

Did you catch all the news?

THE club said farewell to instructor Dan Welch as he left for New Zealand.

A mini courses deal is being offered for Sundays and our Thursday evenings are to be devoted to trial lesson groups again this year. Contact the office to book a date. Minimum group size five, maximum 20; price: £50.

Carol Smith and Kevin Neave are to take the DG 505 to Gap on August 11 and it could be up for grabs. Kevin is also seeking volunteers to take part in Rockpolishers.

Congratulations to Kelvin Cobb, James Blockley and Stefano Longo on going solo. Also the Mosses on the arrival of baby Megan Lucy.



Chris Ellis, who 50 years ago paid "the princely sum of £28" for a two-week course at Nympsfield

His story is on pages 10-11

New post for Alison

ALISON Lees, elected on to the committee at the AGM, has taken on the role of social secretary.

**AGM report:
Page 5**

CLEAN SWEEP FOR THE DAVIS FAMILY



Andy and Bill collect the height trophy; Pami Davis, top, with her tankard

TROPHIES were awarded at the club dinner-dance on February 23 at the Bear Hotel, Rodborough, to the following:

Cyril Uwins cross-country trophy (longest or best flight from Nympsfield): Tim Macfadyen.

Shaun de Salis trophy (fastest or best closed circuit flight from Nympsfield): Andy Davis.

Club ladder trophy: Tim Macfadyen.
Weekend ladder trophy: Russ Francis.

Malcolm Gay trophy (junior ladder): Matt Davis.

Guinness trophy: Gavin Wrigley for 286km in ASK 21 on August 9 (a difficult day).

Continued on page 2



Bernard Smyth, who was awarded a BGA diploma for "services to gliding" at the BGA AGM in Daventry. He was a member of the S&G editorial board in the days of editor Gillian Bryce-Smith and for eight years has helped to proofread S&G

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MY city centre winter garden bird record shows 28 different species since the beginning of November, which is more than have been seen at Nympsfield, according to TFS recording sheets – can our local birds be in semi-hibernation awaiting the soaring season just like many of the members?

It was a year ago that our noticeboard and other trap-pings were banished from the canteen to a corner of the old clubroom and I have been worrying that fewer people see it there. However, 35 members added their observations to the monthly sheets last year, which is more than in 2006. With our wonderful site of rich and varied habitat we've had all the usual sightings and soundings (if that's the right word) of skylarks, buzzards, orchids, hares, roe and muntjac deer, red admirals, etc. The more unusual observations included grass snake, a pig, the famous shrew in the bar, partridges, several records of a red kite, an injured badger, snipe, curlew, a brambling among the chaffinch flock at Roger Targett's feeders and ravens doing aerobatics. Records written up by Don Puttock and others at the club on weekdays are always valuable because I fancy there might be more wildlife around when there are fewer people about.

Other Terra Firma Syndicate news of the past year: we had a naturalist led walk around the field in May, enjoyed by more than 20 members, and I shall endeavour to twist someone's arm to do another one this spring or early summer. I promised we'd have a presence on the club website but haven't quite got around to it yet.

Ann Bray has done an illustrated sign which is next to the main noticeboard with a large arrow pointing the way to our corner in the old clubroom. The excellent talk by Colin Pennyquick in January on "How Birds Soar over Land and

More members are eyeing up wildlife



A female greater spotted woodpecker by Daphne Malfiggiani

Sea" was not really TFS at all but I'll claim it as I organised it! Around 60 members enjoyed it and more than half of them had a supper afterwards.

As with all other club syndicates, we are looking forward to the coming season – our good views through leafless trees, the possible sightings of winter thrushes and bramblings, etc. may soon be gone but the catkins are already in bloom, small tortoise-shell butterflies are out on warm, sunny days and our resident birds are starting to tune up for full song. Soon the summer warblers plus the swifts, swallows and martins will be back, *someone* might hear a cuckoo and our continuing care of the field will

yield many flowers and insects for us all to enjoy. Please continue to add your observations to the clipboard.

Nancy Barrett

Cup winners *continued from page one*

Rex Young trophy: Best progress by a novice (pre-Silver pilot): Jeremy Bodian, Silver distance to Edgehill, K-8.

Evening World trophy: Greatest gain of height from Nympsfield: Andy and Matt Davis.

Parry Jones trophy: Awarded by the chairman for services to the club: Dave Bland (EASA paperwork etc).

Jim Webster trophy: Awarded by the CFI to the most deserving instructor: Alison Moss.

Meyer trophy (best retrieve story): Andy Davis sent Pami to collect Gavin Wrigley from Petersfield while Andy attended a committee meeting. Pami had to drive back as well as there as Gavin only had sun glasses. Gill Starling was presented with a bouquet for organising the event.

