Windsock

The SOUTHERN HANG GLIDING Club

JANUARY 1988.

Daredevil Santa's flying visit

SOARAWAY Santa ignored the bad weather and flew in to make a special Christmas delivery.

Plans to hang-glide in from the top of Devil's Dyke with a sackful of presents had to be abandoned.

But Microlite pilot Russ Crowley came to the rescue and delivered Santa to a crowd of waiting schoolchildren.

Santa and his pilot set off from a farm near Poynings and flew in on time to deliver goodies to around 40 youngsters.

The stunt was organised by the Southern Hang Gliding Club.

Evening Argus,

WELL DONE TO "SANTA" IE. MARK JOHNS AND ALL THE OTHER HANG GLIDER PILOTS WHO TURNED UP TO HELP. ITS NO MEAN FEAT TO TRY AND ORGANISE 40 CHILDREN PLUS PARENTS JUST WHEN SANTA IS ABOUT TO FLY IN.BUT IT WENT OFF WELL AND WITH THE HELP ALSO OF THE FARMER WHO ALLOWED US TO FLY IN TO THE BOTTOM FIELD.

CHRIS B.

+ STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS + STOP PRESS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, BUFFALO, AUSTRALIA

The first stage of the competition is run as 4 groups of 45 fliers, then the first 12 of each group go through to the final.

Here are some of the positions after 7 out of the 8 tasks of the heats:

1 John Pendry	4 Steve Moyes	1 Larry Tudor	8 Bruce Goldsmith
2 Ricky Duncan	9 Darren Arkwright	5 Michel Carnet	
4 Jess Flynn	16 Graham Slater	12 Tony Hughes	20 Len Hull
9 Rich Pfeifer			

Current team positions: 1.Australia 2.USA. 3.G.B.

Latest Disasters

One of the Canadians crashed and broke his pelvis.
Jo Bostick broke his arm.
Graham Slater has had chicken pox, but has now passed it on to the Spanish team.
Peter Bolton (remember him? - he emigrated a few months ago) managed to leave several Brits stranded by crashing the recovery van.

Statistics

Total distance flown in the last world championships in Austria was 44000 Km. with flight times often reaching 7 hours.

So far in Buffalo they have flown 50500 Km. despite flying typically for 4 hours.

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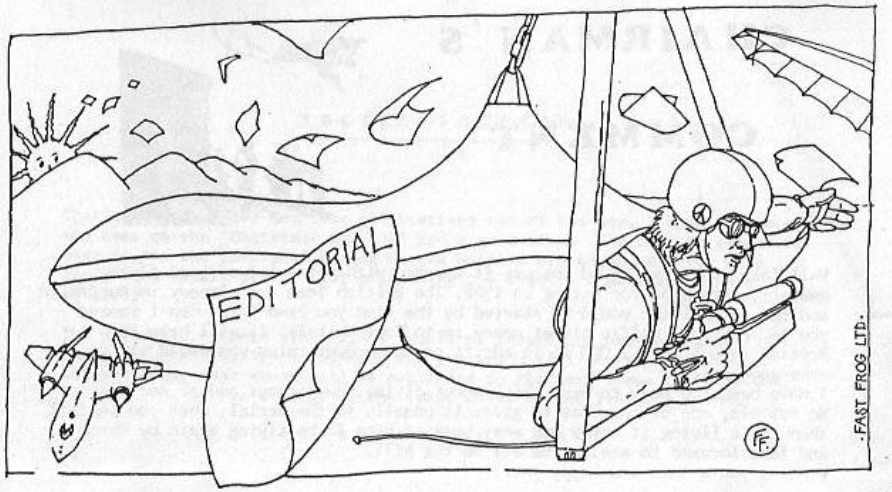

Well, what's going on in the SHGC this winter? Quite a lot if the size of this issue of Windsock is anything to go by. Possibly the best ever Annual Bang et, possibly the worst ever flying weather over the Festive Season, an excellent piece of local PR in the form of the Santa Claus event last month, and two very good days at the Dyke in January so far. (see Eddie's article for one of them)... Winter has finally been forecast for the next few days, but let's not forget that tha thermal season is only about 7 or 8 weeks away.

As promised I've printed every letter received so far on the current issues at the Dyke.... One, so far... Ican only assume that we are all in agreement.

I've included an excellent article by Tom Bradbury, taken fro.: the ma:azine Sailplane & Gliding (well worth buying at £1.50 every two months), originally this was to pad out the Windsock, but it is so good that I've left it in anyway; cunningly entitled For Beginners, it in fact contains some very advanced stuff!

Thanks to everyone who has put pen to paper this month, and extra thanks to those who got out their own typewriters and word processors to save me the job! Keep it up chaps....

See you up there....

Mark Fisher

CONTRIBUTIONS: These are always welcome. Please write clearly, or if possible, type single spaced on A4. Please enclose SAE if any material is to be returned. Send to Mark Fisher (address at front of Windsock). If writing an article, a small photo of you would be useful.

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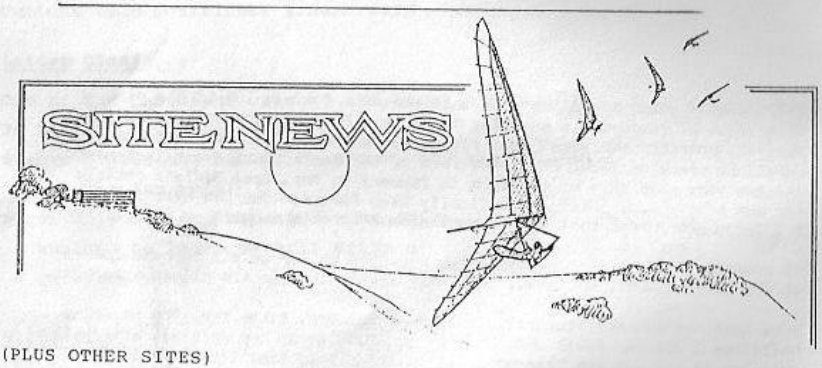
VIEWS EXPRESSED IN WINDSOCK ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE SHGC COMMITTEE OR THE EDITORS.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

Well folks the year ended the way it started with not a lot of good flying weather, lets hope for better in 1988. The British team are already in Australia and the competition would be started by the time you read this. Can I remind you to send your raffle ticket money in to Noel Whitall, it will help the British recoup the £7,000 it is adrift on the budget, plus you could win some good prizes.
I have been too busy to even think about flying. Hurricanes and TV aerials do not mix, one of them has to give, it usually is the aerial, when you install them for a living it makes you very busy. I hope to be flying again by March and look forward to seeing you all on the hill.
Wishing you a safe and happy year.

Johnny Carr.



DYKE (PLUS OTHER SITES)

TOP LANDINGS, MOST OF US LAND IN THE "PADDOCK" AREA,THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM. THE PROBLEM COMES AFTER WE LAND,SOME PILOTS DECIDE TO EITHER POSE WITH THEIR RIGGED GLIDERS IN THE LANDING AREA.OR STEP FORWARD TWO PACE,S AND DROP THE GLIDER.PLEASE AFTER YOUR DIFICULT LANDING REMEMBER ALL THE OTHER PILOTS WHO WANT TO LAND.TAKE YOUR GLIDER COMPLETELY AWAY AND DOWN THE FRONT OF THE HILL,WELL AWAY FROM THE TAKE-OFF AND LANDING AREAS.THAT WAY WE ALL WILL HAVE EASIER LANDINGS,AND ALSO YOUR GLIDER IS LESS LIKELY TO BE "LANDED ON " AND BROKEN. NOTE,IF YOU SEE SOME FORGETFUL PILOT JUST REMIND HER/HIM OF WHAT THEY MUST DO .

DYKE. "WATCH OUT" IF YOU LEAVE YOUR GLIDER IN THE BIG BOWL AREA OR "PAST THE FENCE" KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR COWS.THEY LOVE TO LICK AND CHEW HANG GLIDERS WHICH IN ITSELF IS NO PROBLEM.BUT IF THEY SCATTEROVER YOUR GLIDER THEN 1 TONNE OF COW HOOFS MAKES A FAIR MESS,SO "WATCH OUT".

SOCIAL SECTION

That's Christmas and New Year celebrations out of the way, I hope everyone who came to the 'Christmas Banquet' had a good time. I'd like to thank who ever it was who initiated giving me two bottles of champagne (they were one of the raffle prizes) for organising the event - a most acceptable reward!!

The nasty bit - there are still a couple of people who have not paid for their tickets (£6.75p) - you know who you are - if I don't receive your cheques soon, your names will be published in the next issue of 'WINDSOCK' so hand over or you will be on the front cover of the February issue!.

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NEXT CLUB NIGHT - VIDEO EVENING

There seems to be quite a few videos around at the moment so I thought we would have another go at getting together a 'Video Evening'.

