com/bhpf](https://www.twitter.com/bhpf)

YouTube



ROYAL  
AERONAUTICAL  
SOCIETY  
HUMAN POWERED AIRCRAFT GROUP



Date	Pilot	Glider	Task	km	kph
22-Jun	Jake Brattle	ASW20 (15)	Alton - Westcott-Soham-Leominster	577	89.5
22-Jun	Finn Sleigh	ASW20 (15)	Alton - Westcott-Soham-Leominster	577	89.4
21-May	Finn Sleigh	ASW20 (15)	Alton-Hereford RC-Feltwell-Stony Stratford	586	87.2
21-May	George Metcalfe	ASW28	Brecon SW-Crowland Bridge	604	81.8
04-May	Andy Aveling	ASG29 (18)	Alton-Eastbourne-Weymouth-Mynd-Dorchester-Alton	810	81.2
04-May	Martin Roberts	DG 800 (18)	Alton-Eastbourne-BreconSW-Bala	758	78.3
21-May	Chris Starkey	ASG29 (18)	Cocking-Hereford Cathedral-Feltwell	623	91.8
12-May	Adrian Emck	KA6E	Butser Islip-Feltwell-OxfordS	472	74.4
21-Jun	Jake Brattle	ASW20 (15)	Alton-Westcott-Ely-Great Malvern	503	88.7
21-Jun	Finn Sleigh	ASW20 (15)	Alton-Westcott-Ely-Great Malvern	503	88.7
22-Jun	Richard Browne	JS1 C (18)	Vyrnwy-Overton-Birlip	652	104.5
21-May	Jez Hood	LS8	Lasham-Hereford Cathedral-Ely-Winslow	532	96.2
12-May	Tom Arscott	LS7 WL	Alton-RugbyNE-Earith- Bradford on Avon	502	99.4
22-Jun	Andy Aveling	ARCUS	Rodney's Pillar-Overton-Bridgnorth	750	96.3
12-May	Jake Brattle	ASW20 (15)	Alton-RugbyNE-Earith-Bradford on Avon	502	99.2
12-May	Finn Sleigh	ASW20 (15)	Alton-RugbyNE-Earith-Bradford on Avon	502	99
04-May	Roger Barber	NIMBUS 4	Popham-Eastbourne-Brecon-Bala-Lewes-Butser	900	83
21-Jun	David Masson	DUO XL	Thame-Ely-Hereford Cathedral	532	84.5
21-Jun	Andy Aveling	ARCUS	Enstone-Ely-TalgarthS	623	87.2
12-May	Ian Macarthur	LS4	Alton-RugbyNE-Earith-Bradford on Avon	505	91.2

As in previous years, I have listed the flights from Lasham with the highest total score on the National Ladder for the year to date. All flights started and ended at Lasham unless stated.

I had been thinking of publishing a separate list of flights by non-turbo gliders, but this year, despite indifferent weather, only eight flights by turbo gliders have made it into this list.

In case you are wondering, Admiral Rodney's Pillar is a monument on Breidden Hill in Powys, Wales. It was built in 1781-82 to commemorate the naval victories of Sir George Brydges Rodney, Admiral of the White.

Feltwell is a village 10 miles (16 km) west of Thetford, Norfolk. Crowland is a small town between Peterborough and Spalding.



**An account of a FAI 750km Diploma flight made from Lasham on 4 May 2019**

How do you describe a dream? Imagine a flight where everything goes right; right weather, right task, and then flying that goes right resulting in success on a really big task. You might think that would be the perfect flight, right? Not quite...

For me, this flight was rather more than that; it was the culmination of 30 years of reflection on our great sport. It was made through the landscapes of younger years, across the South Downs, the Cotswolds, Forest of Dean, the Brecon Beacons, mid-Wales and Snowdonia, joining up the beautiful landscapes of three National Parks.

Martin Roberts currently flies a DG-800b '44'. He has 1100 hours plus the Diamond Badge. He started gliding at Essex GC at North Weald in 1987. He spent many years at Southdown GC, then had a 10 year lay-off, but has been settled at Lasham since 2012.

In 1990, flying from Southdown GC, I gained 'All Three Diamonds' in club class aircraft, completing the 500k at my first attempt in a DG-300club. Nice!

I knew that I could probably complete a 750km flight if I just had a high-performance aircraft. Sadly, a 750k machine was never likely on a primary school teacher's salary! It wasn't a question of the '750 always eluding me – I just simply couldn't afford the kit. I could only afford cheap club class gliders. Then I had a 10 year lay-off.

Readers can make the assumption nevertheless, that I have been thinking about the 750km flight for all that time. In 2016, I bought outright a DG-800B – an 18m ship with outstanding performance.

