

Andy in World Sailplane Grand Prix

STANDARD Class World Champion Andy Davis, is the British representative in the first World Sailplane Grand Prix taking place in September at St Auban.

This is a new type of gliding competition, easier for the public to understand and more attractive to the media. All sailplanes will start simultaneously, tasks will be relatively short with TPs set over the airfield or over easily accessible mountains and the winner will be the first pilot to complete the task.

Overall rankings will be calculated using Formula 1 type place scoring. Sailplanes will carry tracking units broadcasting their GPS position so spectators will be able to watch the race in real time.

More details are available at <http://www.cnvv.net/wsgp/>

This event, from September 2-11, will bring together the world's 20 best pilots and the victor will go home with the title of World Champion in Grand Prix Racing.

Misses other comps

The relatively late-season date has been chosen so that this meeting does not clash with the numerous conventional championships planned for this year.

To render this competition more attractive, the use of new technologies, based on GPS and the computer, will make it possible to transmit the competitors' positions to the ground and project them on a big screen so that the spectators can follow the racing in real time.



New gliding event: Andy Davis

In addition, a sophisticated info-technology model will allow three-dimensional virtual images of the gliders in flight to be shown. It will be possible to see a glider from outside or from inside, against a representation of the real landscape. Transmission of video footage taken from the gliders or from an accompanying aeroplane is also

envisaged, pictures which could be spectacular with the mountain environment where the races will be set.

The Federation is inviting all gliding enthusiasts to a European Sailplane Show over the final weekend (September 10-11).

This event will comprise exhibits by the main glider manufacturers, stands offering used bargains and an air show with the constructors presenting their latest products, vintage gliders in flight, the Big Wings of the Open Class flying to music, exhibition aerobatics by both sailplanes and powered craft and demonstrations by impressive scale models.

Stop press

RAY Payne and Trevor Stuart completed 750km from Nympsfield on May 10, it was reported on uras. Both flew ASW 27s and completed Nympsfield-Carmarthen-Sheffield East-Carreg Cennen Castle-Nympsfield for 767km. Richard Smith did 750 the next day.

Gavin covers Monday-Friday

MEMBERS were advised in April to check the availability of instructors if they needed one.

The club did not have a regular schedule of instructors for trial lessons, and courses were booked on some weeks, so summer instructor Gavin Wrigley was busy.

He advised members who needed an instructor to telephone before the day so it might be possible to arrange another one to meet the demand(s).

If members ring on the day at 9am

the office may be able to advise on instructor availability – but it might be too late to find another one!

This situation will improve in July when Fred Bebbington joins us as another full-time instructor. Claire Alston may also cover trial lessons during June.

Gavin said it was always a good policy to check with the office in advance in order to avoid disappointment. This only applies to pilots who need to fly with an instructor.

James Metcalfe will direct the Standard Nationals at Nympsfield from August 20-28

WITH unerring accuracy I once again chose a grey, cloudy evening for the Terra Firma Syndicate walk around the field – and this time it was quite chilly and very windy too, **and** it rained before the end! **BUT** 29 members turned out and rumour has it that they enjoyed themselves.

What a difference a few hours makes – when this year’s leader, Paul Reddish, a former BBC Natural History producer, and I walked around the field at 4pm, the sun was shining, skylarks were singing, Paul was catching crane flies for closer inspection and half a dozen species of birds were crowding around the feeders at the caravan site.

By 7.30 the low temperature and strong wind meant a virtual absence of flying insects (apart from those brought in matchboxes for identification!) and little sign or sound of birdlife. But there was still much to see and learn about.

This year’s walk was a bit early for many of the wild flowers we get on our precious protected field edges but even the main, regularly cut, part of the airfield was already blooming with buttercups, dandelions, plantain, vetch, etc. and stood out in comparison with the wall-to-wall green, chemically fed neighbouring field to the east. When the sun was out next day the difference was even more striking as our field had swallows zooming around feeding and next door remained boringly empty.

After looking in a bucket for a nest of baby mice discovered earlier under a trailer, but which had been moved by mother mouse, we examined at a section of our much diminished drystone wall on the north boundary and learned that there’s good news even there as it is excellent habitat for lizards and slow-worms. Please keep a lookout on warm, sunny days and write up any sightings on the monthly sheet.

It was good to have time to stop and look at the trees, from the ever-present ash, which is very quick to move in on limestone, to the beeches – such a vivid colour at this time of year – the introduced park species, the crab apple and the whitebeams with their downy silver underleaves.