I know there are some excellent 'home' videos out there somewhere, ie Training at Steyning Bowl, Training in India etc (anything for a laugh) and also many professionally made videos of Hang Gliding and/or related sports, TV programmes etc. so if anyone is prepared to lend them to the club for an evening, please phone me with details.

We also need a venue. I'm trying to find a Pub somewhere between Brighton and London which has a video player in a bar and a landlord who would be willing to give us use of same and lay on some grub etc. Anyone knows of one - or who has a large lounge, TV/video and is willing to have 20/30 people trouncing around their home ..... Dates can be set once we have the above sorted.

Finally, if anyone has any specific requirements for Club Nights, input of ideas is always very welcome. Thanks.

Anne Carrington-Smith
Social Secretary

CHALLENGE TOW MEET

A TOW MEET IS TO BE HELD HOPEFULLY AT A NEW TOW SITE SOUTH CHAILEY. IT IS HOPED TO PLAN THIS OUT AND HOLD IT AT A WEEKEND IN MID APRIL. TWO POSSIBLY THREE WINCHS MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE,BESIDES TOW ENDORSMENT FLIGHTS, CANOPY CONVERTION TOWS PARACENDING ARE PLANED.
MICK PERRIN IS CO-ORDINATING THE EVENT SO PLEASE PHONE HIM FOR FURTHER INFO ON 0273 424861 (AIRTIME)

C.B.

City Airport flights resume

By Mark Rosselli

FLIGHTS FROM London City Airport to Paris, suspended four weeks ago after fears were expressed about their safety, will resume next week — using new and safer routes.

The Civil Aviation Authority ordered an inquiry after pilots flying out of the £30m docklands airport, opened in October, reported three air-misses in rapid succession. Brymon Airways, one of the two operators using the airport, told the authority that the risk of a collision was unacceptably high.

Problems arose because the Dash 7 aircraft used by Brymon and Eurocity Express, the other operator, were being forced to fly out of London for about 50 miles below controlled airspace.

As such, they were using the same space as light aircraft, balloons, parachutists and gliders; they were not being directed along safe paths by air traffic controllers, but were forced to rely upon the keen eyesight of the pilot and an occasionally intermittent "guidance" service provided by ground radar.

Following letters of complaint from Brymon, the CAA announced last month that it had no choice but to suspend the Paris flights pending an inquiry. Flights to Plymouth and Brussels were unaffected.

Subsequently, Eurocity strongly criticised Brymon's actions, maintaining that the routes were safe.

Yesterday, the panel of inquiry revealed three new routes available to Paris. However, the chairman of the panel, John Chaplin, the CAA's head of safety services, stressed that the change in routes did not imply that Brymon's original complaints had been valid; all that the panel had been asked to do was to work out routes acceptable to all parties.

"It quickly became clear that there was a general consensus . . . that as the general aviation activity built up towards the summer, some improvements to the route were in any case desirable. That is not to say that the routes were unsafe."

The Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers (Gatco), which has also expressed concern about safety, said last night that the new routes were safer, provided that controllers would not find themselves overstretched by the docklands traffic they were being asked to look after. A spokesman also said Gatco would have preferred new routes to be worked out also for incoming flights.

Controlled airspace around Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports is called the London Terminal Manoeuvring Area. It operates by keeping unauthorised traffic below certain heights, 2,500 feet near the airports and the capital, rising to 3,500ft and finally 5,500ft further from the centre.

Flights from City Airport will eventually be allowed to use the LTMA controlled airspace, along with regular airline flights to the other three airports, but only in several years when the massive and crowded complex of routes is due to be reorganised.

The main Brymon complaint, and that of the Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers, was that aircraft using the original route to Paris, travelling almost due south from London, spent too long flying low in uncontrolled airspace heavily used by flying, gliding and other sports clubs.

The new route solves this complaint by bringing the docklands flights into controlled airspace south-east of Biggin Hill in Kent, and allowing them to stay there until they leave the LTMA.

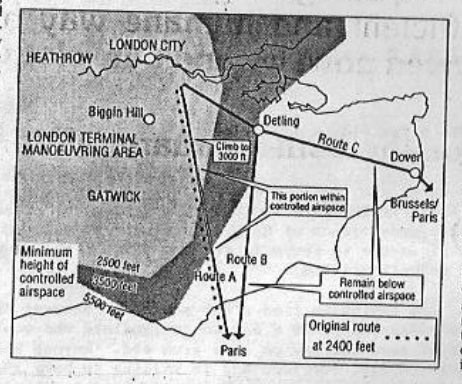
However, the CAA has acknowledged the heavy workloads already endured by Gatwick air traffic controllers by restricting the number of docklands aircraft using this route (route A on map) to 10 outgoing flights a day, which was the level of service before restrictions were imposed.

Mr Chaplin said that if Brymon or Eurocity wanted to increase the number of flights to Paris in the future, these would have to travel either by route B (travelling east from London to the edge of the LTMA at Detling, Kent, then turning south), or Route C (due east to Dover and then turning south — the route already used for Brussels flights, and the option favoured by Gatco).

Both alternative routes involve longer journey times.

Mr Chaplin emphasised that many British flights took place in uncontrolled airspace, but said: "I would not like you to think that outside controlled airspace, anarchy reigns. It certainly does not."

He said Brymon and Eurocity had been advised to get in touch with flying clubs and other recreational groups along the new air routes and to promulgate their timetables, and said that both operators had confirmed their willingness to use the new routes.



THE INDEPENDENT Friday 15 January 1988

CARTOON FROM MELBOURNE NEWSPAPER.
[SENT IN BY PAUL RANKIN.]

SUNTIGER REPORT

BY CALVIN PARTRIDGE.

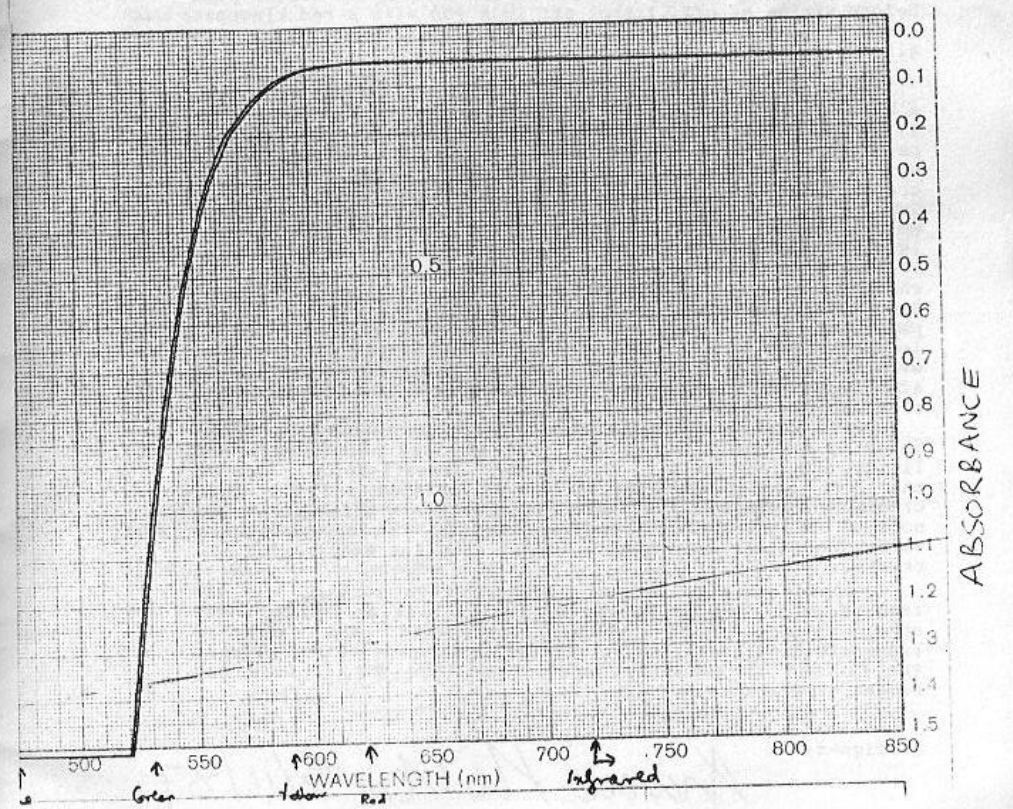
For Christmas I was given a pair of Suntiger glasses. My father took an interest in them after reading the advertising blurb and offered to run a quick spectrometer test on them. The results are shown on the attached graph and may be of interest to those confused as to what the glasses are doing.

Dark glasses work by cutting down the entire spectrum. These glasses just cut out blue-green, blue, violet and ultra violet while leaving the rest intact. There is nothing particularly magical about the filter, but the effect is to reduce eye strain in bright conditions and improve clarity (see Febuary 1987 Wings!, p.21).

Another possibility for pilots are polarised glasses. These allow through only light polarised in one plane. The effect is to reduce light scatter (such as light reflected off the sea). Since I have not tried these I will instead refer you to Rich Pfeiffer ("Hang Gliding according to Pfeiffer", p.39):

"Polaroid lenses are the very best; you can spot haze domes about twice as easily through Polaroids as you can with naked eyes. They also allow you to see haze and dust in the air more readily."

