

Severn Skies

The magazine of
Bristol and Glos
Gliding Club

Spring 2006

New team off to a flying start...

THE new committee has got down to work, tackling some of the issues raised by members at the information meeting.

The new officers led a working party that tidied up the airfield entrance and car park soon after the AGM and a change of policy on courses was reached (see back page). Also a meeting was planned to discuss the club fleet as *Severn Skies* went to press.

About 40 members attended the information meeting and had a wide-ranging discussion about the club's future and how it operates.

At a December meeting, the committee decided the major priorities for 2006 are :

To establish BGGC as a premier UK soaring and training club for members and visiting pilots by:

- Maintaining and improving safety in all that we do
- Establishing reliable daily flying operations, ensuring a launch is always available

- Establishing a viable business with stable finances which support our activities

- Refine our strategy to focus investment in the club's long-term future.

Committee meetings will normally take place every first Friday of the month and dates as well as minutes will be published on the website as well as notice boards. The committee needs the support of every member to help achieve its priorities.

In future two non-committee members and one BUGC representative are invited to attend all committee meetings. If you wish to attend or have an item that you wish to raise in person please can you make it known to the office at least two days before the meeting?

Please go along and take part or let the committee know if you wish to help in any other way. The club has asked for information on occupations plus any areas of particular interest/expertise.



The new club officers: Richard Grey, chairman, top left, Steve Tromans, treasurer, top right, and Andy Townsend, secretary, right



Jon wins top award

JON Meyer was picked as male sports personality of the year at an award ceremony in Reading in January. He was presented with a decanter and plaque by Northern Ireland manager Lawrie Sanchez.

Jon, now on the Airbus graduate scheme, won Silver in the Junior World Championships last year and he hopes to take part in two nationals this year.



Bear dinner-dance a big attraction

THERE was a good turnout for the dinner-dance at the Bear at Rodborough in February.

Trophies awarded at the event: Cyril Uwins x/c trophy, Ray Payne; Shaun de Salis trophy, for fastest closed circuit flight, the Jim Webster Plate for services to ridge running and the Club Ladder trophy, Trevor Stuart; Weekend Ladder trophy, Tim Macfadyen; Malcolm Gay trophy for Junior Ladder winner, Jon Meyer; Guinness trophy for best closed circuit in club glider, Rob Thompson; Rex Young trophy for best flight by a novice, Julia Dawson; Evening World trophy for best gain of height from NYM, Tim and Barry Walker; Parry Jones trophy for services to the club, Phil Lee, for his work on the club's health and safety policy; Meyer trophy, for best retrieve story, Fred Hill.



Gill Starling is presented with a bouquet by treasurer Steve Tromans for organising the dinner-dance

WITH ice on the pond outside my window, I have to put on my optimistic hat for writing this “spring” article for the Terra Firma Syndicate. Those periods of *proper* cold weather we’ve had during the first six weeks of 2006 may well have held back some pointers to spring, which seems to have been occurring earlier and earlier in recent years – for instance, no butterflies have been mentioned on the record sheets so far this year – but the catkins west of the clubhouse on both the north and the south sides of the airfield *are* looking particularly good.

A recent replenishing of bird table and nut-holder at the caravan site for the first time in many months resulted in the swift (as in “prompt” **not** an early summer visitor!) arrival of many birds, including great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and the relatively uncommon marsh tit to mop it up. Some of species we see frequently and close up during the winter are less obvious during the warmer months but their absence is more than made up for by the incoming migrants such as the willow warbler, chiffchaff, swallows, house martins, to say nothing of the return of the soaring season.

When will the first “singing skylark” be noted (it was mid March last year)? Who will hear a cuckoo first this year? Will the “Discus nesting for summer

season” recorded by an anonymous observer last March return to its favourite spot again this year?

In this first TFS article of the year I traditionally look back. I think we can allow ourselves a pat on the

back again for our efforts in conserving what we’ve got and encouraging much wildlife, which is disappearing in many parts of the country, on the bits of our land not used for flying. There *were* fewer bee orchids and hardly a glow worm recorded last year but plenty of butterflies, a wealth of wild flowers, including other types of orchid and harebells, months of singing skylarks, a red kite, woodcock,

A pat on the back over conservation



A woodcock – by Daphne Malfiggiani

hares and much more.

The contrast between our field and the neighbouring one on the eastern boundary was pointed out by the leader of our May evening walk. You can allow yourself quite a satisfied smile as you stand on that east boundary on a sunny day and see the diversity of plants *we* have, and see and hear the insects enjoying them, and then look across at the rather sterile field over the wall.

I will endeavour to organise an early summer walk around the field again this year – I might even manage to arrange a non-grey, non-windy evening so we actually *see* some of the things the leader assures us should be there!

There *is* a description of what the Terra Firma Syndicate is all about on our noticeboard on the canteen end wall near the kitchen door, which is also where a map of the site, monthly nature news, reference books **and**, most importantly, the yellow clipboard with its monthly sheet for observations.