Finally, I had an aircraft capable of taking me on this 750km adventure that I had spent half a lifetime daydreaming about.

As a pilot with a Southdown background, for years I imagined a 750km flight starting on the ridge if a certain set of circumstances lined up: a 20kt+ wind of North or North-North-East at sunrise, some thermal activity from about 9am, soarable to 2500-3000' at Midhurst at 10am, conditions good in Wales if you can get there, work up through mid-Wales into wind, then float home. An ambitious concept, but gliding is all about turning something imaginable into reality, isn't it?

The meteorology leading into Saturday May 4 suggested that all the necessary factors would come together, but with showers in the Midlands & the South later.



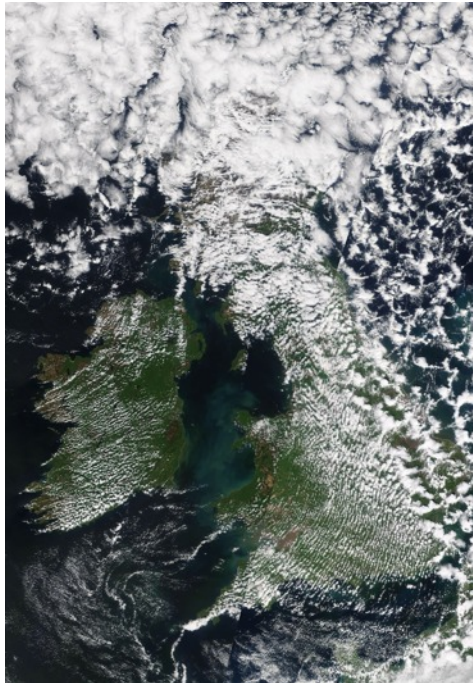
*Pen-y-Fan – Brecon Beacon at 1pm*

My first go at a '750 in 2018 had ended at Brackley after 625km. Flying 600km+ anytime is hardly a failure, and I learned several crucial lessons from that experience: preparing much more carefully next time, leaving as early as possible, resting fully before the flight. For this second attempt, the trip I had in mind was by far the most challenging flight I had ever declared: Eastbourne (ENW), Brecon South West (BSW), Bala (BAL) for 758km. It seems strange to me now – but I had no doubts.

The early morning was not promising. I stepped out of my front door into puddles under a grey sky, but in a howling northerly which made the telephone wires outside my house hum.

It was blue but still windy at Lasham, as I sat with the engine running on runway 09 at 0758hr. The 25kt Northerly cross-wind made for a very tricky launch with half-water. I survived that, climbed to start height and at 0810, set off for my first turn point at Eastbourne. And so - the big adventure began.

I know the South Downs ridge and conditions - every fence post, every water trough. I knew the ridge would be working well, and it was. My only slight concern was that the windsock at Lasham showed a slight westerly component in the North wind, which might make the run into Eastbourne 'interesting', the wind really needs to be just east of North. Even so, thermals were forecast, with wind veering by 0900, and I expected to arrive there around then. That's how it turned out. The run into and out of ENW was quite easy in ridge/broken thermals. Rounded Eastbourne at 0905.



The satpic at 1200

Hammered back west along the ridge. By now, good looking cloud streets were forming. My plan was to be climbing away in a thermal from the Cocking-Harting area around about 0945-1000. All I had to do was wait until I ran into strong lift. The plan worked, and I was able to climb in a solid 4kt to 3200' at 0955. Now in the good streets, I passed Lasham at 1030 and 3000',

and observed a long and packed grid. One National Park down, two to go. So far, so good.

The long cross-wind / into-wind leg towards Brecon featured slow progress and a couple of low points. However, I felt good and on top of my game. By Swindon the cloudbase was about 3700' and rising.

I was quite secure as I crossed the Cotswolds with its hills and stiles of my childhood. I passed south of Nympsfield at about 1200. So far, the trip had been a bit frenetic, but flying here again, heading over the magnificent River Severn and Forest of Dean somehow had a calming effect. The mood changed from electro-pop to ballad as I approached the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The last time I flew here was to Abergavenny from Aston Down in 1993 in my 17.7m Cirrus, a flight steeped in personal mystique. Now, here I was again. The valley of the River Usk leading into the mountains, looked rather like a dragon's mouth, formidable and daunting. Welcome to Wales!

I needed to get high enough to tame the beast, and help was offered in the form of a 5-6kt thermal coming off of Abergavenny. As I climbed up alongside Blorenge mountain, a familiar Lasham Nimbus ran in underneath me.