It should be possible to combine both filter and polarisation on one pair of glasses.



ACCIDENT REPORT

Midair collision - report by Andrew Hill

Pilot: Andrew Hill BHGA No 36294 8A
Date : 14 Nov 1987
Site : Devil's Dyke
Glider: Clubman C160
Conditions: NW 10-15 mph

Pilot Experiance

Pl - May 1987 with Free Flight Hang Gliding.
50 mins airtime post Pl including two soaring flights (not at Dyke), and several top-to-bottoms at Devil's Dyke.
Member of BHGA and recently joined SHGC.
Chairman Imperial College HGC.

Details

As it was my first soaring flight at the Dyke and considering my lack of experiance, on arriving at the Dyke I approached Eddie Bilous, Club Coach, for advice. He agreed it was okay for me to fly and talked me through my flight plan before wiring me off. I took off in a POD with a red kingpost streamer and wheels on the bottom bar. There were 10-15 gliders in the air at the time.

The flight progressed normally, although on two occasions a blue glider had come very close to me. After twenty minutes I was halfway through a beat, flying straight and tracking parallel to the ridge at about 150 feet and from east to west. I saw a flash of a blue wing above me and then felt a crash on my left wing. Before the collision I had been looking around and had not seen a glider in the vicinty. I only glimpsed the glider during the collision indicating that it was above me throughout.

The collision left me pointing away from the ridge, I checked the the wing, and although I knew it was damaged the Hang Glider appeared to be flying normally. I did not have a parachute so my only option was to head for the bottom landing field. I noticed that the glider which had collided with me was flying parallel to me and appeared undamaged. I also realised that it was the same glider which had come close to me earlier.

Whilst flying over the road the glider seemed to start behaving strangely but I was able to lose height over the fields and land safely. Preliminary investigation revealed the left number one batten to be twisted and the left crosstube to be badly kinked. In addition, a slight tear was noticed on the leading edge outward of the upper rigging wire. The glider is now with Aerial Arts for examination and repair.

I spoke to a number of Southern Club members who all assured me it was in no way my fault. Back at the Dyke the other pilot, Mike Allen, apologised and admitted responsibility, agreeing to pay for the damage to the glider. The Clubman is owned by Imperial College HGC. I have now bought a parachute.

signed: Andrew Hill 5/11/87

From: Flight Lieutenant Michael Allen

Officers' Mess
RAF Wittering
Peterborough
PE8 6HB

4 December 1987

Mr Paul Ray
Sky Systems Ltd
Knoll Workshops
Bellingham Crescent
Old Shoreham Rd
Hove, Brighton
BN3 7GS

RECEIVED 8 DEC 1987

Dear Paul,

At time of writing, the accident form has not yet arrived, so thought I had best send you the report of my mid-air on the Dyke on the 15 Nov.

Magic 4
Pod Harness
Metamorphosi 'chute
11.5 hrs. Vision/Magic

Wx: W/D WNW/10-15kts

T/O: 1145 LAND: 1415

"At approx. 300ft. I commenced a turn to the left in a weak thermal. After 270° of turn and roughly parallel with the ridge, I saw a Clubman with a red streamer coming in my direction, slightly below and to the left of my nose. As the Clubman passed below me, I felt and heard an impact. Up until the time of the collision, I had assessed that we would pass clear of each other. Both gliders continued to fly normally and I could see that the protective plastic coating on my left bottom wire had become detached over approx. 4" of its length. After landing, I also discovered that the port no.5 baton was bent. On inspection, no other damage was found. At the time of the collision, I felt that the Clubman's kingpost had struck the undersurface of my port wing. I believe that the pilot of the Clubman did not see me at all during the accident. I believe that I was responsible for the collision and that a hard roll to the right when I first saw the Clubman would have prevented the accident, but did not think that a collision was a possibility at the time."

I hope that this is all the information that you require. If there is anything else, you can reach me on: 0780 64501 ext. 3069 during work hours.

Apologies again for the lateness of my report,

Best Wishes,

Mike Allen

Minutes of the SHGC meeting held on Tuesday 24th November 1987

at Devil's Dyke

Attendees : Johnny Carr
Chris Bartram
Eddie Bilous
Andy Wood
Jonathan Cattlin
Paul Ray
Mark Johns
Mark Fisher
Anne Carrington-Smith
Ian Carrington-Smith
Kelvin Wilson
Michel Carnet

1. Accidents

Three recent accidents occurring at Devil's Dyke, including a mid air collision, were discussed. Although no serious injuries were sustained by the pilots involved, each accident was potentially fatal and was caused by pilot error. Accident reports would be published in Windsock.

2. Towing

John Chadwick stepped down as towing coordinator and Mick Perrin was nominated as replacement. Kevin Wilson reported that progress had been made with a new towing site and the committee agreed that a club towing event should be organised early next year to stimulate further interest.

3. Sites

Chris Bartram reported that crops had been planted in the large filed immediately below Devil's Dyke and so any landings there would incur a £10.00 fine.

4. Paragliding

The committee discussed the safety implications of paragliders sharing the airspace at Devil's Dyke with Hang Gliders. So long as the airspace infront of the take off and landing areas was not obstructed by paragliders and numbers in the air were strictly controlled, the committee agreed that it should not be a problem. Paragliders would have to join as full club members and abide by SHGC site rules. BHGA membership would also be obligatory.

5. Awards

The annual awards to be presented at the SHGC Christmas Banquet on Friday 11th December were agreed as follows:-

Best Newcomer	Ella Sanderson
Best Novice XC	Richard Lever
Most Improved Pilot	Andy Napolitan
Sussex XC League	Dave Rusbridge
Sussex XC Weekend League	Dave Keepax
SHGC Outstanding Achievement Award	Michel Carnet

6. Safety Officer

Having done an excellent job over the last two years as club safety officer, Paul Ray decided it was time he should step down and allow another person to take over.

7. The meeting was closed.

A MET GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

Are you relatively inexperienced and waiting for the right day to fly away from the airfield for the first time or to attempt Silver distance? Then this article by Tom will help you to pick the best day

These notes are for early cross-country pilots who (at present) are more interested in getting somewhere slowly than trying to win races.

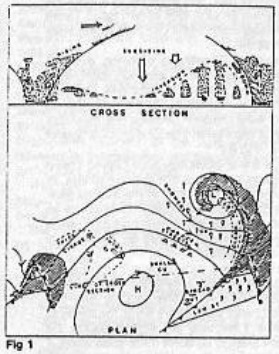


Fig 1

1. Picking a good day

Fig 1. The best conditions usually occur after the passage of a cold front when:
(a) There is a ridge of high pressure moving across the country (or at least anticyclonically curved isobars).
(b) The wind speed in the 2000-5000ft range is less than 20kt (preferably near 10kt).
(c) The forecast Max temperature is at least 10°C higher than the dew point. (As a guide one may use the TV chart for the night Min and next day's Max temperatures; if the difference is 10°C or more then the cloudbase will probably become high enough.)

There is a useful rule relating cumulus base and the difference between the surface temperature and dew point. While the temperature is rising each degree C between the air temperature and the dew point is equivalent to about 400ft in the base of convective cloud. For example a difference of 10°C should give a cloudbase of 4000ft. This rule is not valid once the temperature starts to fall.

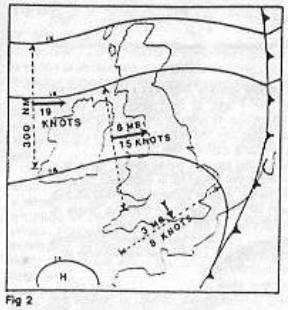


Fig 2

2. Route planning

The wind. The wind at flying levels is best obtained from an aviation forecast but one can get an approximate guide from large scale forecast charts like those in the *Telegraph*. (The *Times* alas no longer provides an adequate picture.) Measure off a length of 300nm (this is 5° of latitude). Draw a line of this length at right angles to the isobars on the forecast chart and note the pressure difference between the ends. Multiply this by 2.5 and you have the wind speed at about 2000ft. (This figure is strictly valid for latitude 52 ½ north but it is close enough for most of the central and southern parts of England.) (Fig 2.)

Fig 3

Wind speed is usually critical for into wind legs. Although pundits can achieve an average air speed of 50-60kt on a good day, less experienced pilots will rarely exceed 30kt. This obliges slower pilots to avoid into wind legs unless the wind is very light. If headwinds are unavoidable the into wind leg is best attempted during the afternoon rather than in the morning.

Even with light winds the choice of track and TPs is influenced by wind direction because it is usually essential to keep clear of windward coasts. Unsoarable sea air tends to spread long distances inland across large flat areas (such as the Somerset levels and the regions round the Wash). There are rare occasions when the air is so dry and unstable that good thermals can be found right up to the windward coasts, but it seldom pays to bank on it. These areas are best crossed early in the day before inland convection has started to draw in damp sea air. (Fig. 3.)