Please don’t be shy about noting anything you see – the more records, the merrier. This syndicate is for everybody, it is free of all charges and no work is involved.

Nancy Barrett

Severn Skies

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Welcome to new members

Chris Chown Student Flying
Joanna Read Student
Nicholas William Field

P1
FPTS
Student

TYPICAL comments from those fortunate enough to make the trip included: “sensational, awesome, beautiful, exciting, challenging, scary rotor, tumble drier, where's the ***** airfield?... thank God we've got GPS... who was that snoring last night”?

Certainly, an unforgettable weekend. Sid's forecast predicted that the weather, at least at Nympsfield, would

be ideal for gardening, golf and circuit bashing. Clearly, however, they had different ideas in the Black Mountains. Early on Friday we gathered at Nympsfield under grey skies. Rob Hanks set off with the club DG-505 and Martin Talbot took his own Grob.

To quote an old local joke when we arrived, “OK, we've found the trailer park – but where's the airfield...?”

On Friday afternoon it seemed doubtful it would be worth rigging. Low cloud was blanketing the mountains to the east and prospects looked uninspiring.

However, Talgarth's CFI Don Puttock soon convinced us to rig the DG since the south-easterly wind was strong enough for wave and he would be going up soon to check conditions. There were indications he was right although we could only see one fixed slot in the cloud cover to the NE, where there were intermittent glimpses of blue sky.

Several local gliders launched (aero-tow only at Talgarth) into the unknown, and promptly disappeared from view. Soon after, they radioed back confirming that they were in wave, and then proceeded to remain airborne for most of the afternoon. Rob Hanks set off with Jerry Mitcheson and then later with Tony Harris. They experienced testing conditions in wave in a layer of clear air with cloud above and below and only a small slot over the airfield tantalisingly opening and closing. Not ideal, and definitely challenging conditions.

With the prospect of a brighter day tomorrow, we headed off to the Trekkers' Barn at the Castle Inn at Pengefnffordd. Comfy communal accommodation, with a selection of

Unforgettable Talgarth trip



agreeable beers and excellent food, followed the next morning by a generous and tasty (full Welsh?) breakfast. Special thanks to whomever it was who thoughtfully set an alarm for 06:15.

After early mist, Saturday was much brighter with the south-easterly wind sweeping cloud over Myndd Troed and Castell Dinas, setting up wave conditions immediately overhead with corresponding rotor not far away, producing exciting conditions at both take-off and landing.

Many of us had tremendous wave flights throughout the day, consistently reaching 7,000-10,000ft, often with ear-popping +10 knots on the vario. It was like soaring invisible ridges. The smooth wave lift and excellent visibility higher up belied the totally different conditions nearer the ground where visibility was decidedly murky and the local rotor made it seem like circuits and landings were being made inside a giant tumble drier.

Trying to get to high key position to start a circuit with full airbrake to defeat the 10-up lift was a new experience to most of us. But without GPS, even finding the airfield could have been a real challenge. Knowledge of the local area was vital.

More than once during the day the tug pilot decided that it was just too turbulent to launch two-seaters. Kevin Neave will confirm that even four hands on the controls of the Silène at less than 100ft up were barely enough to keep it on station during aerotow. The message radioed to those already flying was “if you can, stay up”. Great for some, but frustrating for the others

waiting for a glider to return.

“It was so rough my fillings fell out” (Bob) – or was it just due to a very heavy workload on the chewing gum? On Sunday morning the early mist seemed, if anything, thicker than on the day before. We were also advised at the morning briefing that the weather was expected to deteriorate by mid-afternoon. Nevertheless, conditions did

improve and flying started around mid-day. The moderate easterly wind was still producing excellent wave and maximum heights were achieved similar to those on Saturday.

Later in the day some of us were lucky enough to fly over some spectacular lenticular clouds. Text-book formations that looked stunning with the sinking sun behind. It was very hard work to descend, so powerful was the lift. Full airbrake at 60kts in a K13 and still going up at 4kts.

So nose down, speed on and eventually down we went in to the gloom and turbulence. With the local rotor effect, turbulence on approach exceeded by far anything I have ever experienced at Nympsfield.

After some truly exhilarating flights we finally packed away the toys and headed home in the descending dusk with big smiles on our faces.

We were certainly privileged to have experienced tremendous conditions at Talgarth and can still look forward to ridge soaring in a N/NW maybe next time.

Finally, thanks to everyone for making it a great weekend. And although his total domination of the pub pool table cannot go without comment, particular thanks go to Rob Hanks for organising the trip and also to Rob, Dave Ascroft, Kevin Neave and Steve Eyles for keeping us company in the back seat, and looking after some “interesting” landings.

Thanks finally to all at Talgarth for their tremendous hospitality, welcoming facilities, and use of a K13 and their unusual side-by-side Silène. We hope to see you again soon. **Bob Page**

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How to catch that wave

ABOUT 35 members turned up for talks in January on flying in wave from Nympsfield.