Severn Skies

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Welcome to new members

James Ewence

Graham Bunt

Christina Politz

Pavlos Efthymiou

Florian Mertens

Thomas Smith

Alexander Pattison

Kelvin Cobb

Joe Reed

Rory Condon

Antonia White

Stefano Longo

Full flying

Full flying

Student

Solo & Beyond

Student

Student

Student

Solo & Beyond

Associate

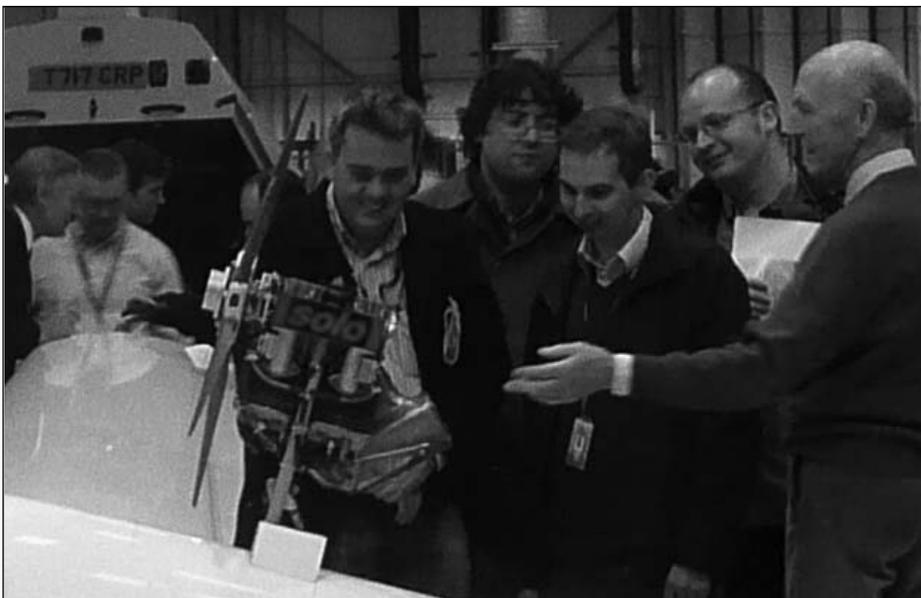
Junior

Student

Student

Keep our visitors safe – members are urged

Treat for Airbus workers



Composite Structures workers inspect Dominic's turbo – *Picture: Bob Page*

THE club took a glider to the Composite Structures Development Centre at Airbus UK in Filton for a day in November so that the engineers could have the opportunity to see a glider and learn about its construction.

This presented an excellent promotional opportunity for the club in terms of attracting new members and at least one was gained.

Members who helped out on the day had the opportunity to see some of the very latest Composite Manufacturing Research being carried out in the UK.

The trip was organised by Jonathan Meyer. The club agreed to lend the LS4 but Dominic Conway loaned his turbo to help increase the “wow” factor for the engineers.

IT is essential that all members adhere to the following to ensure the safety of visitors and Trial Lessons. **This includes your own family or other visitors.**

A revised version of the visitors site briefing sheet is now available at the office, the main changes being that a map with safety instructions is attached for retention by the visitor and the person giving the briefing must also sign it (to prevent visitors ‘self-briefing’).

All visitors (not just trial lessons) who may go outside of the clubhouse area must receive a safety briefing and must sign a copy of the briefing sheet before going on to the airfield, where they must be escorted by a club member.

Anyone giving a site briefing must determine if the visitor has anyone else accompanying them and if so, get **each one** to sign a separate briefing sheet.

When giving a briefing, please take the visitor through each point on the sheet to make sure it is fully understood. Do not just leave them to read it on their own.

BGGC Committee

Help needed for Sid's Task Week

I HAVE made preliminary arrangements for my Task Week to run from Saturday July 19 to Sunday 27, in order to avoid the Juniors and the International Air Tattoo.

Tasks will be set in A class for those with good competitive cross-country experience and the B Class for those who are still looking for their first 300k or so. This year I will not be running a C class (those below 100k diploma standard) due to a lack of interest in previous years. (Last year's sole entry did so well he was promoted to B class on day two.)

Scoring as always, will use the BGA Ladder system. If interested please submit an entry form, available from my ‘Weather’ page, together with the £5 entry fee. Closing date for entries is July 1.

However in order that I can better concentrate on weather and task-setting, I would like a volunteer to do the scoring.

This is not too demanding and requires no real technical ability. Please contact me if you would like to take on this essential task and earn a free entry! Given sufficient demand, I may also

run a second week over the August Bank holiday (August 23-31), but this is by no means certain at this stage.

Sid

Please fall before night does!