3. Timing

There is an urge to get in the air and away down track as soon as possible. Resist this urge if you are only after Silver distance. Unless it is known that poor weather is approaching one can expect soaring conditions to become easier later in the day. The cloudbase usually rises to its Max in mid afternoon and thermals, though further apart, seem to be smoother and easier to work during the latter half of the day.

High ground warms up sooner than wide damp valleys and good thermals can be found over regions such as the Chilterns, Berkshire Downs, Cotswolds and the bigger hills of Wales a good two hours before any lift appears over low ground. On days of restricted convection this delay may be much longer. (Fig 4.)

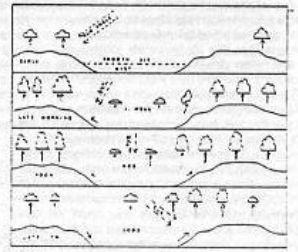


Fig 4

4. Variation of thermal strength

If occasions of cu-nims are excluded the average rates of climb seem closely related to the height of cloudbase, or the top of blue thermals. A survey carried out by the French showed that lift

in knots was (approximately) 1.2 times the height of cloudbase in thousands of feet, minus 1kt. Thus 2000ft produced a miserable 1.4kt, 4000ft gave 3.8kt and 6000ft 6.2kt. Almost every one finds stronger thermals than these during the course of a flight but they nearly always have to stop and accept much weaker lift too. These figures are a useful guide for planning but no indication of absolute values.

Spacing of thermals. If the depth of convection is shallow thermals are close together. As thermals extend higher the spacing becomes wider. There seems to be no exact relationship between depth and spacing because late in the afternoon the gaps between thermals continue to grow wider even though the depth of convection is no longer growing.

Sink between thermals. Early morning thermals usually produce weak lift with sink mainly confined to the immediate surroundings of the thermal. Later in the morning when convection is deeper and lift stronger the areas of sink often seem to extend much of the way across the gaps. When thermals become separated more widely (usually from mid to late afternoon) the inter-thermal sink is less troublesome although strong sink still occurs close to the best thermals. During the last hour or two of thermal activity the spacing is strongly dependent on isolated hot spots such as sun facing ridges. In between these isolated areas the air can become very smooth with negligible sink.

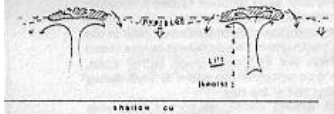


Fig 5

Variation of lift with height. Over level ground thermal lift is almost always weak below about 1000ft and does not develop its best strength until 2000 is passed. If the thermal is feeding into a cumulus which is at least 1000ft deep the lift may show a further increase close to cloudbase. However, on days when the only clouds are very shallow cumulus the lift frequently decreases rapidly just below cloudbase. On such days the cloud tops are restricted by a well marked stable layer. The cloud tops may protrude a small way into this stable layer due to the momentum behind the thermal. However, the rising airflow starts to spread out as it nears the inversion and as a result the lift ceases quite suddenly. Fig 5 shows the distribution of lift with height on such days, and why it is a waste of time to take the last few feet of the thermal. The same effect occurs when there are only blue thermals.

5. Looking for lift

Cloud reading. A major factor in the success of pundits is their ability to read clouds; it seems to be a skill best learnt in youth.

(a) Active cumulus clouds usually have well defined flat, (sometimes slightly concave) bases and crisp bulging tops.

(b) The larger the cloud the harder it may be to find the lift. Sometimes such clouds have a slight step down in the base, or a region of slightly lower

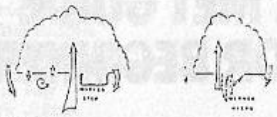


Fig 6

rather ragged cloud. The best lift is frequently very close to this step. (Fig 6.) Lacking such signs one may have to waste time searching round. The time will not be entirely wasted if one can establish a preferred location for the lift at that time of day.

(c) The core of the thermal is often on the windward side or the sunny side of the cloud; if wind and sun are on the same side there is a good chance that the lift will also be on that side. Do not be too surprised if the core is actually in quite a different spot.

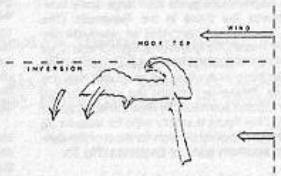


Fig 7

(d) Shallow clouds under a dry inversion sometimes show a curled over hook like shape on the top. (Fig 7.) This usually develops when there is a stronger wind above the inversion. The shear of wind takes the rising top and blows it over into the curling shape. Lift is almost always close under the windward side, with sink on the down shear side.

(e) Small clouds usually have a very brief life in the morning, but they are normally close enough for there to be working alternatives near by. The larger the clouds the longer their life cycles; when there are many large clouds (more than half cover) several will be slowly decaying without showing any clear signs of their weakness.

(f) If the lift is very strong (6-10kt on an average) it is almost certain that there will also be very strong sink not far away. Unfortunately the reverse is not always true.

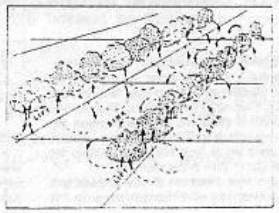


Fig 8

(g) While heading for a good looking cloud one may meet an unexpected surge of strong lift out in a cloudless gap. This is probably a vigorous young thermal about to form its own cloud. These often produce much better climbs than the older clouds nearby.

Cloud streets. Streeting is common, even on blue thermal days. Streets generally form when the wind speed is over 15kt and may be widespread with strong winds. Streets are aligned along the wind direction (within a few degrees). This makes them invaluable for making progress into wind. (Fig 8.)

A single line of cloud may have formed from a local hot spot on the surface but true streets do not depend on irregularities in the surface temperature. Streeting occurs over the sea as well as over land, especially when fresh cold air sweeps out over a relatively warm sea on the western flank of a depression.

Streeting needs a stable layer to limit the depth of convection so that nearly all the cumulus tops are on the same level. The spacing between streets is usually about three times the depth of convection. If the tops are around 5000ft the streets are likely to be some three miles apart. If the inversion rises the spacing between streets increases, usually by the disappearance of weaker streets. (Not by all the lines edging further apart.)

Over England one may go as much as 50 miles under a good cloud street without turning but the crossing from one street to another has to be made through continuous heavy sink.

Streets are much harder to follow on blue thermal days. On such a day an unusually prolonged spell of sink encountered when flying up or downwind probably means that the track lies between streets. Turn crosswind for a time.

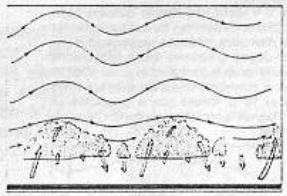


Fig 9

Waves above streets (Fig 9.) Lee waves may develop above and at right angles to cloud streets. Such waves are not always marked by lenticular cloud. The first wave often occurs at the upwind end of a cloud street.

If, when flying along a cloud street, there is a stretch where the usual lift is replaced by sink and then there is a small zone of unusually strong and rough lift it is quite likely that the street is being influenced by the waves above.

Waves have also been found parallel to streets of shallow cloud, the streets then seem to be acting as temporary hills.

6. Avoiding sink

The best instructors will tell you to "follow the energy", meaning to take a winding course under all the working clouds rather than heading out

directly on track. A common problem is how best to dodge the decaying clouds. Clouds have a limited life and the small clouds tend to stop working sooner than big ones, especially during the morning. Although the big clouds last longer they tend to leave a larger and more persistent area of sink.

When the moisture in a thermal condenses out as droplets of cloud there is a release of latent heat. This gives an added boost to the thermal. However once the lift ceases and the cloud starts to decay descent of air causes evaporation. Evaporation removes all the heat previously released by condensation and this air becomes colder than its surroundings.

This cold mass produces heavy sink; the bigger the cloud has been the more extensive is the sink when the cloud decays.

The signs of decay are:

(a) Loss of sharpness in the cloud top; it starts to look fuzzy.

(b) The cloudbase ceases to be level.

(c) The cloud shadow changes from being solid to become a tattered area with holes. This is often the most reliable indication if you are near cloudbase and heading for the next good lift.

(d) Tall clouds which start to topple over in a wind shear usually decay. Never fly close under the over hanging part of such a cloud. Steer round on the upwind side if possible. The net loss in flying five miles in relatively still air is often less than taking a direct course and going two miles through heavy sink.

(e) A cloud may be still be growing on the upwind side while decaying on the downwind side. This is common with large clouds when there is an increase of wind speed with height. (Fig 10.)

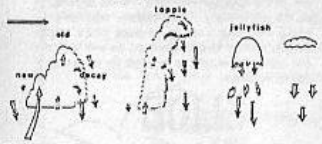


Fig 10

7. Showers

As a shower advances downwind there is often a region of particularly strong lift under the leading edge of the cloud. This can be used to gain or maintain sufficient height to fly round the end of the shower. It is usually wise to go round even the smallest shower. Flying straight through nearly always takes one into a large area of heavy sink.