The scenery was beginning to be quite stunning! As a teenager, I used to play in these hills and valleys, I know them intimately. Now, more than 45 years since I first walked up Pen-y-Fan (Brecon Beacon), I was here again - this time at 4500'. I can't describe how I felt, but the word that comes closest is *awe*. Sometimes, this sport is just so beautiful. It was magnificent to be flying in these mountains that I love so much. The place and occasion got to me, and tears were rolling down my cheeks.

I had to drag myself away to the turn at Brecon SW at 1325. I was up on my schedule! 400km completed in 5 hours 15 minutes. Any other day I would have been quite happy with that and I'd be closing the trailer and going home. But this wasn't *any other day*...



Running north, the sky looked nice. My goodness – I was a long way from home! It was going well, but I played it carefully. There was a 15/18kt headwind on the vario, but fortunately I was also getting 5-6 knot averages to 5000'+. It was a labour of love now, and I had to work *hard* for that love. I needed to stay high and follow the energy. I've never flown over the surface of the moon, but it must be like Wales!

Eventually I approached Lake Bala. The Snowdonia National Park! My favourite one! I've spent 6 years living and working here. What a wonderful view! Sometimes I can be sloppy at turns, but I was determined not to be today! I still took some photos.



Bala Lake looking south-west

I turned Bala at 1515, I had made the last turn. Once I make a final turn point, I always reckon the rest is on me to really use every trick in the book to get home. I'd spent most of the day patiently working my way into wind. Now that wind was going to be my best friend. When you are 260km from home in the UK, you need all the friends you can get.

Looking back, turning Bala marked the beginning of another phase in the flight. I'd waged my war with the Welsh wind 200km from home, and won! I relaxed.

The wind was behind me now. The pulse of the flight duly changed, without me even noticing.

The next thing I remember, I was closing in on Gloucester and thinking; '*Oh, that's Gloucester*'. No, I hadn't fallen asleep. I passed the Gloucester South turn point at 1635. Where had I been for the past hour and a half? In the zone, perhaps.

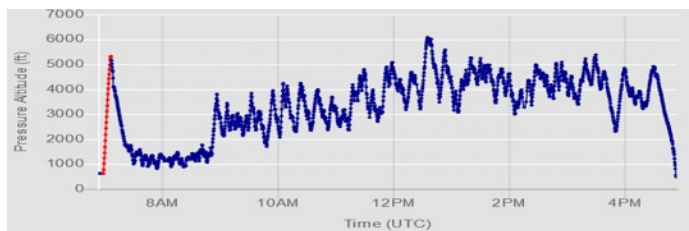
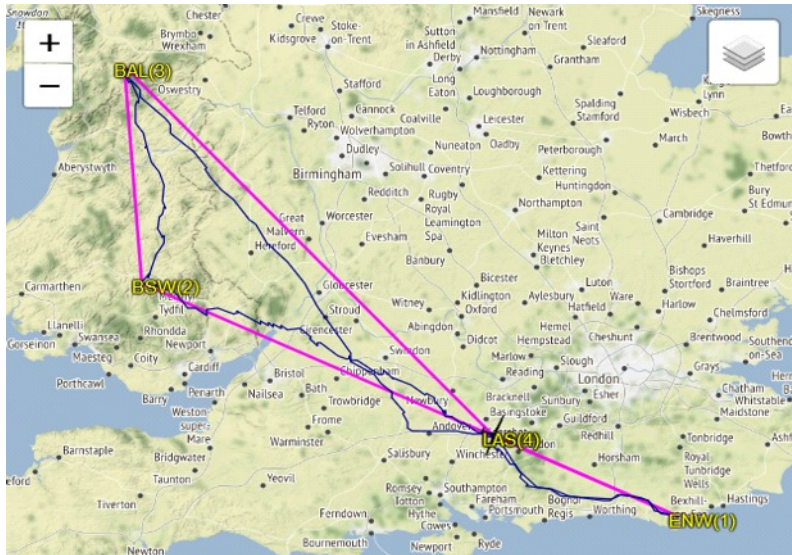
I remember being startled at the time! Jeez – I'm over half way home! More concerning – I was aware of big showers on my left and up ahead. Specifically, on my track near Swindon, which was blotted completely by a huge shower! Ooo er...! Time to change gear and focus...

Suddenly, I was not that high. Up ahead, I thought I could see a growing cumulus over Aston Down, but I looked down and saw that I was actually over Aston Down! The cumulus was, in fact, near Lyneham and miles away. It was a loooong way away.

I set off. There was one massive storm cell south of Swindon now. Mmm...I was really reaching for that cumulus. I needed a climb, and I needed it *now*. I dumped the water as I ran in and was down to 1600' as I finally connected with first 2kt then 4, as I climbed to 4500'. I had plenty of time to look at the dire situation ahead; in the Hungerford-Rivar area, there was that vast shower with what looked like snow/rain coming out of it blocking my route. It was drifting fast on that wind too. Soon it was going to close off my route home. Bloody hell!