Sid Smith kicked things off with a talk on the weather conditions needed for wave. The met was not always obvious, he said. But 15-plus knots were needed at 1,500ft with the wind in a west to NW direction for the best wave. Southerly wave was to be found but it was pretty rare. The wind direction needed to show no significant change with height and its speed needed to increase with height.

Slightly cyclonic patterns or straight isobars were desirable.

Chris Hughes said we were quite a long way from the primary source of most of our best wave, the Black Mountains. Trouble was the Severn Valley was the wrong width.

What to look for: lenticulars were not necessary. For the most part, for the best wave, you needed a pattern with a leading edge running NE-SW, with the clouds seeming to stay still, with a clear patch before or after it. Not all that clear, but one of the best indicators were wispy clouds forming. Also if there was a cloud over the Forest look at the trailing edge of it – if it was lit up it could be a sign of wave.

Another indicator was if the cloud was in streets and sometimes became thicker or thinner. From above this type of cloud widens and narrows. Go to the strong part of the lift and explore. The problem is that wave can be very local and it could be turbulent down low. If it is in phase with the hill ridge lift will be stronger than you expect.

Cloud shadows were first class indicators. Sunny patches should stay where they are or repeat themselves downwind of a sunny patch.

Get to cloudbase, get s high as possible and fly forward from cloudbase into reduced sink or lift. The problem was making the most of this lift. Be patient, said Chris. Hang on to a quarter knot even and scan, making gentle circles.

Locate your position on the ground. If you lose the lift go back to where you found it and look out at how everyone else is doing. On a health and safety note, Chris warned against flying back into cloud. In wave, it is easy to drift

back. At height you can see the leading edge of the wave and the general wave pattern.

Chris also warned that it was difficult to see other gliders nearby at the same height. So keep a very good lookout.

Slots in the clouds fill in, so watch a slot ahead of yours. If it is filling in the slot below you will probably soon fill in too. There might be a slot downwind of you that you could use, if yours fills in.

In wave, find the best area of lift and fly forward from there. Speeds to fly:

● Graham Morris gave a good tip: If you think you're going into wave wear lots of layers of clothing!

Add speed in any sink and if the rate of sink increases increase your speed even to VNE (but VNE decreases with height!).

Chris pointed out that the steep curve of the wave cloud did not indicate the air flow. Some clouds have almost vertical edges upwind.

Be aware that the whole wave system you are in can move. And the line of the wind need not be in line with the wave.

And if you have to land out after a wave flight remember that the wind direction on the ground can even be the reverse of what it was at height because of the effect of rotor. The strength of the wind could vary, being stronger on the ground too.

Chris reckoned the wave length (between wave bars) was typically about six miles. Pushing forward it was possible to lose 3,000-plus in 35-40 knot winds.

Graham Morris showed a map where the nearest wave bars were typically found in a NW wind. One is in front of our ridge and another on the far bank of the Severn.

In NE wave there was often a bar running between Stroud and Stonehouse. In a southerly there is lift behind the N ridge.

GPS could be very useful higher up where it was difficult to place yourself visually. A Man Overboard facility was useful as you could mark your position when you found lift. GPS was also good for working out wind speed. This

is important, as to push forward efficiently it is necessary to increase the Macready setting with strengthening winds and even more if sink is encountered. True airspeed was about 50% higher than indicated airspeed at 25,000ft, 15% at Gold height and 30% at Diamond height. VNE comes down with height so it is easy to overspeed the glider.

Downwind speeds needed to be watched carefully as you can cover a lot of ground very quickly. At Sutton Bank you could end up over the North Sea in minutes and from Nympsfield you could end up in the London TMA.

Another point to watch was that your GPS could fail so you need to be aware of your position without it. Graham warned that it took a long time to come down from height. Descend gently if possible to give the glider and gelcoat time to adjust to differences in temperature. Also beware that at height it can seem warm and sunny, but at ground level it can be turning dark. So allow time to get down while it is still light on the ground.

Referring to the wispy clouds that Chris mentioned, Graham said it was best to go on the windward side of them.

Andy Townsend said pilots needed to know how their oxygen system worked and to sort out it out before taking off. It was necessary to have it all ready by 10,000f to put on at 12,000ft. This height could be gained quickly so you needed to be ready. He warned about the dangers of anoxia, which could bring a sense of euphoria and affect your vision. One sign of anoxia is blue fingernails.

Pilots were warned of other dangers with oxygen systems such as leaks, icing up, restricted vision with a mask on and insecure bottles

Two books were recommended during the evening. One is *Advanced Soaring*, a handbook for future diamond pilots, edited by John Joss. Jack Harrison has a chapter on wave soaring (the techniques that really work). Published by The Soaring Press, California. The other is *Meteorology and Flight* by Tom Bradbury (A & C Black, 1989).

Why I'm glad I stuck it out to go solo!

SITTING alone in EUC, I was ready to go solo, but still nervous as hell.

I thought back to long days spent lounging on the airfield in the sunshine, memories of gob-smacking beauty in the air, moments of exhilaration, and periods of frustration verging on despair.