Sometimes the lift continues right up to the shaft of precipation (Fig 11). One may even make a climb with hail rattling off the canopy, but be prepared for very sudden and often nasty surprises. Precipitation nearly always changes ascending into descending air, often very suddenly, sometimes within the space of a single tight circle.

Blue holes. A common problem in England is the short lived shower which dissolves to leave a blue hole. Although the cloud has vanished the

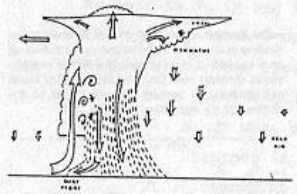


Fig 11

sink may still persist; it pays to avoid flying under such a decayed shower, or across the stretch of ground upwind over which the shower has passed. Even when the sink has died out the cooling effect of the rain and the recently moistened ground inhibit thermals.

Defunct showers are only one of the reasons for blue holes; they may be the effect of an unsuspected trough in a wave system higher up or due to preferential growth of big cumulus round the perimeter. When a group of cumulus clouds clumps together to produce an area of heavy cloud they may set up a wide area of surrounding sink which wipes out all the lesser cumuli which have not organised themselves in such a co-operative system. (Fig 12.) The development of a big cu-nim cell amongst a field of small cu frequently wipes out the tiddlers.

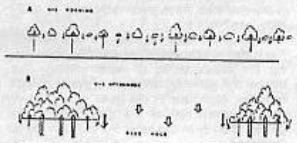


Fig 12

With so many reasons for blue holes it is wise to be cautious about setting out across one. The pilot of a Ventus recently set out into the blue from 3000ft. With tips to extend the span to 17 metres he was confident of reaching the other side. In fact he was on the ground seven miles downwind of the start.

A diversion of 30° only adds a small amount to ones total distance; when going downwind even a 45° change of heading is worthwhile. It is far better to take several short climbs at high level where the lift is good than to waste time scraping about low down where the lift is weak.

8. Spread out of cumulus

This ruins very many days which would otherwise have been magnificent. The main reasons are:

(a) A very unstable air mass which is too moist, and

(b) An inversion or stable layer which traps all the convection beneath it.

(c) The arrival of extra moisture near the inversion level, often from a very weak old front which has temporarily lost all its cloud due to subsidence.

It usually needs a depth of at least 2000ft from cloudbase to the inversion for spread out to become extensive. Each thermal takes up more moisture and spreads it out under the inversion adding to that already present until a solid layer of cloud is formed.

When such an overcast area appears one should try and stay high using any scraps of lift under darker patches of cloud. Until the sun breaks through there will be few if any thermals rising off the ground.

Warning Signs

(1) The morning starts cloudless and visibility is often very good.

(2) The first cumulus forms unusually early and the cloudbase is low. (If the first cu have a high cloudbase there is much less threat of spread out.)

(3) Some of the first clouds may shoot up as narrow columns with no proper bases. (The base decays before the top has finished rising.)

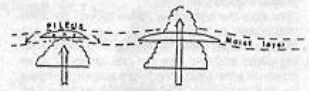


Fig 13

(4) A lenticular cap of cloud may appear just above the top of a growing cumulus. This has the latin term "pileus". The formation shows that as the top of the cu ascends it pushes up some of the moist layer air above. This push is just enough to cool the upper layer below condensation point; it shows that the layer was nearly saturated at that level before the cu formed. Pileus is an almost infallible sign of subsequent spread out. (Fig 13.)

The cycle of spreading out. When an almost total layer of strato-cu has formed thermals become very sparse or totally absent. Lacking a continued supply of moisture from below, the layer may break up in an hour or two. This allows the sun to set off more thermals so that the process is repeated. With a really thick layer the cycle is so slow that no worthwhile clearance develops until evening.

Two things can act to disperse such a sheet. Further subsidence may bring the inversion too low for a full cloud cover to develop, or the arrival of drier air may result in the cloudbase lifting up to within a few hundred feet of the inversion when the sheet will disperse. The two processes can occur together to bring about a rapid improvement in soaring conditions. The extra subsidence may be found near the axis of an advancing ridge, (which is one reason why ridges often give the best soaring weather in summer).

Spread out situations. The problem is most troublesome near to windward coasts especially when the air over this country has come round the perimeter of an Atlantic anticyclone and arrived over us from the north or north-west.

9. Blue thermal days

Competition pilots have to set off on blue days but they have the advantage of many other

gliders to find and mark the thermals. It is much harder for a beginner to succeed when there is no other glider in sight.

The most important factor, (after the wind speed) is the height of the inversion. With only 3000ft between ground level and the inversion unaccompanied cross-country flying is very difficult. If the convective layer extends up to 4000ft it is probably worth a try. With 5000ft to work in the prospects become quite good.

Possible thermal sources are towns, sun facing ridges, and areas of higher ground which are relatively dry.

Regions to avoid if possible are wide damp valleys. These may be devoid of thermals except where there is a large town. Even when some thermals do develop they are often weaker and do not go up as far as those over the high ground. The lack of thermals is due to the abundance of lush vegetation and the generally moist ground. So much of the sun's energy is wasted just evaporating the water that not enough is left to produce good thermals.

(See also the last issue, "Blue Skies" by John Williamson, p126.)

Slopes. These were the first resort of early soaring pilots and are now the last resort of most cross-country pilots. Windward slopes may save the day when all else has failed. Ridges work best when there is no high ground upwind. Upwind ridges may set off lee waves; if these are out of phase with your ridge the lift may be damped out. Notice that rapid alterations of lift and sink may be due as much to thermals breaking away from the slope as to the mean flow of air uphill. Thermals often come off from one area like a stream of bubbles and one may need to head back into wind several times before finally escaping.

10. Top cover of cloud

The arrival of a layer of cirrus nearly always reduces the strength of the sun. If the lower air is already full of active thermals the top cover tends to make thermals rather smoother and less strong. However, if it is early in the day, or there is a low inversion, (when the full power of the sun is needed to produce any thermals at all), then the cirrus often stops thermals completely. On such days a gap in the cirrus may allow a narrow zone of thermals to develop when most of the area has gone dead.

Thickening pre-frontal altostratus. Such cloud almost always has a disastrous effect on thermals, stopping them very quickly. Note the "almost"; there are occasions when the air is so unstable that even the arrival of this grey sheet of cloud does not completely kill off all thermals and on rare occasions one may still find lift (usually smooth and weak) persisting almost up to the time when the rain starts.

11. Fog and low stratus

These are signs of very stable conditions at the lowest level; it is useful to know about them when route planning. Some of the sun's heat is wasted in evaporating the fog before any thermals can develop. Even when the fog has been burnt off the area is apt to be lacking in decent thermals for many hours. In summer sea fog or low stratus often blows in again from the coast on blue days when sea breezes begin. Although the sun may continue to burn off the stratus as it comes inland the air will probably never develop useful thermals until it has spent three of four hours over warm ground. Even then the lift is likely to be shallow and weak. The boundary often shows up as a marked change of visibility. When easterly winds develop over England the effect of North sea stratus can spread from the Wash to the Cotswolds by mid afternoon. (Fig 14.)

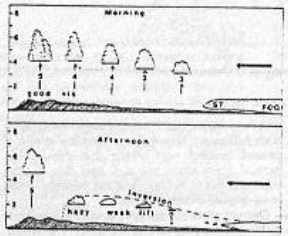


Fig 14

12. Haze

Most of our summer haze comes from the continent when winds over the UK are between ENE and SE. It is usually trapped beneath an anticyclonic inversion. The chief effect of haze is to delay the start of thermals in the morning, and to cut them off earlier in the evening. It is noticeable that thermals become weaker if one flies into the haze from an area of good visibility. Few long cross-countries have been achieved in really hazy weather.

Some of the haze particles are hygroscopic, that is they tend to absorb moisture by accelerating the condensation of water vapour. This makes the visibility worse in regions of high humidity, especially in the layer within two or three hundred feet of the cloudbase. Since gliders often fly in this layer the collision risk is increased.

Hot weather and summer haze often go together. The restricted visibility makes it next to impossible to see clouds ahead well enough. If thunderstorms break out (as they often do after a hot hazy spell), one cannot see the distant thunderheads until one climbs above the haze layer. Instead the storm's approach is marked by thickening gloom where the cloud shadow falls on the haze.

Haze tops and cloud tops. Strong thermals often reach the inversion with enough momentum to penetrate a short distance into the stable layer. On blue days it may be worth accepting the reduced lift at the top in order to get above the inversion for a brief time. The great improvement in visibility allows one to see any small cu tops in the distance and may reveal those active areas of convection previously hidden from sight.

Big cumulus can grow through a haze layer and extend high up to levels where visibility is almost infinite. The haze layer seems hardly affected by this deep convection; it remains at its original level. A cloud climb is particularly satisfying on such days but brings navigation problems: it may be impossible to make out any ground features when looking down through the haze.