It seemed to me that there was no justice. 30 years – and to be so close now! It looked like I might get shot down by rain right at the end. I had no option but to glide on into the gloom under this cumulo-nimbus, and hope to reach round it or even through it. There was some vague drab sun on the ground on the downwind side, which might just be feeding it – so it wasn't over. But I wasn't going to give up without a fight. The vario fell silent. On I went into the grey unknown.

45km to go, but down to 2800' approaching Thruxton airfield. I ran on under a high canopy of very dark cloud, with no clue as to whether there would be any lift. If there was nothing, then I'd be out of options, as I couldn't see anything I could reach. It would be all over. The silence was matched by the gloomy sky.



Nothing happened. There was *nothing*. I ran into rain instead. Down to 2600' now, I began eyeing up Thruxton.

The rain stopped, but it looked like my adventure was coming to an end.

.... Beep beep beep... The silence was broken. My vario showed lift! Adventure at an end? *Maybe not...*

I made a broad circle in 1kt, and felt a push, which I moved towards next time around to make it 2kt. 2kt was enough. I made sure not to

try anything fancy. Gradually, oh so gradually, I began to climb away. But I was still confronted with a wall of water between me and Lasham. It was a sort of curtain. An absolutely terrible sight. I did *not* want to fly through it!

As I climbed past 3500', I noticed that a sort of parting was forming in the curtain; a gap. At 3800', the vario said I had a glide home, but I knew from hard experience that meant nothing in these conditions. There is often vast sink running for miles around the sides of these big showers. I did not dare to continue climbing into the cloud either. The curtains were opening... I had to go through. It was now or never. So, I took a deep breath, straightened up and aimed for the centre of the gap...

To my amazement, the vario remained beeping up! 3kt now right in the gap. I continued to run on track for home climbing through 4000' along the way. Wow! I passed through the curtain and then got gustered with even heavier rain and sleet for about a minute, but I still had 3kt up wings-level. Then, at 4200', the vario went silent. I was expecting huge sink to kick in and rob me – but it never came. *Relief!*

I'd had to work very hard, and the past hour had been completely buttock clenching. The sun, which I hadn't seen for nearly an hour, dazzled and startled me but didn't put me off my approach. I rolled to a stop, and sat for a while with my eyes tight closed.

As I sat there, in the peace and quiet, I had plenty of time to think. I reflected that years of desire had not prepared me for this feeling. Quite a feeling!

Also, there is an audio visual of this flight at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1QP97vBYIc>

*Martin Roberts*

At the start of June when I'm writing this, we're well into the Lasham soaring season. There have been some decent days for us but definitely not outstanding so far – but we live in hope! Vintage gliders do not carry water, and the majority don't like strong winds because they cannot penetrate very well!

### PLACES CLOSE BY

We have been supporting a number of local events recently.

### Three day Popham meeting 4-6 May

Very strong northerly winds meant only the YS53 Sovereign ("The Beast") could be flown in on the Saturday, but the Steinadler was able to join it on the Sunday. The first two days were aviation days and there was a great deal of interest in the GHC gliders. Bank Holiday Monday less successful as the theme was classic cars (old bangers many of them, but a few absolute gems!).



(Popham - Photo courtesy of Paul Haliday)

### Basingstoke festival of transport 12 May

We took the prototype Slingsby Prefect, a nice day that was very well attended.



### Goodwood open day 25th May

This in tandem with the LGS who took a K21, the GHC flew in the Steinadler. Lovely weather again and very well attended.

### FURTHER AWAY PLACES

The UK Vintage Gliding Club normally holds its national rally during the last week of May. This year it was held at the beautiful and historic Sutton Bank near Thirsk in Yorkshire, a fair old trail, 250 miles plus from Lasham. The GHC was represented by our Foka 4 returning to its Yorkshire GC spiritual home, and taken there by the LGS vice chairman, Gary Pullen.



Other Lasham members also took gliders,

Richard Moyse (Sky) and Ray Whittaker (K6e). On Sunday 26th Richard took his Sky to over 10,000ft.

Yours truly was also supposed to attend taking the GHC prototype Prefect. However, on Wednesday pm before the Saturday meeting

start I received a phone call saying that the inn in Kilburn village where I was booked to stay had burnt down! Thankfully no one was hurt.