A REMINDER to all pilots that landing during (or after) twilight is extremely ill-advised. It may be just acceptable when conditions are smooth and uncluttered, but makes a safe landing all the more difficult in turbulence.

This is especially tempting over winter months when days are short and the ridge is working, as was graphically demonstrated recently by several pilots, including some senior instructors, who attempted a mass landing at the last moment on a wave day.

Please exercise your better judgment.

Sid

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AGM backs officers' strategy

CHAIRMAN Richard Grey began his AGM presentation by thanking the many members who had put a lot of effort into keeping the club running.

He said there had been concern and hurt over the change to tug management from two people to one. He apologised to John French and James Metcalfe for the way the matter was handled.

Richard reported that the launch rate over the year was 6 per cent up. An "exit poll" of members leaving the club had been conducted and no negative feedback had been received.

There had been too many incidents involving insurance claims in the year, Richard added. This had contributed to a huge increase in insurance premiums, from £25,000 the previous year to £39,000.

The website had been developed and had sold £1,200 worth of trial lessons up to the end of November. Richard said the site was one of the best in the country.

The club's buildings needed improving to make them more economical to run and solutions were being sought.

Financially, it had been a reasonable year, with income up to £239,000 but we had not built up reserves. The club now knew more than ever about its finances, thanks for Peter Bray and Trevor Stuart.

Drive up launch rate

More days had been flown, with members doing more flying, said the chairman.

On utilisation of club gliders, the K-8 was down, the single-seater Grob was up. But the club needed to drive up the launch rate and utilisation even more.

The new course structure for members had been well received and used and Martin Talbot was having a new look at the tugging operation. One question was: do we need two tugs?

One of our priorities had to be to get more members, with everyone trying to get people to join. Members were the best ambassadors so he urged them to do their best.

Communications with Aston Down had been improved, Richard added, but

the committee's "open door" policy had not attracted much uptake. He urged members to "come and talk to us". If you wish to attend a committee meeting, give your name to the office staff.

The use of professional instructors had guaranteed a seven-day operation with more consistent and available early training to attract and keep members.

Barry Walker proposed that with recession possible and no cash around the number of professional instructors be reduced to two next season. This was amended, after some discussion, by Jon Meyer, who proposed that the committee be restricted in the number of man-hours paid for in the year – 104 – rather than a number of people.

After more discussion, Jon's amendment was carried by 56-4 with four abstentions. It was made clear that "2008 season" meant the whole year.

Barry Walker's proposal, as amended, was defeated by 29-16, with three abstentions. So in effect the committee strategy was accepted without change.

Treasurer Trevor Stuart said that despite a poor soaring season income had increased by 12 per cent.

We were declaring a loss of £1,294. Income was broken down to include: aerotowing at £56,866 (down 0.5%), winching at £26,624 (up 27%) and soaring at £38,491 (up 13%).

However, insurance had gone up by 56% to £39,353, glider maintenance by 36% to £10,869 and tug maintenance by 93% to £18,117.

The committee proposed to increase

08 weekend grid launch rota

BY the time you read this, this year's grid launch rota will be on the noticeboard and the website – if your glider is not on it, then, according to the office, you have not paid your trailer rental. The rota starts from April 5. **Sid**

On yer bike!

ON ITV's Family Fortunes a contestant was asked to name something that flies but doesn't have an engine.

Answer – A bicycle with wings.

membership and rentals by 8% and soaring by 5% (except K-8s).

The accounts were approved by the meeting by 45-4 with one abstention. Peter Bray proposed a vote of thanks to Trevor. The subs proposal was agreed by 43-5, with one abstention.

Andy Townsend asked for the accounts to be made available earlier, before the AGM, and for committee minutes to be put in the bar.

Elections

Richard was re-elected chairman, Andy Davis vice-chairman, Phil Lee secretary and Trevor Stuart treasurer.

Committee members elected are Alan Price, Kevin Neave, Rob Thompson, Martin Talbot and Alison Lees.

Ken Brown made a plea for notices taken from the noticeboard not to be thrown away but put in the History Group's folder on the board.

Sid Smith said the club really needed to replace the K-13 – was it actively seeking one? Richard said the committee were taking stock before deciding the way forward. At the moment the club was not in a position to rush into getting a new two-seater but the matter would be kept on the agenda.

Bill Meyer proposed a vote of thanks to Guisepppe and his kitchen team and this was passed.

Andy Davis said one more glider needed "adopting" by members. He thanked those who had volunteered to look after the other gliders.

Advanced met talk is on again

I WILL be giving my annual Advanced Met talk at the clubhouse on Saturday, March 15, at 18:00.

This will take the form of a live demonstration on how I produce my forecasts, rather than the theory. However a good working knowledge to Bronze C will be required.

Guisepppe will be providing food afterwards – please book through him.

Sid

The navigator who used to get lost!