Outside the RF4 hangar there was much discussion on fairy rings as we found one with a couple of mushrooms in

it. It is thought that where these occur, one is looking at a “ghost tree” because the fungi in the ring will have been associated with a former tree’s roots. Apparently almost all plants live together with fungi, these latter providing minerals and trace elements and getting glucose in return. There are articles on the TFS noticeboard about this in connection with both bluebells and orchids.

Two roe deer were spotted at the west end and everyone managed to see them before they retreated into the woods. Two hares were also seen but only by two members who left the walk early.

There had been so much to look at and so many questions with which to bombard Paul that we decided not to circumnavigate the field completely and cut across to the north track in front of the winch. It was at this point that the rain started! This may have had some bearing on the fact that only

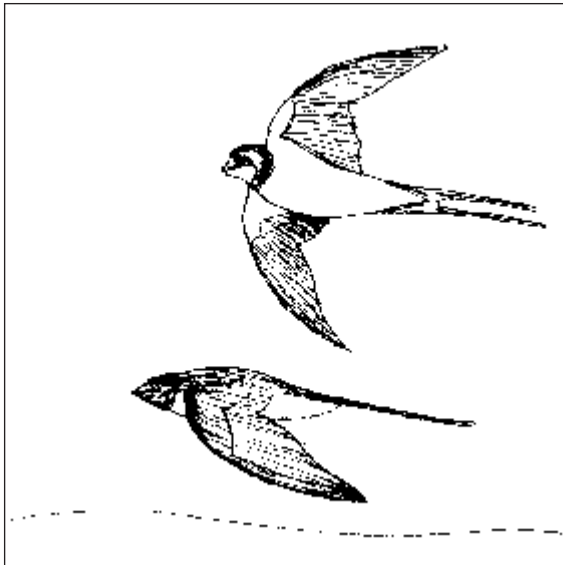
17 members finished the walk (are the missing 12 still out there somewhere?).

However, it wasn’t all over – we stopped to look at the fossils in stone dug out for Roger Targett’s new foundations and, thanks to Carol’s torch, were able to see as well as learn about Brachiopods, which looked like clams and were the dominant life form 500 million years ago. Although thought to have gone extinct, some have been found recently on the deep ocean floor.

After a scamper back and a warm vote of thanks to Paul for leading and sharing his knowledge, we re-joined the visiting Fournier pilots and caravan clubbers in the bar, with thoughts of future walks at different times of year and different times of the day – there’s so much to see out there without leaving our own field.

Nancy Barrett

29 members brave a chilly evening to learn about wildlife



Swallows – by Daphne Malfiggiani

Severn Skies



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Welcome to new members

Christopher Cane
 Dave Hatch
 Thomas Bell
 Simon Twiss
 David Fox
 Fraser Harland
 Anne Burrell
 James Llewelyn
 Alexander McArthur
 Patrick Winters

Fixed Price to Solo
 Full Flying, Silver
 Student
 Full Flying, Gold dist
 Fixed Price to Solo
 Young person Flying
 FPTS
 FPTS
 FPTS
 FPTS

Fancy another Sutton Bank wave exped?

I AM thinking of organising an end-of-season wave expedition to Sutton Bank between September 24 and October 2.

Anyone interested please sign the notice in the foyer so that I can make arrangements with Sutton Bank, or see me for further details.

Sid

We launch new style of mile-high 'club'

A NEW type of extended trial lesson is being offered by the club to give pupils a longer flight with more time to get used to controlling the glider.

When weather conditions permit, rather than the usual 2,000ft aerotow, the pupil and instructor will be towed to a height of one statute mile (5,280ft) above the Severn Estuary before releasing.

This will give something like 45-60

minutes in the air as opposed to the usual 15 to 20 – of great benefit when learning to fly and a fantastic experience for £100.

Because this is obviously dependent on the cloudbase and visibility, the club waited until after Easter before flying these flights.

The “mile-high” flights are available only on weekdays when we have the staff and tug capacity.

How to be a good member!

HANGAR rash: Even minor damage is expensive to repair so please be very careful getting the gliders in and out. Accuracy is more important than speed.

Daily inspections: Be gentle on the positive control checks, there's a lot of leverage on that stick. Pump tyres up if necessary (35psi is good for the main wheels).

There is usually no great rush at this point so do try to give the glider a bit of a wash, at least get the bugs off the leading edge if they haven't been cleaned off the previous night.

At the launchpoint: If the glider tail has to be lifted round because the dolly is not attached, please do not lift under the tailplane. The fittings are not designed to stand this weight.

If you see anyone sitting on the wing, please ask them not to do so. It can easily distort the leading edge.