### REALLY FAR AWAY PLACES

The Wasserkuppe is 100km to the NE of Frankfurt and has splendid museum. A 4 day luxury coach trip to this most historic of gliding sites is being organised for 26 -29 April 2020. Whilst the GHC supports this we're not the organisers – this is Hilton Thatcher and Paul Jackman. If you're interested for full details, go to <http://www.glidingheritage.org.uk/WasserkuppeTour.htm>

### NEW GLIDERS TO THE GHC COLLECTION

Two of them, a Bergfalke 2 and a Slingsby Dart 15



*Bergfalke 2 - Gary Pullen shaking hands with Rainer Karch, photo courtesy of Colin Simpson*

This is a German 2 seater manufactured by Scheibe in 1963, about the same performance as a K13. It arrived at Lasham on the 18 April having been trailed from Germany by Rainer Karch (who donated it) and Geoff Moore. We're looking to get it flying again but the last time

it flew was 2012. Currently being thoroughly inspected and a number of repairs are being made.

### Dart 15

Actually this is the prototype Slingsby Dart BGA 1187, first flew 26 Nov 1963. This has been donated to the GHC by Robin Birch and was trailed to Lasham from Cirencester on Tues 7 May by Lemmy Tanner. We know it needs some work doing on it to get it airworthy, but it has been flying (at Aston Down) in the not too distant past. It has a 15m span and a fixed undercarriage, with a wooden spar (later Darts had metal ones) so it's a bit of a "lead sled".



The original Slingsby advert

*Glyn Bradney*

### Letter to the editor

Sir, I have just been reading the CFI's email about people pushing up insurance rates by crashing expensive sailplanes. And all this before the season is properly under way!

It is very hard for a humble third-of-a-Skylark owner to read this as my flying has been exemplary of late and I wish to point out to all members that this hike in insurance is in no way due to me. The only slightly dodgy landing I ever made was after my five-hour flight two or three years back when there was a touch of PIO on round-out brought on by pilot fatigue, but soon brought under control without anyone seeing it. At least I don't think anyone saw it. And my only dodgy take-off was my second one in the third-of-the-Skylark 4, when I failed to appreciate how vigorous the trim tab was on aerotow. Unfortunately this was right in front of the CFI, but I think even he appreciated my heroic efforts to get the nose back down in the general direction of the tug before it actually left the ground. Apart from that and a couple of flights with nervous instructors in gale-force winds which I'm discounting (they were simply men of little faith) then I have to say my flying has been entirely without incident.

Accordingly it occurs to me that if any club pundit or once-wealthy owner of a posh aircraft would care to lend me one for a bit, I'm sure it would help to bring insurance rates back down again. I'm just thinking of the General Good you appreciate.

Actually it also occurs to me that the more expensive the aircraft, the more I might be able to help. What I'd really like to get my hands on is one of the new Ventuses or a JS1 or something like that. Or how about one of those massive span things... a Nimbus 4 or an ASH25 or even wider? I quite fancy the idea of simply wandering from cloud to cloud without the tedium of having to do much turning. If anyone could see their way to lending me one of those hot ships I'm sure I could bring insurance rates back down even faster.

Of course it goes without saying that anyone generous enough to lend me their Hot Ship would be free to have a go on my third-of-a-Skylark. I'm sure the sense of overwhelming nostalgia would make it all worthwhile and if nothing else he or she would have the fun of mastering a Really Serious Trim Tab. In fact they might even come to see the joys of just gently wafting around without all this hell-for-leather belting about from A to B and then C.

But what would I know? I never get to belt anywhere...

Your's faithfully

**E. Grimshaw**



*Jordan Bridge awaits an arrival*

*Photo Colin Simpson*

## Editorial

This edition of the magazine is shorter than the previous bumper issues that had exceeded my expectations. This time the pendulum has swung in the other direction. The magazine is a useful institution and I am proud to be the latest of a long line of editors. Please support it by writing and by taking stunning pictures.

After the previous issue's obituaries of three life members, I feel must at least mention the passing of four people who were also significant elements of our society:

- Michael Bird - my obituary and others appeared in S&G
- Malcolm Hook - DCFI at Lasham in the 1980s
- Annabel Lucas - partner of Chris Garton, and the second female pilot to gain all three diamonds
- Trish Williams - syndicate partner of Mick Wells

Geoff Martin was unavailable as sub-editor for this issue, so any increase in typos is down to me only.



The memorial event for Derek Piggott on 26 April was attended by about 200 people. Readings and reminiscences were from Roy Cross, Hugo Trotter, Trish Emck, Russell Gammell among others. His son gave an exceptional *a capella* performance of *Tom Bowling*.

## PARACHUTE SHOP

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Our great thanks are due to Mike Philpott and Gary Pullen for organising such a large event with an ever increasing number of acceptances.

Gliding is without doubt a sport whereby one meets people and notable characters from all walks of life and my story begins in Chile in 1993.

### **MV Odessa**

After an overnight flight to Santiago, I boarded a cruise ship - where I was to perform as a guest entertainer.