The Jim Webster Trophy

JIM Webster joined the club soon after the move to Nympsfield.

During the war he had been an RAF navigator, and he quickly became an instructor in the club. He was enthusiastic about all aspects of club activities, including cross-country flying, but in spite of his wartime experience was notorious for his difficulties with navigating with map and compass.

He was particularly interested in instructing and was popular with the pupil pilots.

But sadly Jim was killed during a Western Regional Competition in 1981 in an approach accident. In his memory, his widow, Barbara, donated the Trophy for the Most Outstanding Instructor.

The Parry-Jones Cup

John Parry-Jones was a founder member of the club when it reformed after the war, and in a short space of time he became successively CFI, Secretary and Vice Chairman. It was in this last position that he was involved in the move from Lulsgate to our present site. In 1954 Lulsgate had become earmarked to become Bristol Airport



The Jim Webster Plate

and the club was looking for a new home. Thirty acres of our present site was up for sale. This was clearly not enough to operate a gliding club, but John's persistent persuasion induced the farmer progressively to increase the amount of land he was prepared to sell to 50, and finally 80 acres, including the cow shed which was to become our clubhouse.

In addition John was influential in persuading the Kemsley Flying Trust to waive their normal limit of £5,000 to the amount of the loan they would give to any one club. As we had already got £1,000 on loan and the field was to cost

£3400, this would have left only £600 to provide for building a hangar and clubhouse and the other necessities for operating the new site.

It was largely John's insistence that the club would fail if we could not equip the site properly that resulted in the loan being extended to £5,000, with a separate mortgage to cover the purchase of the field.

Sadly John was killed in an accident to a Britannia Airliner on a test flight in November 1957, scarcely two years after the move to Nympsfield. The Parry-Jones Trophy was not founded until some time in the 1990s, but it is appropriate that it is awarded for services to the club.

Ken Brown



The Parry-Jones trophy

Three golden rules for launching the big droopy Nimbus

THE *Severn Skies* of winter 2007 made a statement on page 3 I was glad to read: "The launch signaller/wing runner is the launch controller, a very responsible job. He/she must stop the launch if the glider overruns the cable and, very importantly, if there is a significant load on the wing. On the recent DG-505 accident at Nympsfield and last year's fatal at Keevil there was so much load on the wing because of a crosswind that when the wing runner let go one wing immediately went down."

The AAIB Report on that Keevil ASW 20 accident states "...the wing runner had to push the glider's left wing down in order to keep its wings level. When he let go of the wingtip the glider rolled to the right. The right wingtip struck soft ground, causing the glider to yaw and roll rapidly to the right, pitch nose down and somersault

inverted." I highlight this because: After many years of launching fast and hairy things with enough wheels to keep level, or self-launching gliders with a wingtip wheel I now winch-launch a big droopy-winged Nimbus, 970, and note that a mere five degrees of roll could put my wingtip on the ground in about a second, yet I cannot detect any roll forces whilst the wing runner is gripping my wing tip. Then, when I am accelerating like a rocket, roll suddenly appears at the absolute worst moment to touch a wingtip!

I am happy that this piece in the club newsletter gives the wing runner proper status to help me by stating: "The wing runner is the launch controller". OK, you're in charge.

If you launch me in 970 please always do this:

1 Immediately before signalling "up-slack" separate your hands two feet so I

can adjust aileron to hold my wings level.

2 If I ignore that and you feel ANY load up or down on the wingtip then tap the wing to attract my attention.

3 As per last *Severn Skies*, do not launch me with any up or down wingtip force present.

Thank you.

John McWilliam

Severn Skies: an opening

THE editor would like to find someone who would be interested in becoming deputy editor with a view to taking over production of *Severn Skies* in time. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact the editor (details on page 2).

Tape mystery on K-21 take-off

IT WAS a cold December morning when I climbed into the front seat of the K-21 for a check-flight at Nympsfield with Chris Edwards.

Full cockpit checks, full and free movement of the controls, all well, and off we went behind the Scout, peering through a rather misty canopy as we went off, the first flight of the day.

It very soon became apparent that all was not well; I was applying a heavy stick load to the right to keep the wings level and kept the pressure on until we reached 300ft, when I said to Chris "Chris, check this out will you, something is not as it should be."

He took control and quickly decided to turn back to land downwind near the hangar, saying "I thought you were having trouble with the crosswind, but this is not good. Let's get her inspected."

The techie came out and soon discovered that the underside wing root joints had not been taped, neither one of them. (Note – who carried out the DI that day?). So it fell to me to lie on my back in the slushy grass to tape both wing roots.

Half an hour later we took off again, not without some trepidation as I had heard Chris saying to the techie "If I had let go of the stick we would have spun in!" However, all was well and we had an enjoyable flight together.