When the gliders get wet, do dry them off with squeegee and leather. Wings may appear to be waterproof but they aren't. If the gliders are left out

Some tips from Norfolk GC that apply at NYM

during a shower, keep the airbrakes closed as most have no drain holes. (This does not apply to K-13s). If rudder pedals are sometimes difficult to move the answer is not brute force. Keep a gentle pull on the adjusting knob while applying intermittent pressure to the bottom of the rudder pedals (pushing hard at the top end of the pedals is counter-productive).

On landing, don't hammer the brakes – especially on the two-seaters. Fixing the brakes or changing a burst tyre can take an essential two-seater off the line for several hours. If you land in the mud, please clean it out. If left it will set like a rock and the next day's pilot may not be able to retract the undercarriage or get the wheelbrake to work. Be

careful not to get water inside the fuselage. If you do change a tyre yourself, remember to enter it in the glider's log book. Also report it so stock level can be maintained.

There is new information on what work can be carried out by club pilots without supervision by an Inspector:

The broad guideline is that “all maintenance involving structure, controls or safety systems must be carried out or directly supervised by an Inspector”.

There is no actual schedule yet published to say what can be done by club pilots, but my information is that it will be based on the BGA leaflet on pilot maintenance for tugs and motor gliders. Reading across from this document gives us the following list of “Scope of permitted work”:-

- a Normal rigging and de-rigging.
- b Replacement of landing gear tyres.
- c Replacement of defective split pins or safety wiring.
- d Small fabric repairs not requiring stitching.
- e Repairs within cockpit when repair does not involve dismantling or interfering with any structural item or controls.
- f Replacement of DV panels, safety harnesses, batteries.
- g Replacement of radios.

Note: Replacement, repair or adjustment of cable release mechanisms needs the supervision of an Inspector.

Don't let the above discourage you from helping out with the maintenance. If you are in any doubt ask an Inspector.

Cloud flying hints from Tim

CFI Tim Macfadyen gave an introduction to cloud flying in April and gave out a hand-out on the subject. Here are some points from it.

During cloud flying the results of the limitations to our senses can easily lead to misinterpretation of the attitude of an aircraft, and cause confusion known as “spatial disorientation” during manoeuvring flight, such as in a thermalling turn. Therefore flying in cloud, with no outside reference available, is not pos-

sible without some assistance. Sight is the strongest of the senses and thus the least likely to become confused, and hence is used to view appropriate instruments to allow flying with no external visual references.

It is essential that the pilot flying in cloud believes his instruments, which requires a great deal of concentration, and faith!

If you'd like a copy of the handout ask Tim nicely.



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Congrats to our new instructors

JON Baldock, Dominic Conway, Alison Mulder, Simon Robinson and Ed Wright all passed their Assistant Instructors course held at Nympsfield at the end of April.

Kevin Neave has rejoined the ranks of the Assistant Instructors. Congratulations to all concerned for a vast amount of unpaid hard work. We are now short of Basic Instructors. If anyone would like to do this please see me.

Rockpolishers has got off to a good start with a trip to the Mynd. Fearless

From the CFI

Fred (Ballard) did the first and second field landings of this life and won his first contest day. Michael Platt and Tim Maw landed me in fields in the DG-505 after I had failed to get them around the tasks. Kevin Neave only landed out once. We won. The DG may be going to other events. Aspiring P2s of Bronze standard upwards should see Rob Hanks.

Would you walk across the Staverton main runway blindfolded? If so, please go and play your Russian roulette at home where it doesn't generate any paperwork for me. If not, then please do not walk or drive across the middle of Nympsfield where the dip in the ground means that you can't see gliders or aircraft that have just landed or are taking off.

This applies to Hungarians on foot, winch drivers in cars, members towing their gliders from the South hangar and everyone else. We came very close to two big accidents on a recent weekend. Please spend an extra minute driving or five minutes walking and only cross where you can see – it could save yours and someone else's life.

With the awful weather we have had so far this year, especially at weekends, many people are out of practice.

Please recognise your lack of currency and fly with suitable caution and safety margins. If in any doubt please have a two-seater flight or two, this is

no disgrace, just commonsense. Our new (or old) instructors will be very happy to oblige.

There are a large number of tyres lying around the airfield. I am amazed that no one has taxied into one – they are often driven over. Please never leave tyres where they could be landed on or taxied into. If a glass glider needs tyres on it to stop it blowing away put it in a hangar (or trailer) – it is too windy to fly it. Never put tyres on a glass glider, park it with the into wind wing up to prevent it “changing wings” in a gust. Try putting a tyre on Ray Payne's glider wing and see what happens, this is only recommended for Olympic sprinters!

Tim Macfadyen

‘Accident’ verdict

A VERDICT of accidental death was recorded at the Gloucester inquest into the death of former club secretary Bob Williamson. Bob died in his syndicate Std Cirrus 252 during a winch launch last August.