"All out!" EUC leapt into the air, tearing the cable noisily through the sky until it reached its highest point and released. The K13 levelled as it had so many times before, and drifted gently out towards the valley.

"Well, f**k me!" I shouted out loud. Looking around at the empty seat behind, I half expected to see a surprised figure blinking back at me in the bright sunlight. No. I really was alone.

"OK. I can do this," I said to myself, gingerly making a few turns, half expecting a wing to drop and the glider to tumble and spin. But no. It didn't crash and burn. EUC banked and turned as normal.

What goes up must eventually come down: After a couple of nervous verses of Cliff Richard's Summer Holiday, it was time to circuit and make a solo landing.

"Brakes out!"

"We're going where the sun shines brightly..."

"Don't let the speed drop!"

"We're going where the sky-eyes are blooo..."

"Straighten up!"

"We've seen i-it in the mov..."

"Keep the wings level!"

Now it felt like there were six instructors in the back instead of one! Plus Cliff, of course.

"Now let's see if it's true-oo-oo..."

I rounded out abruptly, held off as long as possible, and plonked EUC on to the grass. The glider weaved down the field, came to a bumpy halt and dropped a wing. I was down.

It's taken a while for the grin to wear off, but now it seems like the beginning of a journey rather than the end. I think I'm supposed to have words of wisdom to say here to others following this well-worn path. But I don't think I do. I've enjoyed the last year-and-a-bit

tremendously, and although several times I nearly packed it in, I'm glad I stuck it out. If all of it had been easy it wouldn't have been nearly so satisfying!

Thanks to all the instructors I've thrown around the sky, especially to Chris and Dave, who got me through my darkest hours, and not forgetting our winch drivers, without whom none of this would be possible!

Grid rota reminder for 2006

FOR the benefit of more recent members who may not be aware of how the weekend grid system operates (and those with short memories):

The system was set up several years ago to ensure that all pilots who wished to seriously fly cross-country had fair opportunity to get a launch. This followed instances of overnight gridding, several aggressive outbursts and glider 'races' to the launchpoint from the trailer park.

It is similar in operation to a competition grid in that the list rotates everyone's position by 10 places each weekend day. Copies of the list are put up on the noticeboard just outside the entrance to the canteen.

The operational rules are as follows:
1 Those wishing to participate should circle their glider registration, initial the box and circle their grid number under the appropriate date column. This must be done before 8:30am on the day.

2 At 8:30 the grid closes and a list is drawn up for the final positions by deleting those who haven't signed and 'closing the gaps'.

3 The person who is last on the list is then responsible for organising the grid.

4 All those participating must ensure they position their glider on the grid by 9:30am or otherwise go to the back - please ensure you leave sufficient room for other people to position their gliders.

5 Anyone not on the list can join at the back of the grid on a first-come-first-served basis.

The 8:30 cut-off is selected in order to



New kit going well

NEW clothing is selling well from the club office. There is awinblock jacket at £41, a bodywarmer at £19 and hats at £7.

allow time to get things organised before launching starts. Club single-seaters (except K8s) are included in this list.

Please let me know if you have a new glider on site, so that I can include it in the list - however you will only be included if you are paying trailer rent!!

Safety notes are available

FOR those of you who were unable to attend the safety meeting in December, a set of notes are available. Please contact me for a copy.

Sid

Handy Hints - No 4

Tired of waiting for a launch? Then why not learn how to drive the winch?

Sid

The club cafe

is open to members,
friends and
non-members

Sunday roast dinners £5
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coffee with every cake
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In Memoriam: John Anthony Wight 1940-2006

WHEN John was born on June 16 1940 the peace of the sky of southern England was about to be shattered by the Battle of Britain. Happily he grew up under more peaceful skies and was able to enjoy his passion for gliding for many years from Nympsfield.

John was a man of many parts. Besides his love of flying he had many other interests, including beekeeping and diving. It was through diving that he met his future wife, Mary. He was safety officer to the diving club and it will come as no surprise to those who knew him well that he was extremely careful and conscientious in this role.

He also sailed. For this he built his own Mirror dinghy. This was one of the finest I have ever seen because he applied all his considerable skills as a craftsman to its manufacture.

He was also a skilled aero-modeller and produced some superb flying models. Everything he did, he did well. His engineering was exemplary and he applied attention to detail to all his endeavours. He carried this attitude into the air; I have never had the privilege of flying with a more careful pilot.

John's breadth and depth of knowl-



edge went far beyond engineering and aviation in general. He could speak authoritatively on history, economics and politics. He had little time for politicians of any party.

John was a member of my syndicate for 25 years and one could not have asked for a more careful or considerate partner, but he was much more than that.

Behind a rather taciturn exterior he hid a deep compassion for his fellow men and to me, as to many others, he was a true friend, never judgmental (even when I wrecked the glider in its trailer on my way to Portmoak) and always supportive.