I still can't quite figure why a symmetrical absence of tape would have resulted in such a very pronounced bias to the controls, but there is no denying that the trouble went away after the taping up.

But could it have been something else – possibly ice or condensation on one wing before the first take-off. The 21 has a thick airfoil: could condensation on the port wing have caused this effect? My bet is that it was water on the upper surfaces and I have made a mental note to wipe the wings when flying on cold humid days such as this was.

PS: It was interesting because as always in these cases there are several opinions expressed. The engineer said a similar thing had happened with the Astir and taping cured it. However I am pretty well convinced it was water or even ice.

The aircraft had sat at the launchpoint for half an hour or so before this the first

take-off of the day, port wing down. I noticed quite a build-up of condensation on that wing, but did not examine both of them so could not say whether the starboard wing was similarly affected. There was noticeable condensation on the wings, and looking back on it I believe I should have taken positive steps to remove it. It is possible that, due to dihedral, more heavy condensation existed on the port wing, the one that was on the ground.

Two further general thoughts. First, even though the tape was absent from the underside of the wing-roots surely this was not peculiar to that day? The aircraft had been flown presumably more than once since its most recent rig? Had nobody experienced a tendency to roll over?! Secondly, I fly from Booker, where we also have K.21s. I remember during my training there last spring we had showers, and my instructor insisted the wings were dry before we flew, saying that that particular wing profile "would do funny things when wet".

Tim Macfadyen adds: It is well known that if aileron or elevator tape lifts you can have a major control problem, but for wing root to give a major roll problem is odd. Having said that, the two-seater Grob rolled significant-

ly, but not dangerously, with Sid, with one wing not properly taped, a few months ago. My guess is that it was the tape not condensation, but that is only a guess.

John Bonallack

Chris Edwards writes: Condensation was evident and both operating gliders had their canopies cleaned inside and out and positioned in a sunlit part of the launch point. The flying surfaces had been wiped and although there was some condensation remaining it was slight and not sufficient to prevent launching.

I can confirm that the right aileron pressure John experienced seemed excessive (even accounting for a cross wind). Had I taken my hand off the controls we would have rolled abruptly to the left. However, I don't recall mentioning "that it would have spun in". This was a K-21 after all.

From my rear seat position I could see nothing interfering with the controls or the ailerons that might contribute to the experience, so it was a prompt return to Nympsfield for a closer inspection.

A strange occurrence most likely caused by a combination of wing taping and wind strength, which was noticeably stronger at height (500-600ft), and nothing to do with condensation.

Adopt-a-room idea launched

THE success of the "adopt-a-glider" scheme got me thinking that may be we could use a similar scheme to help initiate and control the maintenance of our rather aging building stock.

As you know the committee are looking at long-term plans for the building strategy of the club, but meanwhile we have to try to maintain what we have.

The proposal is that members volunteer to adopt a room in the clubhouse – don't be alarmed this doesn't mean that they would be wholly responsible.

What we would like is for the volunteer to keep an eye on "their" room and report back to myself any maintenance issues, problems or even cosmetic improvements (we all like to be in pleasant surroundings).

In addition, it would be helpful if they could arrange quotes for any work required and/or organise a work party to carry it out. Where costs are involved the

committee will review all the issues raised by the adopters over the previous period, then allocate funds as they become available and as they see fit.

As a start Andy and Elaine have agreed to be the bar, this of course changes nothing in the way they operate the bar (exceptionally well may I add) – it just formalises what they already do. And Hywel and Alison have agreed to adopt the ladies' loo on the ground floor, only if you agree of course! Richard Starling and Jed Barratt have taken responsibility for the caravan site.

Hopefully Guiseppe will agree to do the same for the kitchen and canteen. So for the all the remaining rooms, noticeboards, plus hangars and workshops, do we have any adopters? Do you have a favourite room or may be a bunk room that you regularly use? Please email me – but don't all rush at once. **Alan Price** (a_price@btinternet.com)

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Solo...now for beyond

By Ant Clerici

IT'S Christmas as I write this and a time of parties and socialising, when I've often found it difficult to explain to non-flyers why I took up gliding.

The questions, familiar to many of you, seem to have a sub-text of "...no engine? You must be bonkers". However after 50-something flights and being sent off solo the novelty hasn't worn off, if anything I'm becoming a bit of a fanatic. (Family gifts this year were trial flights.....)

I began in the late summer when thermals and northerlies on the ridge allowed long flights. We soared over the countryside; I could admire the views, wave at the buzzards and generally enjoy the spectacular scenery. With plenty of lift there was time in the air and I was introduced to and practised: stalls, spins and trying to fly in a straight line.