MV 'Odessa' was a delightful cruise ship leased by Transocean Tours based in Bremen, and owned by the 'Black Sea' shipping company from Odessa - yet constructed in England. She was the pride of the



Black Sea shipping company and catered for German guests operated by Russian deck and engine crew.

In my cabin I found an invitation from the cruise director for an early evening 'get together' - to meet a few specially selected guests. Since my previous visit to the ship, I had purchased a third share in a new Discus and

was consequently introduced to a certain Herr Franz Huller, a keen glider pilot, about 72yr old who had been gliding for 'many years'. He now enjoyed flying a speed Astir but his favourite glider remained the Ka6e.

We chatted for a while and suggested I might like to join him the following day to visit the Santiago gliding club - to see if we could possibly get a flight. Seemed like an excellent idea.

### **Brown Shirts**

The next morning we left the ship very early to journey back to Santiago, this time on foot, public bus, train and tram. Once on the train we engaged in more conversation during which Franz asked if I wouldn't mind visiting an old friend of his - at the end of the day. Someone he hadn't seen since for many years, who was in fact his very first girlfriend. Margot and Franz had always remained in contact and I asked where they had met - he replied 'Hitler Youth'.

Somewhat surprised by his honest reply he continued to explain that Hitler Youth was where he first flew gliders and saw some 'magnificent machines' but that the war had sadly put an end to all gliding.

When called up for military service, he naturally applied to join the Luftwaffe, but was one centimetre too short to become a pilot officer. His options were infantry or an aircraft mechanic which at least allowed him contact with aeroplanes and some flying from time to time.

He said that one day he had just finished refuelling and re-arming the last of the squadron's 109s and taxied it to its parking position. While he was shutting it down, there was a loud explosion. He looked up to see a bombing-run across the airfield. It was too late to get out the aircraft. The line of fast approaching bombs hit other parked aircraft either side of him - full of fuel and munitions. Then the bombs blew the hanger roof open - full of aircraft.

Just as the second bombing-run started, he jumped out of the 109 and ran to the bunker. The nearest dugout was some distance away but he made it and dived in head first. With bombs landing everywhere, he grabbed a tin hat and then looked up to see a direct hit on the 109 he had just left.

### **The majestic condor**

We arrived at the gliding club but soon realised it was unfortunately shut, due a public holiday. Wandering around the club, which seemed to be owned by the Chilean Air Force, we saw an amazing fleet of

aircraft behind fabric walls which hung around the hangar. Inside there was a Discus, Ventus, Janus and Nimbus. Most of them very new. There was also another hangar with numerous (I think) Blaniks.



The well-manicured clubhouse, had beautiful gardens and even a swimming pool with an outside shower - (for 1990 - this was very impressive). A gentleman drove up from the other end of the airfield to see what two strangers were up to and invited us for tea.



His name Eduardo Hill - I think he said he was a fourth generation Welshman whose family emigrated many decades before. We enjoyed tea and cake from the canteen and he suggested we might like to go flying in his aeroplane - to at least get airborne and see the Andes.

When he showed us his Cessna 172, I asked if this was really sufficient to get above the local mountain ranges. He lifted up the cowling and showed me the turbo-charged Cessna 210 engine..... and so we duly climbed in.

It had a very impressive performance and so we were able to level off at 14,000 ft to enjoy a

fleeting yet spectacular view of a condor with the Aconagua mountain in the background. Truly magnificent.

After we landed back at the club we helped put his aeroplane away and bid farewell to Eduardo who kindly telephoned for a taxi to take us to a local address that Franz had written down - just a couple of miles away.

### A chilling moment in Chile.

We arrived at an address which was obviously a very expensive neighbourhood with enormous wrought iron gates, fences with razor barbed wire and cameras placed high above. Searching for the bell, Franz eventually located the button and spoke a few words into a speaker-phone. The gates opened.

Upon entering the immense residence, more tea and cakes soon appeared, this time not from a Cessna pilot but a lady servant I remember feeling distinctly inappropriately dressed for our visit.

A shadowy figure of a man descended the staircase and made his entrance into the room. Slowly he approached in some sort of smoking jacket. I recognised this person's spectacled face but I was unable to think of his name, and so it took a few moments to realise just who had entered the room.

It was the ex-leader of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), good mate of Leonid Brezhnev, **Eric Honecker**, hardened communist leader who walked towards me with his outstretched arm and open hand. I immediately turned around and headed to the bathroom while making my excuses.

Ken Barker



It was dusk. We had recently de-rigged two gliders of historical interest at a nearby museum Open Day and were dutifully and carefully returning them. One of my club venerables had just pulled into the BP station on the main road back to the club. I did not need fuel myself but thought I ought perhaps to follow in support as we had been a sort of double act.