All the accident investigation findings were accepted. The coroner, Alan Crickmore, said no blame was attached to any other individual involved, all of whom carried out their duties as required. But he said the hot weather might have been a factor in the accident.

There was no pathological evidence of dehydration but that didn't rule out the possibility that the delay before he started his launch on a hot day, hatless, didn't affect his judgment and concentration, he added.

Any ideas about dinner-dance?

AFTER all Chris Lemin's hard work organising the recent dinner/dances, Gill Starling has taken the job on for next year to give her a well-deserved break. Gill asked

Handy Hints – No 2

SAINSBURYS sell a really good aerosol polish which is excellent for light cleaning of wings etc. It contains no silicone and comes in a bright yellow can labelled 'Beeswax Polish'. (Don't use on canopies! 'Mr Sheen' is best for this).

This hint is courtesy of me – please let me have any others you know of! Sid

Ah, well, you can always dream...

THE ed nearly fainted when he got this email from “the treasurer” – until he realised it was from the Norfolk club!

“JANUARY SALES!”

FOR the months of January and February 2005 the following pricing policy has been approved by the committee:

- Half-price price winch launching all day.
- 3,000ft aerotow will be charged at the price of a 2,000ft aerotow.
- 10 per cent discount will apply to motor glider flying

Conditions

- Only applies to flying members of Norfolk Gliding Club – not Temporary or Reciprocal
 - Non-instructional club two-seater glider flying will be charged at the normal rate – instructors please sign to confirm instructional charge applies. Other aerotow heights will be charged at normal rates.
- Enjoy!”

Oh well, we can always dream...

New Uni glider

JOHN French and Dave Bland inspected and bought an Astir CS on behalf of the Bristol University students.

members to let her know their thoughts on venues, the band/or disco and the cost by the end of May. The Old Rectory, Crudwell, is one suggested venue.

Wise winching

DON PUTTOCK gives some advice on the subject after a winter's instructing at Nympsfield

AT A winter Wednesday evening talk about winch launching, a number of interesting, and sometimes illuminating points came out. I felt it would be beneficial if (as the Americans say), I shared them with you. They are not intended as a general treatise—just recent observations.

Launch safety is foremost in our minds right now. Accidents directly related to winch launching represent a major slice of the UK statistics – and unfortunately the situation is not improving. Please read these general notes and fly safely.

Tim Macfadyen has written an excellent piece in *Severn Skies* – if you haven't read it yet, you should.

Launch preparation: The glider should not be allowed to rotate into the climb with yaw. It was pointed out by a local instructor that, on occasions, insufficient care is taken to ensure the cable is laid out straight in front of the launching glider. Good cable alignment will reduce the risk of yaw.

When considering eventualities, pilots should nominate an approach speed – this is the very first thing you will need to achieve in the event of a launch failure. If you cannot sensibly land ahead, know which direction you will turn.

Transition from “up slack” to “all out”: There were a number of comments about winch drivers delivering launch power too quickly.

If the tail of the K-13, or similar nose-heavy aircraft, hits the ground before accelerating, then the winch driver got it wrong. If the tail strikes the ground after acceleration, then the pilot probably got it wrong. Delivering power too rapidly is clumsy, damages the aircraft and can be dangerous. According to some, not all winch drivers understand this.

If as the pilot you are applying any rudder to deal with a crosswind, remove it as soon as the aircraft has flying speed. It is very easy to forget, and then rotate with yaw. Because the winch is so powerful and the acceleration so fast, it may be questionable if weathercocking correction is required at this stage at all.

Rotation into the climb: My own very

frightening observations are : **Pilots** are more speed conscious than angle of climb conscious. **Both** speed and angle of climb are important.

Typically pilots rotate into the climb, pulling off the speed. When the speed is under control, stick loads are relaxed and the glider allowed to reduce its climb angle. At this stage the pilot checks his angle of climb – **BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF HOW STEEPLY HE WAS CLIMBING MOMENTS EARLIER.**

My second observations is that some pilots are rotating into the climb too steeply and *immediately* laying off to allow for drift. My personal view is your own safety is paramount – lay off **after** you have safely rotated into the climb – if conditions are so marginal that this is not possible, put the winch away.

Rotating into the climb is a matter of management. Your task is to “allow” the aircraft to rotate in a controlled way. Most modern gliders will rotate into the climb safely with little input from the pilot. Tim Macfadyen's article covers this point very nicely.