I discovered that the huge disadvantage of being airborne for an hour or longer was there was no escape from Don or Dave's repetitive mantra of "stick AND rudder" and worse (much worse) Don's singing. So there was my motivation for improvement – peace

and quiet from the P1. But as I made progress there was the inevitable change to having responsibility for "where to go" and "when to land". One of the worst moments was being asked by the voice behind; "what's your plan?" It didn't take a second for me to realise:

(a) Oh dear (!?). I had no plan (too busy having fun flying)

(b) A "normal" circuit wasn't possible from that particular location. This is when I learnt that there were other options and landed safely – against the flow.

Other interesting moments included:

● The application of brakes by the P1 when we seemed to be miles out from Nymphsfield....can we really get back? (Of course we could).

● A tricky height gain needed at Haresfield before we could return to the home ridge. (Don not only stopped singing but wouldn't talk either – as he expertly found the necessary lift!).

● Witnessing a couple of real winch problems.

When it came to my first solo I found myself thinking "yes, this is OK". The expert training had got me to this point

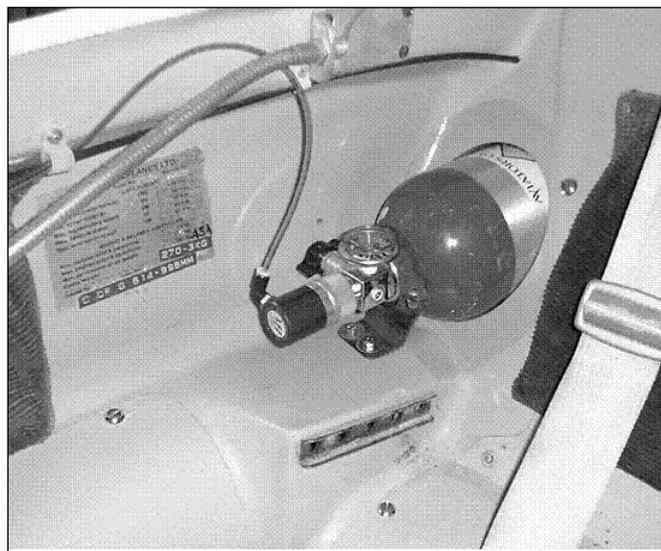
(launch 45) with a confidence that I would not have believed a couple of months earlier. Three solos in quiet conditions on November 14 left me on a high for days. Then a few weeks later I was allowed to fly the "baby Grob", which was another magic experience partly because I managed a 30-minute flight!

The many ad hoc talks have been very useful and I hope will enable me to tackle the Bronze exam in the first half of 2008.

Finally my thanks to other club members; those who are also learning with me have been great, as have some of the experienced pilots who have taken the time to advise and offer guidance to this "learner".

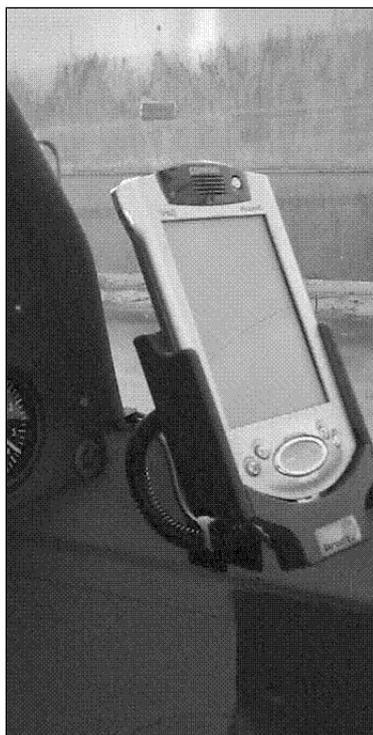
LOAs updated

THE Letters of Agreement page on the BGA website has been updated and now contains, among others, details of LOAs covering LTCA access during competitions (Lasham, Booker and Husbands Bosworth), and Lyneham and Brize Norton class D access during comps (any host club). See www.glding.co.uk/bgainfo/airspace/loas.htm



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LIFE is full of coincidences. I was chatting to Helen Evans in the Lasham bar during the nationals and she introduced me to Bernard Smyth, mentioning that he was from Nympsfield. I commented that it was there that I had started gliding 50 years ago, having paid the princely sum of £28 for a two-week course. He naturally saw this as an opportunity to fill some space in this worthy publication and asked me to write a piece about that time.

In the late 1950s I was in the Merchant Navy sailing on a passenger liner, the mv Reina del Pacifico. We had sailed from Liverpool on August 6 1957 on our regular round trip of two months to the West Coast of South America. Halfway down the Irish Sea there was a loud bang in the engine room as a con-rod came through the side of the cylinder of one of our four engines. We diverted to Milford Haven to disembark our passengers and returned to Liverpool for repairs. This left me with eight weeks to fill until our next scheduled voyage. There were useful courses to attend such as action

to be taken in the event of a nuclear attack and how to survive in a lifeboat, which included rather gruesome advice on how to prevent the boat becoming

train and bus I was welcomed to the Crown Inn by the landlord, Jim Smith. Coincidentally Jim had been transported on my ship in her troop-carrying days.