Use of radio. There are three useful plain language broadcasts of airfield weather reports. They are updated every half hour. Reception is often difficult at very low level except near the transmitters.

The frequencies are:
London North 126.6mHz
London South 128.6mHz
London Main 135.375mHZ

A similar VOLMET broadcast consisting chiefly of RAF airfields is broadcast on 4722 and 11 200kHz. This can usually be heard on the ground but needs an HF receiver tuned to the upper sideband. Ordinary short wave receivers are inadequate unless they have a BFO (Beat Frequency Oscillator).

* * *

AIRMET

The new telephone AIRMET service gives three regional forecasts and are available between 0600 and 2300.

The numbers are:

Southern England	0898 500 436
Northern England and Wales	0898 500 435
Scotland and Northern Ireland	0898 500 434

There is an equivalent night service from specified Met offices from 2000 to 0600.

The numbers are:

Heathrow	01 745 3103
Manchester WC	061 429 0927
Glasgow WC	041 221 6113

Forecast available	Period	Outlook to	Wind valid time
1600	0600-1400	2000	0900
1200	1200-2000	0200	1500
1800	1800-0200	0800	2100

These forecasts are not cheap. The BT rates are 66p for 3min at the cheap period and £1.01 at peak and standard rate time, plus VAT! The duration of the forecast may take 4-8min depending on the complexity of the weather situation so it could well cost over £2 at peak times. Clubs without routine forecasts would do well to make one call and pin up the forecast for all to see. – *Tom Bradbury.*

YOUR WORLD

READERS' LETTERS

A TRICK OF PERSPECTIVE

My friend and I were walking our dogs along Firle Beacon the other day when he suddenly pointed in the air and exclaimed "Look,a Hawk." I knew a bit better though and smilingly said "That's not a Hawk,it's a Hang Glider.It is just a trick of perspective that makes it look like a bird because it is so high up.

We stood still admiring the graceful flight of the glider for twenty minutes until it suddenly blew into my friends eye.Then we realised it was a sweet wrapper blowing in the wind.

"Just another trick of perspective"we laughed and carried on walking.

T.Henderson.

●Keep it up readers.Anyone else got an interesting story about a 'trick of perspective'?

STAR LETTER

My name is Julia and I am Six Years old.I like the hand gliders when I see them at Devils Dyke.They go high.I spoke to a hand glider pilot once,he said it was a moys.I asked him if he just was holding on his hands when he flys and he said he was also strapped in,but another pilot said he was strapped up more like it and laughed a bit strangley.

The pilots said that hand gliders fly without power but my mum says they use a lot of electricity because when they fly all the lights go out in the village and our freezer stops working.

JULIA aged SIX.

When my wife and I visited Devils Dyke to watch the Hang Gliders last week we were disapointed to find that no-one was flying so we decided to go to the cafe there for two teas and a sandwich each. Imagine our shock when we were then given a bill for £42.63p. Can you explain this price to us.

Mr&Mrs Whittall

(Yes. They were probably having a sale. Ed.)

RETURNING TO THE FOLD

Imagine my surprise the other day when I found myself circling in a steady six up over Mt Caburn almost immediately after take off. As I made lazy circles in the cold January air I thought"this can't be real"

When I suddenly crashed into the trees I realised it was just my vario on upside down

M.Johns.

WER'E BACK. Who might you say? The Cackling Brothers of course. We have been away from you guys for ages now but we put it down to the weather so could you please let all our old and much missed mates who we used to fly with know we're back on the hill ie: Otto Lillienthal Amy Johnson etc.

J.and S.

D.J.Keepax.
204 Chanctonbury Road.
Burgess Hill
West Sussex
RH15 9HN

10.01.1988

WALLY OF THE YEAR WRITES IN

As the not so proud owner of this illustrious award I thought I might write in to tell about an amazing revelation.The text is not about writing off my 'trusty' Magic 3,Mylar sandwich glider(which is another story)but about my new Magic 4 F.R.

Having pranged my glider I waited with trepidation for Airwave to tell me the cost of the repair. In the meantime pondering which new glider I might purchase, Ace,Laser,Magic; When you havn't flown for three weeks from the lack of a glider, it certainly promps for action, since Monsieur Carnet had one on the shelf, which I convinced myself was just the colours I wanted, The deal was done.
Michael went to Australia, and I went home with my new baby. At this stage it is only fair to say that Mandy(my wife) god bless her, did not get too paranoid about my moving out all the lounge furniture and partially erecting the glider in the lounge. Well, you have to look at it dont you.

Now I had to wait a week for the right conditions to manifest themselves. Manifestation complete on the 7th Jan at the dyke, well almost. It was blowing 20-25 and gusting.
I waited and waited from 9am. till 3.15pm. Oh boy 16-18 and steady. I was ready as everything had been checked 22 times. The only problem was my stomach which didn't want to fly. It may have more sense than I have, here am I, the last flight a month ago nearly did me in, and flying a brand new glider, not even sure of the hang point. (Hang point located from glider manual,but what do they know,they only build them)
After all the checks I am ready to take off, these aerofoil uprights just don't seem familiar at all.
Go.

A good strong run, glider flying, extra few steps to guarantee flying speed. We are up, the extra speed converts to height and I pull on speed to get forward. The right wing lifts, correct it, left wing lifts, correct again, and so on. This thing does not handle at all like my mylar sandwich Magic 3. The reaction of the glider is totally positive and reacts almost instantly as opposed to the mylar version which after an input I used to have time to smoke a cigar.
It dawns on me that the flying characteristics are totally different, time to put the brain into learning mode, and save a life, mine.
From here on I fly fast for 15 minutes staying in the lift, and most definitely bottom of the stack, just getting the feel. After 30 minutes of gradually reducing speed, height increased at an impressive rate, the lightness of handling and response are an eye opener. Now its getting dark, the wind is slightly off, making it more sensible to approach in front of the Dyke pub. With the thought of my accident at Firle being my last flight, I set up my approach from just in front of the modellers bowl. Twice I get pipped to the post and have to do another beat. Now its my turn and every cow in Sussex has just migrated to my proposed landing area.

Thank the lord for Martin and Steve, they know this fella has a new glider, last flight a nasty, nowhere to land and the lights are going out. With whoops and hollers they move the cows out.
Now I know I could have done an Eddie Bilous war cry, but I havn't done it before, does this really move the cows?. I cannot see the point of riding something which should be on a plate covered in gravy. Especially when I'm still clipped into my glider. Thanks for the thought fella's.

Overshot on the first appoach, did it again and a beautiful landing. On landing someone came over to me and said "You took off in some turbulance." It was not turbulance, it was me over compensating and looking like a no hoper. I sincerely hope this didn't deter anyone from taking off, it did look pretty drastic.
Now then who can I pour my heart out to. By the time I had de-rigged it was pitch black, and all my fellow pilots had to go and get their dinners. They did disappear quick. Oh well.
Now who's this coming. Mark Fisher as I live and breathe. I bored him well into the night, He did carry my harness to my car, thanks Mark, though in retrospect he may have had enough of my prattling.

Still a lot of flying to do before I get completely familiar with the new glider, and until then I will fly slightly faster than is necessary when close to the ground for safety. but, the point is this:-

I came from a Clubman onto a Magic, and at this point it was pointed out to me that I was to be careful with all that extra performance and different handling. Good advice.
I got used to my mylar Magic and thought in my own mind that they all handled roughly the same. Wrong.
When I bought the F.R. Michael said to me "Zis glider compared wiz a normal Magic 4 is steef to andle, but since you ave been flying a mylar sandwich it will feel O.K." What an understatement!! If this is stiff what is a normal Magic 4 like?:
And prompts the question:- How many of us know if the particular glider we fly has undesirable handling?. After all its probably the only glider we fly, and when the unfamiliar becomes familiar it is normal.

Do we know our gliders shortcomings or having got used to it, it is just normal flying?.
I hope this might cause some thought when the time comes to change and fly a new glider for the first time.Or even if regular problems are occurring, give it a thought. Then discuss it with someone.

See you on the hill.

DAVE KEEPAX.

LETTERS

WAVE SUNSET.....

Dear Editor,

I feel you must make it clear, that your observations of wave lift at the Dyke were made at the bottom of the hill, where it had just become sunset. Unlike conditions on top of the hill, where it was in the process of setting. It was Great. (way out and way in man).

LAWFUL OF LONDON .

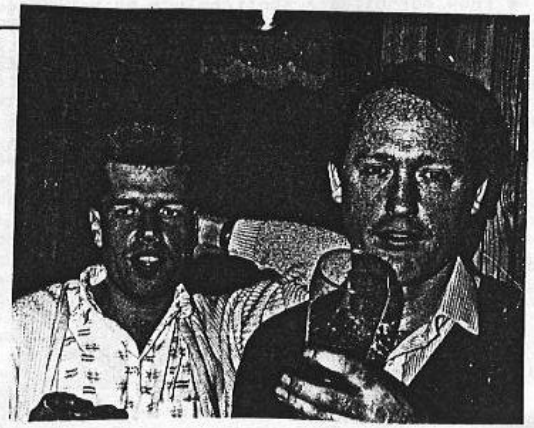
Editor replies: OK the sun had set at the bottom, but the observation was made from the air above the hill! Incidentally, this was the flight when the Snooper first showed its ability to detect bonfires at a distance of half a mile!