As we came to a halt by the pumps, my worst instincts were confirmed by the sight of a large police Range Rover lurking in an *I'm-Not-Going-Anywhere-Just-Yet* sort-of position. A much more powerful instinct told me to just drive straight on through and leave my esteemed colleague to his fate because we were both towing gliders. Very old gliders and in very old trailers. But I hung grimly on in a determined show of loyalty and companionship. Eventually the inevitable happened and there was tapping at my window. It was a large uniformed figure.

- "Is this your trailer Sir?"
- "Me? Ah... what trailer? Oh er... *that* one? well... no not really... no."
- "So who's trailer is it if you don't mind my asking?"
- "You know I'm not entirely sure. It either belongs to a chap called George or it's owned by the Vintage Glider Club... I'm just helping out you here you see. Out of the goodness of my heart and so on. We've been displaying these splendid flying machines at a certain well-known museum and are now taking them home for a well-earned snooze."
- "I see, Sir. Well do you mind if we take a look? We've been staring at your trailers and certain questions have clouded our troubled minds..."

So out I get.

- "I know, I know... you're going to ask me if it's a '*single indivisible load*' as defined by EEC Conduct Of Procedures For Type Approval Category O4 Section 5.10?" (I was very proud I'd memorised this).

- "No Sir. I'm more concerned with this bit of string. Is this supposed to be a breakaway cable or a secondary coupling?"
- "Um..."
- "It doesn't look very strong to me... what do you think?" I immediately agree, cursing George under my breath for it was, without doubt, his. Fortunately I had some strong nylon tape in my car and explain that this has about a two-ton breaking strain. I instantly replace George's tatty old piece of polypropylene twine and finish with a flat figure-of eight knot as a grand flourish. Hooray for the Boy Scouts who taught me so much! "There... that should fix it!"
- "But what about the brake? It doesn't appear to have one..."
- "Um..."
- "What's the weight of this trailer Sir?"
- "Er..."
- "What's inside it?"
- "Ah... now that I can tell you. It's a K6CR made by Alexander Schleicher of Poppenhausen and designed by the famous Rudolph Kaiser... hence the 'K' you see... Schleichers always do that... put the designers initials into the model number. Or they did until very recently..."
- "Yes that's as may be, sir, but what I want to know is how much it weighs... How much does the glider weigh and how much does the trailer weigh?"
- "Ah... a K6? Well it won't be that much... five... six hundred pounds maybe. Plus a few acorns."
- "Acorns, sir?"
- "Yes it appears to have been used as winter storage by a local squirrel and apparently it's almost impossible to get the acorns out of the tail... which is why we don't fly it any more. We let kids sit in it. For charitable purposes you see... we're terribly nice people. Very worried about the squirrel..."
- "That's all very well sir, but what I want to know is the combined weight. Is it over or under 750 kilogrammes? Because if it's more than that you have to demonstrate a working brake."

- "Ah. Kilogrammes you say? I've heard of them. Well I'm sure it's under. It's only a small glider and how many acorns can you get in the tail? It can't be that heavy. "
- "But what's the weight of the trailer? I can't see a data plate on it..."
- "Gosh... now you're asking... sort of normal glider trailer weight I expect. We've been towing these things around since the war you know. This one definitely. I'm sure it's all legit. I mean it must be under 750 kilo whatsits otherwise it would have a brake on it... wouldn't it?"

The officer seemed unimpressed by the logic of my argument and a lengthy lecture ensued on the hazards of trailer towing and the fines both me and the Vintage Glider Club could be subjected to if they knowingly let me drive an unroadworthy contraption. I decided to play it in *Surprised-but-Concerned-Innocent-but-Harrassed-Charity-Worker* response. "Gosh really? Good heavens!"

The policeman looked doubtfully at the tyres. He looked hard at the axles and tried to work out if there was indeed a brake in there somewhere. He even borrowed my torch to do it! Then he wandered over to the other car at the pumps and behold: that trailer had four wheels with a much beefier glider in it and... well... a wheel-brake that should have worked!

So it was an embarrassing evening and two emotionally drained and heavily lectured glider pilots eventually trundled back to the airfield with their dubious loads intact. Subsequent to this episode I am reliably informed that considerable rumination took place at the Vintage Club where Drastic Decisions were made concerning their venerable collection of dodgy metalware, some of which got scrapped!

Thus I was rudely introduced to the horrors of trailer towing... which happens to everyone sooner or later. The unobvious thing is, in practise, you're nearly always towing someone else's device!