The climb: You should be continuing the scan from wingtip (for climb angle) to ASI (for speed) and provided you are inside the normal envelope 1.4Vs to Vw, and the climb angle approximates to 45-50° you should then be monitoring speed trends and stopping changes before the speed goes outside the safe operating range. If speed continues to decay, you should be lowering the nose and aborting the launch. If speed continues to increase, you should signal, and if this is ineffective, then abort the launch – just continuing to pull back like a gorilla is not a safe option.

Top of climb: Near the top you may experience “hunting”, (a pitching up and down of the nose). To correct this, **relax** the back pressure on the stick. When the hunting stops, continue the climb or release as appropriate.

Typically winch drivers are not reducing power progressively enough at top of launch. Ideally the winch driver reduces power and the pilot responds by lowering the nose. At top of launch the aircraft will be near the normal fly-

ing attitude.

Launch failures: I have two observations.

1 After a launch failure, we all know we must lower the nose and regain approach speed. Unfortunately experienced Nympsfield pilots are showing a tendency to do this “by the seat of the pants”. In other words because the aircraft is ostensibly flying normally during the pushover, they subconsciously assume they have flying speed. This has led to pilots turning too early with inadequate speed.

REMEMBER THAT THE STALL SPEED DURING THE PUSHOVER IS LOWER THAN Vs (it can easily be less than 25 knots in a K13) – IT TAKES BOTH TIME AND HEIGHT TO RECOVER THE SITUATION.

2 BGGC club rules call for an “into-wind turn”, (should a straight ahead landing be inappropriate). Normal BGA practice is the opposite, ie a downwind turn is recommended. Nympsfield is different because of the terrain considerations.

You should understand the difference, to prevent embarrassment when visiting other sites and you should also understand the unfortunate side effects of the into wind mini-circuit.

The majority of members I have been flying with do not appreciate the important significance. I do not propose to give a mini lecture here, **IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT, ASK.** Happy flying.

Trailer power on the way

GRAHAM Morris has enough names for a viable trailer power scheme and the next step is to draft a club-syndicate agreement and then get the quote and timetable for the work.

Wing repaired

A PREVIOUS repair on Hagar the duo Grob's wing failed in flight with John French and Simon Foster on “not so” Good Friday.

They landed safely and it was investigated and repaired.

Beware those deer!

THE CAA's latest *Gasil* general aviation safety information leaflet draws attention to the problems of animals on airfields.

Nympsfield newcomers may not know that we have a problem at times with deer. They tend to dart across the field on their way from the south hangar area to the road, risking being launched on the wire! Worth watching out for and adding to your list of eventualities!

Gasil had this to say on the subject: "Unfortunately, wild animals cannot be controlled, and domestic animals may break free from their owners. Other animals, whether wild or domestic, may find their way on to the aerodrome from outside, so the risks always exist.

"When considering forced ('field')

landings, glider pilots are often taught that cows tend to stay relatively still when an aircraft approaches, that sheep tend to run around unpredictably, and that horses are likely to bolt. Little is usually said about others such as deer, goats, donkeys, ostriches or dogs.

"However, as SafetySense leaflet 12, Strip Sense (available in LASORS and on the CAA's website www.caa.co.uk through publications and 'General Aviation') point out, animals are unpredictable, and attempting to anticipate

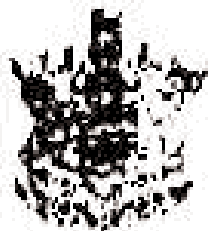
an animal's movements is unlikely to be successful. When operating at an aerodrome, it is vital to remove animals from the runway prior to take-off and prior to landing. It may of course be difficult to keep them away, especially if there is no fence to prevent them returning once they have been moved.

"Pilots need to be aware of the possibility that animals may find their way on to any runway, at any time, especially at small aerodromes and strips. Be prepared to wait for them to clear away before take-off, and always be ready to go-around if you see an animal and consider it might encroach on the runway during the landing phase.

Help needed in bar for Std Nationals

HELP will be needed in the bar during the Std Nationals from August 20-28. It promises to be a busy time, so anyone who can give an evening or even a couple of hours would be welcomed by Andy or Elaine Townsend, who look after the bar. Telephone 01453 861672 or email a.townsend@breathe.com

Landout alert!



Province of Inhambane
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MOZAMBIQUE

WARNING

Due to the rising frequency of human-lion encounters, the Ministry of Fish and Wildlife, Inhambane Branch, Mozambique is advising hikers, hunters, fishermen and any motorcyclists that use the out-of-doors in a recreational or work-related function to take extra precautions while in the bush

We advise outdoorsmen to wear little noisy bells on clothing so as to give advanced warning to any lions that might be close by so you don't take them by surprise.

We also advise anyone using the out-of-doors to carry "Pepper Spray" with him or her in case of an encounter with a lion.