On the Monday morning we were greeted at the club by Peter Collier, the professional instructor ably assisted by Stan Cole (Stan, Stan the winch driving man). Being the mug I volunteered to be first up in the

T21 and was rewarded with 30 minutes of very scratchy soaring in ridge-assisted thermals triggered by a couple of large concrete blocks.

This was the best flight of the fortnight, after that the average was about two or three minutes punctuated by frequent breaks resulting from very old secondhand cable. The first job each morning was to DI the cable, cut out, re-tie and tape any dodgy looking knots.

To the best of my recollection there were six of us each week. Another stalwart who started the same day as me stayed for the whole two weeks was Tony Pentelow. We remained good friends until his untimely death recently. There was another chap whose name I cannot recall who carried on as a club member and I think became a sort of club manager and in later years would give me a lift back to my ship in Avonmouth.

Massive breakfast

Amazingly we had flyable weather on every day but one. The daily routine was to start with a massive breakfast at the Crown, fly all morning, have a packed lunch and hot drinks at the club and after flying for the day back to the Crown for dinner. This was followed the consumption of copious amounts of local cider sometimes mixed with draught Guinness. How we got up, let alone flew, the following morning I don't know.

At the end of a great two weeks, having also flown during the weekend in the middle, I returned to my ship. It was not until Saturday June 27 1959, having transferred to cargo ships, that I found myself in Avonmouth and was inexorably drawn to Nympsfield. I was in

Nympsfield 50 years ago

By Chris Ellis

overloaded. There was also back leave to catch up on.

Two of my aeromodelling friends had answered an advert in *Aeromodeller* and been to Nympsfield on a course which they thoroughly enjoyed.

I had offered my services as a pilot to the late King George VI whilst still at school but this offer was declined. Having done my National Service in the RAF and getting the occasional flight as 'observer' in Harvards, Piper Pacers and Lincolns in Kenya I was still eager to learn to fly.

I replied to the advert in *Aeromodeller* and on September 28, having travelled from Liverpool by



Above: an aerial view on the field when it had two tracks and, below, Pete Collier, right, takes Chris Ellis up in the T-21 at Nympsfield



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Bristol looking for a bus when I recognised a bearded club member, again I am afraid I can't remember his name, who gave me a lift in his Landrover. That day I recorded four four-minute flights. The next visit was the weekend of August 2 and 3 1959. On the Saturday I had a 15-minute soaring flight and on Sunday five circuits, the last being with the CFI Alwyn Sutcliffe, who then suggested that I might like to fly the Tutor.

Needless to say the first two attempts to get into the air were frustrated by cable breaks but I did get my obligatory left and right hand solo circuits. My enduring memory of the occasion is of being up there all alone in an open cockpit, looking out over the beautiful Severn Valley on a gorgeous summer evening thinking 'What the hell am I doing here and how do I get this thing back on the ground in one piece?' With only 36 launches spread over two years it was a bit scary.

Visits more sporadic

Although I maintained country membership my visits became more sporadic and eventually ceased in 1962 with a change of job and a mortgage.

Having moved to Shropshire I started flying again at the Long Mynd 1971. In 1973 I flew my Silver distance to Nympsfield in my Oly 460 to be greeted by Rosemary Storey saying something like 'welcome back'. I was unable to get a launch to local soar or fly back as the hangar had been the victim of an arson attack and, due to lack of tug, there was a mile long queue for the winch. Launch rate had not improved much over the intervening years. In 1974 a career move meant that I was to spend a fair amount of time working in the Bristol area and the Kings Head in Kings Stanley was a very convenient place to overnight.

On my first night's stay I mentioned the club and asked about Jim Smith. The landlords said he was still about and would I like to phone him. I did and we arranged to meet on my next visit in two weeks. He didn't make that meeting as he died in a car accident.

There is a tale, probably apocryphal, that Peter Collier and a semi professional instructor were enjoying a pint or two in the Crown after the end of the

course season and Jim said he had never been in a glider and 'what was it like?' It was agreed that the three of them would meet at the field the following morning and Jim would learn to fly. Peter was to fly Jim in the T21 and the other instructor would drive the winch. The story goes that they flogged Jim round the circuit for the whole of a calm clear autumn day and eventually sent him solo for a circuit and retired back to the Crown to celebrate and Jim never flew again.

I am not sure of the year but the club had Tiger Moth tugs. I was told that four were purchased as RAF surplus for a total of £100. Three were airworthy and the fourth was for spares.