What usually happens is that you agree, in a weak philanthropic moment, to help a fellow aviator. And you're in a rush... because he's in a field near Kettering with tea-time fast approaching. Then you discover that one trailer tyre is flat, the brakes are half-seized, a sidelight doesn't work and if you are brave enough to peer underneath you find it needs welding in three places!

These alarms cause you to forget the One Crucially Important Thing... you clean forgot to put your number plate on the back! Or he's lent you his car for the retrieve but you can't find his spare plate. So here's a thought... have *you* got a spare number plate for *your* car? Most new pilots won't have thought of this unless they're caravan owners and I bet no-one ever warned you about *that* in your cross-country lectures!

Modern get-you-home developments mean that even swanky lift-top trailers tend to sit in obscure corners of the airfield slowly rotting away under a mountain of brambles and nettles. Until suddenly one day... panic... Protheroe has landed out! "Who the heck's Protheroe?" "Never mind... we must get him back!"

So folks, here we have yet another dark source of un-labelled horror at the heart of gliding. It's not enough to know how to fly gliders. You also have to know how to take them apart. And move all the bits back. Without attracting attention from people in uniform!

Now far be it for Grimshaw to suddenly pose as an expert on the towing of trailers. Or as an expert on anything at all really. But it has become obvious even to me that most of us need to bone up on all this stuff. I rushed first to my nice crisp un-thumbed BGA *Laws And Rules* book convinced that hoo-ha on trailers must be in there somewhere... but no. Not in Edition 17 at any rate. However the BGA web-site was more helpful. I was directed to a special section of five pages explaining the basics... hooray!

- The whole scary business of Maximum Authorised Mass, Gross Vehicle Weight, Maximum Technically Permitted Laden Mass, Vehicle Unladen Weight, Kerb Weight, Maximum Train Weight, and Maximum Combined Weight is briefly explained. GOOD LUCK!
- None of this tells you what to do if your trailer is so old it doesn't have a data plate!
- There were, however, lots of things in the BGA info I hadn't thought of... How many pilots check their trailer before going flying? You need to DI the trailer just as you DI the glider! Did anyone ever tell you that? The two could be a mile apart!
- A trailer may not be covered in your road insurance..... especially someone else's... you need to check!
- Most trailer, caravan and motor-home tyres degrade from UV long before they wear out from the road. Watch for cracking on the sides. So those ridiculous-looking plastic covers actually make perfect sense!
- Advice from the Caravan Club: You usually need between five to seven percent of your trailer's laden weight pressing down on the hitch as 'noseweight' when static. This helps to prevent snaking. They might have exact details for your car.
- <https://www.gov.uk/towing-with-car/> should also be perused.

I must stress: we are not really talking about those swanky spotless ten-thousand pound (*Ed: cheapskate trailer at only £10k*) flip-top trailers you see proudly displayed somewhere conspicuous. They will pass any test you care to throw at them! We're talking about the normal *I-Can-Only-Just-Afford-This-Lark* type of trailer... especially the ancient tunnel type camouflaged into the remotest corner of the airfield by bog-weed, boscage and bramble. The one that hasn't been moved for ages.

The person I'm concerned about here is the normal *Skint-Newbie-Who-Can-Afford-Only-A-Share-In-An-Aircraft-of-Ancientry*... people like me! Road legality is just the beginning! When was the last time you looked at the trailer? Do you even know where your

trailer is? Has it got all the rigging aids in it? Do you know where everything is supposed to go when you de-rig?

Grimshaw's advanced advice is to scrounge a fairly poky power trimmer and a pair of cutters and attempt to separate said trailer, if you can, from Mother Nature. Allow two days. Then scrounge a jet washer with a patio cleaner head and some very long lengths of hosepipe. You'll need a chair, wellies, waterproofs and overtrousers. Plus a very long power lead. Give the whole horrible contraption a really good jet scrub. See if anything is left when all the mould is removed.

*(Ed: When to do it: spring = too cold, summer = too busy flying, autumn = it can wait until next year, winter = too cold)*

Don't wear your best suit. Look underneath... the trailer I mean. I bet it needs welding in three places! The brake will have probably seized and the lights won't all work. But you could spray paint it a jazzy colour... just to show people you care. No-one ever does this... why not stand out from the herd? Make sure you know what all the weights are. Whose car are you using? Has he left you any fuel? Are you insured on their cover or are they insured under yours?

The thing to remember above all is that the tattier a trailer looks the more likely it is to be stopped by a tall uniformed person asking awkward questions. Don't forget... you need *three* number plates or you really *will* get stopped!

And a final thought: Do peer inside before you start retrieving someone... especially from Kettering. Make sure your friend's trailer isn't already full of another glider. Someone else could have borrowed it and... well... it *has* happened! Strange but true... as always.

Next time: A dash of colour! *Ebenezer Grimshaw*

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