Outdoorsmen should also be on the watch for fresh lion activity, and be able to tell the difference between lion cub shit and big lion shit. Lion cub shit is smaller and contains lots of berries and dassie fur. Big lion shit has bells in it, and smells like pepper.

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WHEN flying a glider, there are only two things a pilot can actually do:

- Move the stick,
- Move the rudder.

All the pilot's conscious thoughts, senses and automatic reflexes are directed to one end: **to make correct movements of the stick and rudder, and to avoid the wrong ones.**

This is true even though most pilots for most of the time are not conscious of the movements being made.

In current instructional practice actual control movements are spoken of when teaching effects of controls on the first flight.

Thereafter they are never mentioned again until stall/spin recovery is taught, when the reaction to stall/spin symptoms is given in terms of control movements.

What needs to be engraved deep in every pilot's brain is

If the stick is well back, spinable machines spin: without the stick being back they don't spin.

(All gliders are spinable, some only by mistake.)

This is true whatever other control movements are made; if the stick is not back then lots of rudder or aileron won't make it spin. Speed or lack of it is not decisive, it is the stick position that counts.

Stall/spin avoidance

We should teach with effects of controls, and thereafter continually throughout training, "Monitor Stick Position and Movement". For stall/spin avoidance this is more important than ASI reading and trend (which of course must also be monitored).

Every launch when doing the pre take-off procedures, with the check "controls full and free" as the stick touches the back stop we should say "This is the stall position".

In critical phases of flight: such as manoeuvring close to other aircraft (for example, thermalling), circuit flying, flying and especially turning close to the ground, in turbulence and wind gradient, final turn and approach and wire launching, it is vital that the stick does not creep back. If the stick is not back,

then whatever else goes wrong it will not spin.

References

- W. Langewiesche *Stick and Rudder* – McGraw-Hill 1944 – pp 65-68, 159-162, many other.
- Derek Piggott – *Understanding*

Monitor the stick!
AFTER the article in the last *Severn Skies* about spinning, Bill Dean sent in these items that will add to members' understanding of the subject

- Gliding*, A & C Black 1977, pp 38,39.
- Derek Piggott – Puchacz Spinning, letter to Bill Dean 5 Feb. 1994.
- Barry Smith – Exuberance Can Kill, *Flight Safety Bulletin* Vol. XXXI No.4 Winter 1995/6 pp 21-22.
- Chris Rollings – To be safe be accurate - *S&G* April/May 1996 p 91.

Exuberance can kill!

By Barry Smith

This article first appeared in the August/September issue of the magazine Popular Flying and was reprinted in the Flight Safety Bulletin Vol XXXI No 4 Winter 1995/96 with the permission of the Popular Flying Association.

IN 1972 I witnessed the death of an aircraft partner and close friend as a result of a stall/spin accident. The memory has never left me. I recall it frequently, seeing again the horror of it and hearing again the sickening thud of the aircraft diving into the ground.

The inquest stated it was due to misadventure caused by pilot error, aren't they all? In reality it could have fitted into a category of accident I have seen and come to know well over the years. Put succinctly in my own words, "death following exuberance".

Of the last six fatal accidents involving PFA member operated aeroplanes, in at least four cases similar circumstances could apply, and I sense that the pace is quickening. I have already men-

tioned my own feelings after being witness to an accident and the way it has affected me over the years. There are many people out there whose lives have been devastated by the loss of an over exuberant loved one. I emphasise this because the Department of Transport in its latest anti drink-drive advertising has identified that it is more likely to get drivers to behave responsibly by appealing to the driver's responsibilities to his or her own mates and family than to their own safety.

This is not intended to be a finger wagging, 'thou shalt not' article for I recognise the thrill and elation experienced when flying a responsive and highly manoeuvrable aeroplane. In the real world it doesn't matter what I or others say, these accidents would still happen because exuberance is part of human nature. However, I do believe that exuberance can be exercised more responsibly when one fully understands the dangers. That is the purpose of this article.

All aeroplanes have a flight envelope within which they may be flown safely. As you explore the edges of this envelope, you had better be aware of what is happening. For some reason few pilots feel the need to have a real understanding of the aerodynamics of flight in unusual attitudes. What makes the message more difficult to get over is that many of these pilots are reluctant to freely come to terms with the situation.

But, please, will all those exuberant pilots who can identify themselves with the foregoing remarks, give me their attention for a while for I am going to attempt to make some simple but vital points for survival that do not require any in-depth understanding of the technical aspects of the subject?

Attention to these could save your life, protect your loved ones and prevent you becoming another statistic... If you are a pilot who already understands all these matters, please bring this article to the attention of anyone who you think fits into this potentially very accident prone category.