Even when he was dying he was still able to show care for others. He faced

his final illness and death with great courage and dignity. The world is a poorer place without men like John and I shall not be alone in missing him greatly. Our sympathies are with his wife, Mary, and with his sons David and James.

Derek Dye

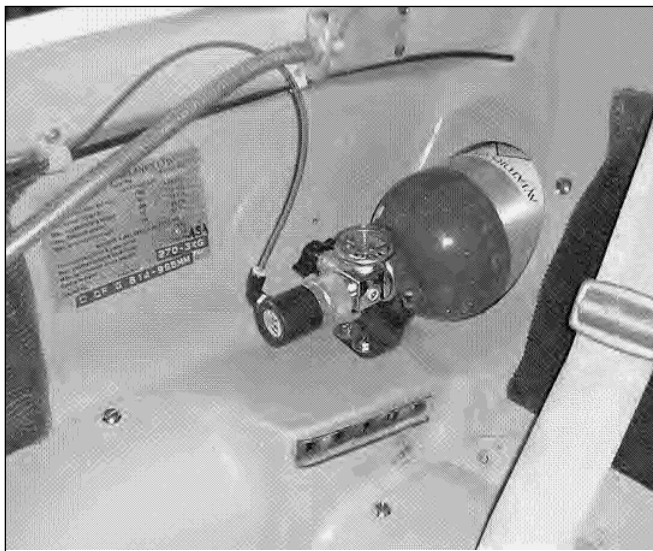
Wanted

Quarter share in basic glass-fibre machine. Approx £5-6K anticipated – Mervyn Darville mervyndarville@hotmail.com 01454-414606. Mervyn Darville has been a club member on and of since 1975, got the Bronze in the 1980s and has just taken a refresher course

For sale

1/9th share in Duo Discus 802 for sale: £6,100. Superb, totally complete kit with tee hangar at Nympsfield. Subs only £36 a month. Must be sold, make me an offer.

Julian Fack on 07812 108 588 or j.fack@virgin.net



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WHY? IF the wind is across the line of launch, and the glider is flown with the wings level, it will drift until it is climbing downwind of the winch. This is the easiest way to fly the launch, and will give the maximum gain of height. When the cable is dropped, it will drop downwind from the winch and therefore downwind from the line of launch.

If the cable must not be allowed to drop downwind from the line of launch, then the glider must be flown so as to climb upwind of the line of launch, so that when the cable is dropped it will fall on the line of launch.

The most difficult case is when the glider is at the top of the launch (which is where the biggest cable load is likely to happen) and the cable breaks at the winch (or the winch fails), the whole length of cable then lays itself out as the cable parachute carries it downwind.

HOW? The big forces acting on the glider during a cable launch are:

The weight of the glider.

The pull of the cable.

The lift from the wings.

The weight of the glider will always act vertically down, there is nothing the pilot can do about this.

The pull of the cable will always be toward the winch/tow-car. So if the wings are held level in a crosswind the glider will drift until it is directly downwind of the winch/tow-car. If the glider is held upwind by banking, the cable pull will oppose this and try to bring the glider back downwind.

The lift from the wings is under the control of the pilot (within the limit set by the stalling angle of attack). If the glider is banked then a component of lift will act horizontally in the direction of the bank. It is this horizontal component of lift from banking which must be used to hold off for drift, if the bank is reduced or the wings are allowed to level then the glider will at once drift downwind.

When the glider is banked the position of the nose, ie yaw, slip or skid does not make a lot of difference to the effectiveness of holding off. However, it is much more efficient to maintain aerodynamically balanced flight, this also reduces the risk of a stall/spin if the angle of attack is allowed to get high. Thus, the yaw-string should be in the middle.

Banking to hold off drift while cable launching is the only flight condition in which the glider is banked but not turning. If the bank is held constant in aerodynamically balanced flight (with the string in the middle), then the 'G' loads are not balanced (and the ball will NOT

drift" is required, in which direction and how much. Having planned the drift hold-off required, the pilot should then consider the launch failure options, taking into account the immediate turn that will result if the glider is banked when the launch fails.

When the launch starts, the glider should be held wings level until in the full climb, only then should the glider be banked to hold off drift. If this risks undesirable cable drift then the

launch should not be made. At Nympsfield the glider should be held wings level until above tree-top level and through the associated turbulence and gradient. Once bank is applied to hold off drift enough must be used to keep the glider upwind of the line of launch, it is not enough to be over this line. The pilot should look down (over the upwind, lower side of the canopy) to check that the glider is being held sufficiently upwind of the line of launch for the cable drop to be on, not downwind of, the line of launch.

The glider should be flown with the string in the middle (aerodynamically balanced).

The pilot must accept that the 'G' loads will not be balanced, and the ball not in the middle. The bank must be fully maintained until the cable is released.

W J (Bill) Dean

Cable launching - holding off for drift

be in the middle) and the pilot will feel gravity pulling to one side. This feels odd and unnatural, and the pilot is likely to move the rudder to make it "feel right". This is why pilots trying to "hold off drift" are seen with the glider turned into wind with hardly any bank, or in desperation they let the wings go level towards the top of the launch, just when holding off is most needed.

