

## Section 1

## Early Club

The first gliding club at Bristol, the Bristol and District Glider Club, was formed in October 1930\* by Norman Hall-Warren and a dozen or so others after an article about gliding had appeared in the Bristol Evening World. Mr A McLoughton of 14, Woodstock Road, Redland, Bristol was Club Secretary. The President was Lord Apsley and Vice President Mr R Wills. The entrance fee was £1-1-0 and the subscription was £2-2-0. They had around 35 members. The Bristol Evening World presented them with a Skud sailplane. This was first flown by Flying Officer K L Mole from a bungee launch from Crook Peak on the Mendips. In a flat calm, he flew over Compton Bishop church and made a safe landing at the bottom.

Another keen member was Mr Bill Sykes (known as Phsyche), the landlord of the New Passage Hotel. He had experience as a test pilot for Whiteheads during the Great War and afterwards barnstorming with an Avro 504-K. He had a collection of components from a variety of aircraft, and constructed a primary glider using the wings of a 1914 Sopworth aircraft and the tail booms and empennage of an even earlier Cauldron. This glider was perfectly balanced, flew well and suffered no structural failure during its career. The Club started its activities bungee launching the Sykes glider from a field adjacent to the hotel.

A two-day public display was organised at Crooks Peak. On the first day, the guest pilot, the CFI of the London Gliding Club, flew the Skud, and after soaring for a while in the stiff breeze went for a landing at the bottom where he wrecked the glider. Baynes, the Skud's designer watched the flight and was delighted to see his aircraft soar. A second Skud arrived during the night but was found to be damaged, and as another visitor who had promised to demonstrate his glider did not arrive the meeting was not a success. However Bill Sykes entertained the crowd with repeated hops in his glider.

After this, flying took place at Parnell's Yate aerodrome with the repaired Skud, using elastic cords and manpower. Fred Miles, later of Miles Aircraft, was one of the members. Very soon however, the short flights and the work involved in bungee launching on a flat site sapped enthusiasm and the Club petered out in a couple of years.

This club, which was not registered with the BGA, handed nothing on to any successor, except its President, and so cannot really be considered as a the start of the present club.

## References

- 1 Article by Keith Turner printed in the Bristol Evening Post on 4 December 1954. <Press Cuttings> 1954-12-04 Bristol Evening Post
- 2 Article by Keith Turner "The past and the Future" in the 1948 Bristol Gliding Club Manual page 28. <Bulletins> b 1948 Manual
- 3 Gliding and Motorless Flight. L.Howard-Flanders and C.F.Carr 1930 Appendix B Where to Glide.
- 4 Article "The Pilot who Crashed Picked Daisies" by Norman Hall-Warren in Bristol Evening World 3 April 1952. <Miscellaneous> 060
- 5 "Gliding 1931" Published by the Dorset Gliding Club - "Statistics of gliding clubs in the British Isles"

\* Note that refs.1 and 4 give the date of formation as 1931, whereas Ref 5 gives it as 1930 and Ref 3 published in 1930 gives the secretary's name and address.