Exuberant pilots who stall and spin in from steep climb outs with split-arse turns at the top usually will have start-

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ed from small beginnings with the climb getting ever steeper until, suddenly one day, they reach just beyond the edge of their understanding or experience. Then tragedy strikes very suddenly.

Occasionally, totally out of character, a pilot will attempt this manoeuvre spontaneously and sometimes this single act can result in an even higher fatality rate. Either make up your mind not to do it, or if you think you might, first train well and make sure that you understand what can happen before it does.

The simple sequence of events in the zoom up from low level in the stall/spin accident goes something like this. In most cases there are friends on the ground. Our pilot's adrenalin begins to flow. He decides to make a good show of it. Let the speed build up after take-off (or go-around) – pull up now – zoom – great! Oh dear! He hadn't noticed the slip ball going to one side as the machine slows up. Oh dear, oh dear! He doesn't seem to have any feeling that the direction of the on-coming airflow is changing and that the attitude of the aeroplane is getting further away from it. Oh no! He's feeding in more back stick in an attempt to maintain the climb attitude and now he's pulling into a turn. Christ! The wing has dropped. Less than five seconds to go now. The elevator isn't working – the stick's hard back. Oh God! There's the ground. Amen! It's as quick, devastating and simple as that.

For professional aerobatic display pilots, zooms and turns at low level are his stock in trade. The confidence and precision you observe at airshows has been learned and practised over many years with a total understanding of the principles of flight. All this proficiency still follows certain rules however. Professionals never carry out any manoeuvre which has not been practised many times at height until total consistency has been achieved, and then they never display the manoeuvre unless the entry height and speed are as practised.

Now please read the following paragraph very carefully so that it really sinks in.

If it starts to go wrong at low level, the professional display pilot's trained reflex

action instinctively and immediately will be to unload the aeroplane; that is, he or she instantly will move the stick towards the middle position because our display pilot knows that aeroplanes can come down faster with the stick back than with it forwards, and most aeroplanes will cease all evil thoughts when the stick is in the middle.

Close attention to this simple action can save your life and all the distress you will leave behind.

Remember the scenario; when our exuberant pilot found the aeroplane departing from the intended flight path and heading for the ground, instinctively he pulled the stick back further thus stalling the aeroplane and making recovery impossible in the space available. It really was as simple as that.

If an aeroplane starts to do something nasty, quickly centralise the controls, reduce power as necessary and, unless you have got it very wrong, the aeroplane will start to fly again.

Maybe the elevator is a badly named control. It might have been better called the 'angle of attack adjuster' because that is precisely what it does even if that is a bit of a mouthful. All pilots know, or should know, that an aeroplane only stalls when the wings reach a critical angle of attack, regardless of attitude and speed.

What most do not seem to appreciate, and it could save many lives if they did, is that any aeroplane will always stall with approximately the same stick position. If you don't pull the stick back beyond a certain position, the aeroplane will not stall or spin.

The stall/spin accident from low level is the most frequently avoidable of all aeroplane handling accidents.

However, it is not just the over-exuberant pilot who dies in this kind of accident. Another category is the pilot faced with a real live forced landing for the first time. The fundamental advice to shocked pilots finding themselves in

this unfortunate situation is to quickly remember to continue to fly the aeroplane (stick forward again!) and establish the correct glide speed. But they should also remember to be aware of the stick position in those final frantic moments of manoeuvring when potentially dangerous obstacles, such as power lines, suddenly appear on the approach. If the stick comes further back than the 'stall point', your fate could be much more serious than having to fly the aeroplane all the way down on to whatever surface is available for you to land on.

There is one other kind of 'exuberant type' accident which it is appropriate to mention here and that is when a pilot believes he can perform his first slow roll at low level, often spontaneously in order to show off to people on the ground. In the latest case that I know of, the pilot also killed an innocent passenger. It all looks so simple when you see the professional display pilot do it but, in fact, a slow roll is the most difficult of all basic aerobatic manoeuvres to learn.

What almost inevitably seems to happen is that the pilot becomes totally disoriented after performing the first half of the manoeuvre and the aircraft comes screaming out of a dive at VNE in the opposite direction. At low level, the ground will be unavoidable.

I do hope that those with the seeds of aeronautical exuberance germinating will take these few words seriously. After reading this, if any pilot would like to discuss the matter further with me, I would be delighted to talk to him.

● Does Brian Lecomber go too far in saying "Don't bother with the instruments. The ASI is a vague and sometimes actually misleading device..."? Instructors spend considerable time and effort in getting students to monitor ASI reading and trend in the circuit and on the approach. What do you think?

Thoughts for the day...

Young man, was that a landing or were you shot down?