If while banked to hold off drift the launch fails, the glider will immediately start turning into wind (because it is banked). This must be allowed for in launch failure planning. However quickly the wings are levelled from the bank, the glider is bound to have turned somewhat.

HOW TO FLY THE HOLD-OFF

Before starting the launch, as part of eventualities, the glider pilot should consider the wind strength and direction and plan whether "holding off for

Progress with Solo2Silver scheme

FOR 2006, the BGGC will be introducing a new training initiative to help pilots progress to the Silver C stage and hopefully avoid some of the problems many have encountered in the past.

The basic idea, in conjunction with other activities happening at Nympsfield throughout the year, is to offer a more structured training schedule to new solo pilots struggling to progress.

To start with, we plan a series of talks on the basic theory behind our sport. This will be followed by special flying evenings to help reinforce that theory. There will be dedicated flying courses to concentrate on the more advanced subjects such as navigation and field landing.

We will also be arranging cross-country experience flights later in the year, along with many other elements to help you progress with your flying.

Although the Solo2Silver scheme has been designed to help post-solo pilots progress, it is open to all members, especially those that are pre-solo. It will also be working with all three mentoring schemes the club operates.

If you would like to find out more about Solo to Silver, either speak to someone in the office, an instructor or by following the Solo2Silver links on the club website.

Advanced met talk

BY popular request (although I can't imagine why), I will be holding my annual advanced Met Talk on Sat 4th March in the Bar at 17:00. This will cover practical applications of available information in relation to task setting, included the dreaded Tephigram and will suit those with a good knowledge to Bronze C level. **Sid**

Launches down despite more flying days

FORTY-FIVE members attended the club AGM in December. Chairman Barry Walker reported a tough year. He thanked the many members who had spent a great deal of time and effort working for the club.

He appealed to members to help with the enormous amount of work of all sorts that needs doing. An hour's work by a member saves at least £20.

Barry congratulated Mark Parker and Jonathan Meyer for their outstanding results in the Junior World Championship; also Andy Davis on continuing to represent the club so successfully. He will be representing the UK and the club next year in Sweden.

Barry reported falling membership in common with most clubs and the unfortunate accident with the Grob 103, which had cost the club approximately £5,000 to repair. Money had been spent too on renewal of the water main and repairs to a section feeding the old kitchen area.

Barry summarised his attendance at the BGA chairmen's conference in November and closed by saying he decided to stand down as chairman, to devote more time to gliding and a return to air rallying, which had had to be curtailed due to club activities. He kindly offered his continuing assistance to the club as required and wished the new committee well.

Acting treasurer Pete Bray reported we entered the year with a surplus of around £11.5k whereas £28k was a more realistic figure for the winter. With a winter instructor being employed there had been a need for strict financial control and the club managed to scrape through without going into significant overdraft.

The new water supply was connected and the electricity supply was also increased in capacity at a cost of £1.5k.

Pete reported that finances were still dominated by the heavy expenditure on the tugs in the year 03/04. A decision had been made to have a five-year loan from the bank of £25,326. This was finally secured in October 2005. The purchase of a Grob Acro at £23.2k again depleted capital reserves and left a low level of cash to cover the winter.

The season's flying had been reasonable, but total launches were down by 12% overall on 2004, with aerotows up

by 18% but winch launches down by 24%. Overall the two-seaters did 2,967 launches (3,246 last year), but 1,001 hours soaring (909 last year). After reporting the single seater flying stats, Pete said flying days available over the previous five years have been 224/226/227/ 223/233, but last year we had 254 flying days.

He reported that trial lessons are still the second biggest income source and a backlog of 294 is totally unacceptable for our image, and created problems for the office staff.

Any surplus of income over expenditure is now heavily reliant on our ability to maintain a steady stream of trial lessons through the year. They are still a fundamental requirement and need to be supported. But this heavy reliance brings risk should we lose this income stream either through legislation, changes in the market, or what appears to be our inability to deliver. The second two are within our control and he strongly recommended further diversification to maintain a more positive income stream than at the moment.

Pete concluded with the good news. The well-managed bar, through the valiant efforts of Andy and Elaine Townsend, had made an increased profit margin on last year at 37% and increased the bar sales by 35%.

Peter thanked Andy and Elaine as well as Bob Page, for the excellent multi-battery charger, and Trevor Willcox for his patient investigations into our continuing water leaks.

James Metcalfe said he would expect to see about 200 trial lessons regularly outstanding as we continue to fly approximately 80% of the ongoing bookings during the period. He noted a doubling of the BGA levy in the accounts and advised seeking clarification of the ongoing BGA charges to the club.

It was noted that in addition the admin and miscellaneous expenses were also significantly up and these too should be investigated.

Doug Jones said the committee understand admin costs in greater detail with a view to reducing them significantly. In addition, employee costs should be scrutinised. Sid Smith agreed, suggesting employed instructor costs should be analysed in detail

against flying income returned.