During the 1970s I spent many a pleasant mid-week evening flying the Swallow and Skylark 4 while Mike Mundy made noises suggesting that I should think about instructing. This came to pass and my first flight as an instructor was June 22 1976 with a group from Redland College. This continued with me flying regular mid-week evening sessions until late 1977 when another work change put an end to them.

Through all these changes I continued to fly at the Mynd at weekends but mid-week moved from Nympsfield to Booker and, on retirement, to RAFGSA at Cosford.

It has been great fun looking back over 50 years of gliding and my thanks to Bernard for setting me off.

Also thanks to Ken Brown for a long telephone conversation recalling far too many names from the past to mention.

At least one of the heads that I used to look at the back of became club CFI.

I write this on September 30 2007, having been to the Mynd hoping to get a 50th anniversary flight in the syndicate T21.

Unfortunately it was U/S but a chance to fly the Grob 109 turbo visiting from Sackville Farm GC made my day at the opposite end of the scale.

Obituary



Alf Samuels in his Skylark

Alf Samuels

IT is with sadness that we record the death of Alf Samuels, who was a member from 1954 to 1964, initially flying at Lulsgate. The period of his membership coincided with the Club's early years at Nympsfield, and Sam, as he was known, joined in all the activities which this entailed. He became an instructor and in 1959 joined a syndicate which bought a Skylark 2, irreverently known as Rhubarb and Custard because of its red and yellow colour scheme.

For six years he acted as the club's press correspondent, writing regular and informative contributions to *Sailplane and Gliding's Club News* over the initials ALS. Sam was a talented engineer, and one piece of his handiwork which still remains at the club is the map which is the centre piece of the Parry-Jones memorial.

Sam introduced Betty, later his wife, to the club and they both continued to fly until an expanding family dictated a change of priorities. In later life Sam suffered from poor health, though he attended the Old Timers' reunions in 1991, 1995 and 2005 and had flights in the two-seaters. He and Betty rejoined the club two years ago as associates, although at that time he was confined to a wheelchair.

Our sympathies go to Betty and their family.

KRB

Grumpy Old Git's Corner

WHY should old folk be penalised by not being allowed to fly club single-seaters! If the insurers are stopping the cover, surely pensioners should have a reduction in their subscriptions, now they're not getting as much for their money as previously?

If you have a moan you'd like to get off your chest this corner's all yours!

Try it: Coaching with champs just the ticket

TWO-SEATER cross-country flying with an expert! Unless you're particularly gifted, most of us have difficulty flying cross-country.

Few people get close to achieving anything like the full potential of their machine or/and the days' conditions. Why? Well, the instructor waves goodbye after the third solo flight and the pupil sets about learning to local soar. The pupil feels he no longer needs two-seaters – or does he? Cross-country flying is like local soaring, only somewhere else, it should be just as easy but somehow the pressures are much greater. Consequently we only tend to wander off on “classic” days, easily discouraged by a low scrape, a difficult farmer or a late retrieve. Unless one perseveres, progress can be slow. For those self-taught, this frustrating period can last for years.

Our five-day courses have helped many with their cross-country flying. We will continue to run these but sup-

plement them with “the Coaching Ticket”. This gives you access to some of the club's best cross-country pilots, for one-to-one coaching in the club's DG-505. The following have all volunteered to be coaches for 2008:

- Andy Davis – twice world champion, Coach for the British Team (and other countries!)
- Andy Smith – no 2 placing in nationals
- Mike Jordy – twice national champion (and competed at world level)
- Rob Hanks – 2,000 x/c hours
- Russ Francis – our deputy CFI, no 8 placing in nationals
- Tim Macfadyen – our CFI with a huge amount of x/c training experience
- Trevor Stuart – 4,000 x/c hours

Once you have your ticket contact your chosen coach to arrange a mutually convenient day – this will be entered on the club calendar reserving the aircraft.

The Coaching Ticket is £179 and

covers the soaring time for three flights in the DG-505. In the unlikely event your flight returns to earth prematurely you may opt to pay soaring time in the normal way and retain your coaching ticket credit.

Terms & conditions: Must be silver C or higher and a member of BGGC. For flights originating at BGGC. No glider reservation charge. Launching (and any retrieve) costs must be paid in the normal way.

Must be paid in advance. Not refundable, transferable or available retrospectively. All coaches are volunteers with other lives/wives, we can't guarantee your chosen coach on your chosen day! You should maintain a rapport with your coach re availability.

ICE alert

HAVE YOU put ICE in your mobile?!

Paramedics will thank you if you have because it stands for “In case of emergency”.

The ICE contacts entry should contain details of your next of kin. If you're unconscious, for example, your nearest and dearest can be contacted.



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Keep a good look out

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