ANOTHER SNAP OF THE SHGC BANQUET.

Anyone for AGER?

If anyone is interested in going out to Ager next August with other club members, please contact Gordon Harris on 01-948-5606..

GORDON HARRIS CONSUMING A PINT AT THE SHGC PARTY [AND PROPPING UP RICHARD LEVER]



FOR SALE

Dall 661 Vario

-

Dall 661 Vario:
Excellent working order.
£225 ono; Phone Paul on
04446 5531 (home) or
0273 [illegible] (work)

XMAS LEAP

By Mark Johns

On the 21st December at about 2.00 in the afternoon, about 45 kids from Poynings and Fulking received gifts from Father Christmas in the bottom landing field of the Devil's Dyke. This is an account of how we did it.

At 11 o' clock I arrived at the top of the Dyke clutching my Santa outfit and a Pod bag full of presents. The wind was Westerly with a lot of ''We're going to go South Westerly for you'' in it! My Ace looked as if it was going to stay on the roof rack.

Andy 'Hawk' Napolitan, Tony Henderson and a chappy called John turned up to survey the worsening conditions. By about 12.30 the visibility was down to nothing at the top and it looked as if Plan B had to be used: Russ Crowley and his trike.

After a quick bite to eat we arrived at the bottom of the Dyke to discover that the mist had cleared 100 feet below the top of the Downs. Russ decided he could fly alohg from Aerial Arts to the bottom of the Dykeunder the mist and land in the 'pimple' field. At 1.00 we arrived at the Aerial Arts factory and set up the trike. I legged it up to the factory to see if Nick could clear our take off with the farmer. This was O.K. (thanks Nick) and at 1.50 Russ and I powered out of the mud and crap that passed for an airstrip and headed for the landing field. We arrived over about forty five ecstatic kids and Russ put on a display of How to Make Father Christmas Poop Himself, before landing beautifully a few yards away from our audience.

The presents were handed out and the kids all trooped off after posing for the photographer from the Brighton Evening Argus. Russ and I took off and loitered in the cover of the mist until all the children had gone.

Back in the landing field we packed up and retired to my flat to watch the video Andy had made of the whole event.

I would like to thank all those who turned up on the day, especially Russ Crowley, who turned his trike into a mud ball in the terrible conditions. I think that the Southern Club Earned itself a million Brownie points with the local residents and perhaps relieved a little of the tension surrounding the future of the Dyke.

I would also like to thank my girlfriend Sue for helping to wrap sixty odd shaped presents and then manage to put herself into hospital for four days by headbutting the planet so that she would not get in the way!

NOTE ON SUNGLASSES

ULTRAVIOLET IS THE MOST HARMFUL RADIATION. IN RANGE GOING FROM 450 nm (just visible) to THE SHORTER WAVELENGTH >250nm (non visible). We are LUCKY IN THAT MOST OF THE SHORT WAVE U.V. IS ABSORBED BY THE ATMOSPHERE (TO PRODUCE O^3 i.e. THE OZONE LAYER) AND THE ADITIONAL MOISTURE IN THE ATMOSPHERE SORTS OUT THE REST. HOWEVER IF YOU ARE GOING TO FLY HIGH IN DRY CLEAR AIR, EXPECT TO MEET SOME HARMFUL U.V. (EVEN AT SEA LEVEL WE HAVE PROBLEMS) THE MORAL IS MAKE SHAW YOU ARE WEARING SUNGLASSES THAT SCREEN OUT HARMFUL U.V. (AND NOT EVERYTHING ELSE) AND THAT IF YOU ARE GOING TO FLY AT VERY HIGH LEVELS WEAR YOUR "U.V." GLASSES.

CHRIS BARTRAM

TIMES HANG GLIDING 30/1/88.

Pendry's perfect score

Bright, Australia (AFP) — John Pendry, of Great Britain, the defending champion, led his qualifying group with a maximum score of 2,000 points in the world championships here. The three other qualifying groups were headed by American pilots: Larry Tudor, also with 2,000 points, Jim Lee with 1,969 and Ted Boyse with 1,980.

The championships, being held in Australia for the first time, have attracted competitors from a record 31 countries.

Flying conditions have been perfect so far, with steady winds and strong thermals, but wedge-tailed eagles have proved a hazard. The birds, whose wing-span of 3.5 metres makes them the largest in the world, are a frightening sight when swooping on gliders.

LEADING SCORES: equal 1, J Pendry (GB) and L Tudor (US), 2,000pts; 3, M Newland (Aus), 1,987; 4, T Boyse (US), 1,980; 5, J Lee (US), 1,969; 6, J Bostik (US), 1,961; 7, M Jursa (Austria), 1,880; 8, M Garnet (GB), 1,858; 9, B Case (US), 1,855; 10, R Haney (Can), 1,854.

Eagles dive on hang-gliding Britons

TIMES By Ronald Faux 6TH FEB

The ambition of every hang-glider pilot is to emulate the birds, but the British team defending its world champion title in Australia is succeeding beyond the dreams of Icarus. Two pilots making lazy circles in the sky above Victoria have been mistaken for birds and attacked by territorially minded eagles.

Mr Len Hull, from Buxton, Derbyshire, was flying his glider from Murmungee Lookout when he was swooped on by a furious eagle which tore the fabric of his wing and ripped away the elastic holding one of his wing battens. He landed safely.

Three days later Mr Tony Hughes, from Lockeridge, Wiltshire, was attacked in his hang glider by two wedge-tailed eagles. One angry bird made a 5 in rip in one wing and the second gouged an 8 in by 10 in hole in the other wing. He also landed safely and a new wing was flown out to him from Britain.

The British pilots believe that their bright red hang gliders may be having the same effect on the eagles as it might have on bulls. Otherwise they are mystified by the eagles' aggression being reserved for the British team, which is facing intense competition defending its titles.

Mr John Pendry, of Brighton, East Sussex, the world and European hang-gliding champion and captain of the British team, reports that conditions in Victoria are quite unlike anything in Britain. The ground heat seeding the powerful thermals is so great that it recently buckled the local railway line.

The British team is also reported to be having problems on the ground. While heavily sponsored American and Australian pilots rely on sleek fleets of support vehicles, the British flyers, who are largely self-financed, make do with a collection of old bangers that wheze and break down in the desert heat. Despite all the handicaps, Britain still remains favourite to retain the title.

An official of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said of the eagles' behaviour: "It is not really bad but quite natural. They are simply defending their territory against a much bigger bird they think is trying to move in."

7TH JANUARY AT THE DYKE

First day its on at the Dyke in 1988, with a strongish W/NW wind of about 300 with a varying windspeed of 12 to 22 knots, sunny and dry, with a weak ridge of high pressure just edging in. One forecast said that winds would moderate throughout the day, but this did not occur until approximately 3 o'clock.

I was down at the Dyke before 9 o'clock as I expected the wind to be less strong then. As I rigged up on my own, another pilot arrived and started rigging his Ace. It was extremely cold so I rigged up in three parts, in between getting warm. After checking my Ace RX and clipping in I had the dubious honour of being the first pilot to fly the Dyke in 1988. My take off was smooth but the lift was poor. After about five minutes in the gusty strongish wind, I arrived at about 300 feet above take off. It was great though just flying..... especially as the festive holiday had been so useless I did manage one days windsurfing in a fresh south westerly. On my first flight my best height gain was 360 ATO, but it was easily lost in the heavy sink that was encountered from time to time, then you were taking a close look at the hill!! Soon the other Ace pilot joined me. After that Mark took off on his Magic. 45 minutes later I came in but was gaining height rapidly on my approach. I misjudged slightly but made a good landing in the road! The wind was a little stronger than I had imagined...

By now, 11 o'clock, the wind was stronger still and the two pilots who were flying were just parked into wind. Then the sky was empty. So we descended on the pub and drank coffee and chatted of course about hang gliding.

Dave Keepax had rigged his new 166 FR and was waiting for the wind to drop, this would be his first flight on the shiny new Magic. He wasn't disappointed, at about 3 o'clock, the wind was shouting about 10 to 12 knots. Mark Fisher arrived and quickly rigged up. Dave Keepax was off with a rather erratic take off. I clipped in and was off, soon the sky was full of gliders with plenty of airspace and everyone was making the most of the last 60 - 70 minutes of flying.

The sun was low in the clear west sky, and causing a very bad glare (a pair of polaroids is an absolute must in these conditions) I didn't have the visibility I would like approaching the north bowl, so I flew along the Truleigh ridge and thereabouts, so I could see all the gliders. The light's fading now, so I came in and landed, got my glider away and on the car before it's dark.