Mike Harris noted that field maintenance costs had doubled as well as significant increases in fuel and cable – these too should be analysed.

The meeting adopted the accounts.

The committee proposed increasing the subscription rates by 3% rounded to the nearest pound. The meeting adopted the proposed subs for 2006, three members voting against.

Full flying will be £316; family flying £491; country flying £229; retired/disabled member £229; young person £163; youth member £77; student member £77; associate £43; and cadet member £37. Officers elected: chairman Richard Grey; vice-chairman John French; secretary Andy Townsend; treasurer Steve Tromans and committee members Nigel Smith, David Bland, Andy Davis, Chris Lemin, Jim Wilson and Trevor Stuart.

The committee recommended application for CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club scheme) status as part of the invitation to the AGM with supporting paperwork.

As a consequence and in accordance with Club Rule 30, Rules 13 and 20 were changed.

George Szabo-Toth strongly recommended that the next committee establish a budget to plan and control finances more effectively. Mike Harris urged the committee to review aerotow prices and consider amending them in line with fluctuating fuel prices.

Thanks, Frank

MANY thanks to Frank Strathern, who looks after the flower tubs outside office year round to make the area look nice.

Chairman Richard Grey thanked him recently, but the wider membership may not be aware of the work Frank does.

Corporate evenings

THIS season the club is keen to encourage groups of up to 20 individuals from local businesses, associations, clubs or groups to spend a great evening gliding at Nympsfield. Do you think your work colleagues, friends or neighbours would be interested? More detailed information will be published soon, but do start asking around now. More info: Bob Page or John French.

Mentoring changed to overcome problems

THE committee has been keen to reorganise the way pilots are mentored at Nympsfield.

There have been particular problems with retaining pilots on the Fixed Price to Solo Scheme and also ensuring that the post-solo pilots and post-Silver pilots get the benefit from coaching by other more experienced pilots in the club.

Hopefully you will have all seen the excellent new courses that have been designed with all these members in mind instead of the more traditional holiday courses tailored to visitors and not necessarily the club membership.

The future organisation of mentoring will be as follows:

Pre-solo/Fixed Price to Solo Mentoring Scheme – run by Dave Hallsworth

This is looking to provide direct mentoring by a qualified instructor who is permanently available on the site. This can range from flying to answering specific questions, to providing tailored authoritative lectures to groups. For more information contact Dave at daviator@glidingbum.co.uk

Solo2Silver Mentoring Scheme – run by Tim Allen

This is designed to try and organise activities, eg lectures, club trips, lectures, which will solve any issues that may arise throughout the year and add to these pilots enjoyment and learning at this vital stage. At the moment, the scheme website can be found at timothyallen.co.uk/Solo2Silver Shortly, there'll be links to it from the BGGC site. Please take a look, and if you have any feedback, requests or information that you would like to pass on, just let me know.

Advanced Mentoring Scheme – run by Richard Smith

This scheme is working well for some, but not for others. All post-Silver pilots should have an advanced mentor to help them set personal targets to ensure that they continue to progress in the many facets of gliding that open up when you reach this stage, such as

competitions, ridge running, etc. If you have not been allocated one please contact Richard Smith at octothorpe@rsmith.free-online.co.uk

The scheme organisers will regularly report on the progress of their schemes to the committee to ensure that they are having the desired effects and to see if any further support is required from the club.

Rob T.

BGA Ladder can now accept web entries

THE National Ladder is an informal, year-long soaring competition intended for UK-based glider pilots.

You can view our progress and submit your own flight details on the website at www.aircross.co.uk/bgaladder/index.asp

You can enter your flights on the easy calculator via the ladder website, press the button and it gives you a score, submit it and you get ranked with all the other UK pilots.

Our pilots regularly finish in the Top 10, and there is a much-sought-after club trophy for the highest-placed BGGC pilot. So far the club is doing well with some of ridge x/c flights keeping us in touch with the other all-year-round soaring clubs.

Recent upgrades mean you can compare your progress against other pilots with the same glider, from the same club, on the same day, probably with the same surname!

Plus you can easily download their logger traces and learn from other pilots' flights and their techniques, if you have one of the excellent analysis packages that are available, such as SeeYou.

Besides all that, it is a great way of advertising the excellent soaring opportunities at Nympsfield and that we are a club that is committed to cross-country flying at all levels.

We are keen to get as many BGGC pilots entering their flights on the ladder as possible, even if it is a 20km landout flight on a your first Silver distance attempt, it still scores points!

It is very straightforward to use yourself or I can enter the details on your behalf. If you have any questions please let me know on 07909 996164 or at rob.thompson@british-energy.com

Rob T

It's all a wind-up over barographs!

THERE has been a recent rumour that clockwork barographs will no longer be allowed for badge claims as of this year.

This is untrue as they are still permitted under the current FAI Sporting Code dated October 2005. This of course doesn't allow for any future changes that may or may not, be under consideration.

Sid

Congrats to Tony

THE club has congratulated Tony Gaze, a former club vice president, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List this year.