If God had meant man to fly He'd have given him more money.

A male pilot is a confused soul who talks about women when

he's flying and about flying when he's with a woman.

The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

What's the difference between God and pilots? God doesn't think he's a pilot.

What a Red Nose Day flight in the Duo!

FRIDAY 11 March 2005, Red Nose Day turned out to be a memorable day for flying from Nympsfield.

I had initially considered flying the club Grob, but a quick look at the wind turbine showed it had been braked – so perhaps the wind was a bit stronger than I had anticipated. It was initially slightly north of west at around 25kts but had regular distinctly stronger surging gusts.

When Mike Harris offered me a seat in the Duo Discus 802 I immediately accepted; perhaps I would fly the Grob later after having experienced the conditions first hand in the two-seater.

After witnessing Rob Thompson take a controlled, but interesting winch launch in the LS4 MY, followed by a very hairy aborted K-13 launch I was feeling happy with my decision not to fly solo. Only later did Mike concede that he had had serious second thoughts about flying at all...

We winch launched without problems and found a mix of ridge and thermal lift along the west ridge. Cloudbase was between 2,500-3,000ft and there we flew for 90 minutes or so between Wotton and Stonehouse.

A radio call from Phil Lee in his LS4

confirmed that there was wave south of Gloucester towards the river. I headed away from the North ridge, worked the broken lift under the clouds then headed for a bright gap.

Soon the vario was working overtime as we smoothly and rapidly ascended to 7,500ft with an indicated average of nearly +7kts! Most of the time the vario needle was between 8-10kts.

Phil was still above us somewhere but we never did spot him. Looking down we could see a blanket of cloud with characteristic, static wave slots and most of the time we remained between Moreton Valence near the M5 and Nympsfield.

Mike then took over and continued to work the wave front 8,000-9,000-10,000ft – fantastic! Smooth and quiet, hardly a creak from 802. Lift not quite as strong as earlier but no sign of sink.

After we passed 11,000ft we heard a

radio call suggesting that the gaps in the cloud far below were starting to close. As we reached 12,000ft, and still rising at 4kts, Mike decided that was enough, we had no oxygen and it was getting distinctly nippy. A rapid descent was made, initially with full brake and sideslip followed by a dive at close to VNE (135kts). A call was made to other gliders under the closing cloud gap to be aware of our imminent appearance.

Once below cloudbase conditions were a lot more turbulent, but by now the objective was to land in the 30kt NW wind. Mike had his work cut out to make a controlled landing and at that point I was very happy to have decided to leave the Grob in the South hangar!

What an incredible flight. 2hr 42mins in a superb glider and an overall height gain of 10,500ft!

Bob Page

PS The “hairy K-13 launch” has, I believe, been described elsewhere by Don Puttock.

Early launchpoint signalling

WITH hot summer days hopefully only just around the corner, please can you all remember to radio the winch from the bus well in advance of the cable being attached. Sweltering under a shut canopy while listening to this happy radio banter is very annoying – try placing yourself in the pilot's position!

Sid



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Safety talk fills bar

A VERY interesting presentation on gliding safety was given on 2 April by Kevin Moloney, chairman of the BGA Safety Committee.

As promised, it was a thought-provoking evening with a positive message for all glider pilots, from pre-solo to world champions.

Kevin covered all aspects of safety, including stalls, spins, collisions,

winching and aerotows. With the use of diagrams, he showed the limitations of the eye to demonstrate vividly why and how we should scan around us in the cockpit.

The bar was full for the talk and, after a good meal provided by our new catering lady, Jacey, Kevin chaired an informal question and answer session that continued well into the night.

Old timers

ABOUT 80 ex-members from the 60s and 70s have replied to an invitation to the Old Timers' Reunion on Saturday, September 17, but if you know of anyone who could be added to the list please tell the office for forwarding to Val Corrick. It is hoped we can fly the visitors. Note it is an invitation-only event. A party to celebrate the start of flying at Nympsfield in 1956 will be held next year.



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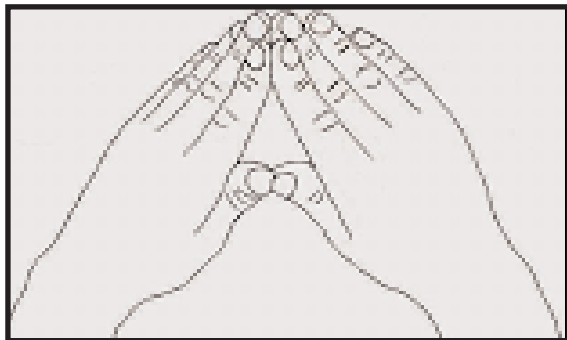


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