I wonder when it will be on at the Dyke again?

Eddie Horsfield

"WAS THIS MARK JOHNS SEEKINGOUT MORE SHGC RENEWAL FEES?"

Cartoon sent in by Hawk.

SAFETY AND NUMBERS

3 January 1988

Dear Mark,

In response to your editorial in the December Windsock concerning safety at the Dyke. My views are as follows, and considering I have been flying the Dyke regularly for 12 years now, in practically all conditions the weather has thrown at me, I feel competent to comment on the following.

Firstly, on any good day at the Dyke in a North Westerly (you may say when!) well the air is generally going to be overcrowded, and quite a few of the members or non members won't have flown for a long time. The inexperienced ones with low air time are most vulnerable when they get into a tight situation. Flying in crowded conditions, especially when the lift band narrows, means even more crowded airspace. Remember a pilot's vision is always about 20 per cent obscured. (At least! -- Ed) Two pilots in close proximity in say turbulent air can easily be in an airmiss or worse situation. I could write pages on these situations, but..... to the second point.

For some time now people have been coming into the sport and are soaring pretty quickly, and some are going onto hotships which can be quite easy to fly in good conditions, but it is always the take off and landing that are critical. They just don't have the necessary airtime, experience of so many different conditions, etc. In an incident close to the hill, an experienced pilot has a very good chance of responding immediately to the situation, but the low airtime novice has impacted with the hill before he can make any response. I feel that people joining the club with low airtime should do a set number of hours on 4th generation gliders before progressing to hotships.

The parapente pilots will make the situation at the Dyke even more tense. I am not happy with the situation at the Dyke.

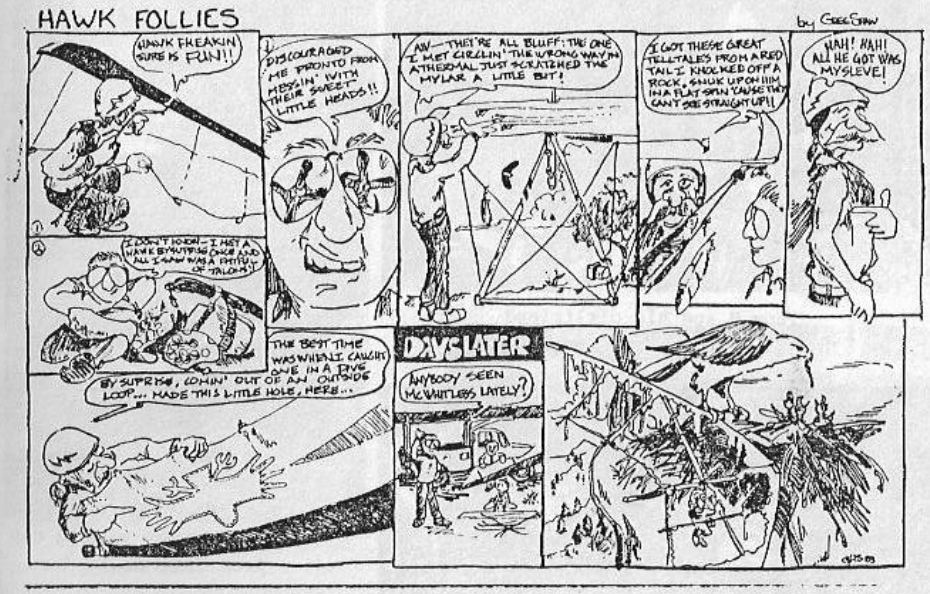
Perhaps the first consideration of the flying parachutes is financial—— Agents selling the parachutes— whether it will make the Dyke more crowded or dangerous seems secondary...

The modellers don't always observe the temporary rule of only flying in the bowl. In certain wind directions, they move out of the bowl on occasions. I have had words with one or two modellers, one was quite arrogant, I felt like throwing him down the bowl but common sense stopped me.

I suppose if anything I am slightly against the modellers, there are some nice ones but in the past at Mill Hill it was a 'Them & Us' situation. Then they argued that they were there first. When the dispute was going on between the SHGC and the Adur District Council they used to ring the police when we flew. So I have a slightly pessimistic view of all modellers. I would advise all pilots to check whether they have proper insurance cover, and also that they know the site rules.

Yours faithfully,

EDDIE HORSFIELD



THE SHGC BANQUET

11 DEC 1987.

Tony H and his girlfriend

Santa Claus disguised as Mark Johns

Would you buy a used car from this man?

Mark and Maggie
(Mark Johns took this one)

Johnny and Diane

Photographs by Mark Fisher

Ella Sanderson, Best Newcomer Award

Wally of the Year receives his Trophy

Joe 90 and Chris Bartram

Richard Rolfe on Trumpet

GRAPEVINE

BY MUCKRAKER

Windsock proudly announces the appointment of TWO overseas correspondents. They get this responsibility in return for having their Windsocks posted thousands of miles each month! 1. Dave Evans (congrats on your PhD, we won't call you the flying doctor) has joined the brain drain and gone to Maryland, USA (not the best hang gliding area, but he has his reasons!) 2. Brian Webb is our Australian correspondent, and has promised to keep the club informed about the scene over there. Unfortunately they haven't corresponded yet.....

****

Only one pound on the annual BHGA subscription would allow Wings! to be produced in colour six times a year..... That's about 4 per cent of the cost of an aerofoil upright.....
(Source: Tim Williams.)

****

News on the Thermal Snooper front:It has now proved itself as an excellent Bonfire Detector! a solitary bleep tells you the fire is some way off, whereas if it is close to the ridge and burning well, the thing goes apeshit.

****

Watch out in Feb Wings for a story concerning the SHGC.....

****

Sussex College of Hang Gliding are now official agents in England for the Bonfire Detector, even though these devices were only previously obtainable direct from the factory. With nearly two dollars to the pound, its probably worth the trip out there to get one at 98 dollars....
(Source: Digilog Inc., Alabama, USA.)

****

Grapevine hears from a reliable source in the Photographic Trade, that Duracell batteries are not always what they seem.... They are made in so many countries now under licence that even Duracell themselves have been known to import cheap copies of their own product! The Duracell copies are non alkaline batteries, which are half flat by the time they get here, and are liable to leak if left in equipment too long..... Be warned....

****

Who is this man who signs himself Lawful of London anyway???????

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Remote air release for wing mounted camera. Approx 20 feet long. As new, £2.00! Mark 0273 832478 1/88

MAGIC 4 166. Low airtime, Mylar l/e, 1 spare aerofoil upright. Condition as new. Phone; Mark Woodhams 0273 501043 10/87

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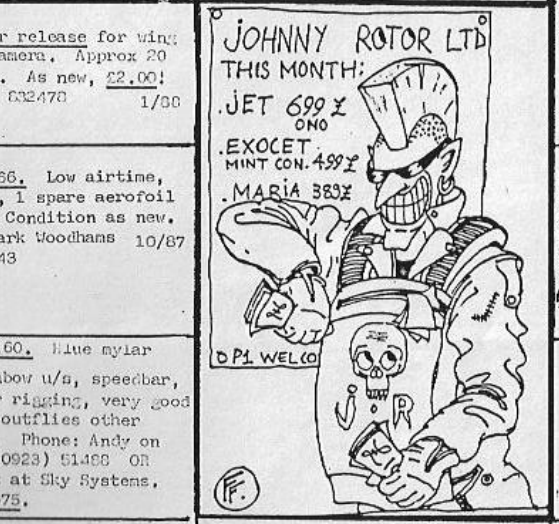
SOLAR STORM: - medium. Blue/orange/yellow, good cond. nice handling, owner moving onto 5th gen glider. £250. phone Robert on 01 464 6416. (Dromley) 1/88



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AERIAL ARTS SATYR 140: Yellow mainsail, red mylar l/e. High performance, double surface glider.Excellent handling. see league table. £300 ono Mark Johns 0273834984. 10/87

CLUBMAN 140. Very pretty glider with one very careful lady owner who is moving up in the world. £750. Small Airtime de luxe stirrup harness also available Phone Jane: 0737 765510 10/87

TO LET: Glider storage space to let, near Dyke. £2 per week Steyning 812679. 10/87

Lindsay Ruddock Microvario: Digital, white case, with mounted Diplex altimeter. Both instruments in perfect working order and good condition Ideal first vario/altimeter. £85. Mark Fisher. 0273-832478.

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MAGIC 4 166. V3 Orange mylar l/e. Excellent condition. £950 o.n.o. Phone David Harris 0273-550610 12/87

Camera: PRAKTINA LTI/3. With Pentax f2 Takumar lens. Good condition. £25.00. Mark on 0273 832478. 1/88

MAGIC IV 155: Blue l/e light blue u/s, V3, Speedbar Spring Tips, Tip fairings. Good condition. £1000 0923 51486 ANDY (Watford) 1/88

SUPP Harness: good cond. Blue complete with reserve Price: £90. Tony Hobson. Brighton [illegible] 1/