The award was for services to motor racing sport. Tony, who won the DFC in World War II in the RAF, flying almost 500 sorties, lives in Victoria.

Pterodactyls' no-no

EXPERTS Pam Gill and Colin Palmer had a good audience in the bar for an interesting talk on pterodactyls in February. The big 18m ones couldn't afford to land out as it seems they would have found it impossible to take off again!

Dominic says thanks

DOMINIC Conway says thanks to the nine or 10 members who retrieved him from a muddy ploughed field after his engine failed to fire over North Nibley bowl in December.

"They came out in droves and got very muddy," said Dominic. "Thanks to them all for their kindness."

From buyagift.co.uk

Gliding Flight Trial Lesson (Aerotow, Gloucester) Price: £59.

Be free as a bird as you soar on thermals over the beautiful English countryside.

This exhilarating Aerotow Glide Flight lesson will take you to heights of approximately 2,000ft over the Severn Valley. You will be able to see as far as the Black Mountains in Wales and the Severn Estuary and its bridges.

The lesson will last around 20 minutes, in which time you will learn to turn and manoeuvre the glider.

Holiday courses to be phased out

HOLIDAY courses worked in the early 90s when Steve Bennett and Les Bradley were running them. Over the years, subsequent committees, in their wisdom, have let them decline. We no longer have a track record for them. We are not known for them. There has been no consistency of advertising. Our website does not entice people to buy a holiday course, we sold only 18 last year. Neither can we revitalise them overnight. We can't provide accommodation, or catering.

They do not produce members. One of our targets is to increase membership by 5% p.a. A gentleman down from Essex for a gliding holiday in the Cotswolds is not going to become a member. They are resented by club members who see them as in front and in the way. The club member pays annually to be here.

Public limited

If we run holiday courses to cover the cost of the instructor – why do them? Why not, just not have the instructor and the associated two-seater? Holiday courses probably make money when full (4-5 people). That didn't happen once last year.

We will continue to do trial lessons and one-day courses but five-day holiday courses for the public will be limited to one a month (max three people per course). If people want to learn to fly we have an improved fixed-price-to-solo scheme.

We teach people to go solo, what do we teach them after that? Sod all. Let's

teach people to fly gliders. Let's run courses for glider pilots! Courses that show what comes after solo. The last committee called an Information Meeting (an oxymoron if every I heard one) to ask for help. It learned from the membership that we lacked leadership, had poor communications and questionable financial control. We've already plugged two of those; financial control will be along in a minute. The fourth item that stemmed from that meeting was for the need to change in the way we operate. Perhaps this is a step in that direction.

All the other clubs, including Aston Down, have beaten us hands down on the gliding holiday business, let's retire gracefully, and turn it to our advantage.

Gliding courses are in place for April-June, a copy of which is on the notice board and via our website. Training will be given in club aircraft

on a pre-booked, first-come first-served basis at normal club rates. There will not be a course fee; you pay only for the flying. Priority will be given to Nympsfield pilots. Details of courses will be published in advance. Nympsfield pilots will have sight of programme before it is offered to visiting pilots. So, get your diary out and book yourself five days of gliding!

Private owners are welcome (indeed encouraged) to partake. Suffice to say, the bespoke flying training will be given to those hiring club aircraft.

Dave Hallsworth and Gavin Wrigley will be our professional instructors for the summer season doing ab-initio and advanced training respectively.

The DG goes to France mid June. Subject to sufficient take up and a new glass two-seater we hope to continue these courses during July-September.

Trevor Stuart

Events diary

Sat March 4 – Advanced Met lecture. 17:00 in the clubhouse.

Mar 17 – Andy Davis: final glides into Nympsfield.

Mar 25 Jon Meyer at Junior Worlds.

Apr 1 – Graham Morris: Safe flying.

June 18 – Kemble Air Day. Expect airspace restrictions. Advanced mentors/mentees meeting.

July 15-16 – RIAT Fairford. Expect severe airspace restrictions July 13-17.

July 22-29 – Sid's Task Week (provisional dates). Expect severe weather restrictions.

Aug 5-13 – Club Class Nationals. Some restrictions on club flying.

Aug 18-20 – PFA Rally Kemble. Expect severe airspace restrictions.

What to do in case of an accident or incident

PLEASE note that in event of any emergency, there is a checklist sited at the clubhouse payphone, in the club office, in the launchpoint bus and also in the winch.

This list gives a step-by step guide of actions to be taken and contains contact telephone numbers.

Please do not, as was highlighted by the recent Grob incident, remove them from these locations – they are for your safety!

Safety Officer

IT'S WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO BE!



to fly without the appropriate insurance cover - which is exactly what we provide, including a complete back-up and advice service at all times.



Contact **Stephen Hill** or **Andrew Hatfield** by:

Phone: 01765 690777 Fax: 01765 690544 Email: hillaviation@btconnect.com
Unit 1A, Sycamore Business Park, Copt Hewick, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 5DF

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