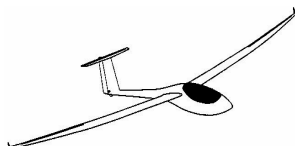


From the home of the *Scottish Gliding Centre*

Portmoak Press

Editorial – Ian Easson

Well, here we are with my 25th Issue of *Portmoak Press*.



Looking back at previous issues, I see that we have included various “regular” items, some more popular than others. We’ve had a go at crosswords and sudoku puzzles as well as the expected gliding and club related articles. We’ve covered safety and competitions, stories from yesteryear and some interesting pieces from our globe-trotting SGU members. For those of you who have contributed to *Portmoak Press*, I would like to say a big Thank You. Without your enthusiasm and efforts, there would be very little between the front and back pages. I would also like to encourage all members, new or old, experienced or ab initio, regular contributors or not, to consider submitting material for *Portmoak Press*. Details of how to do this can be found below.

During the last couple of months, the on-line members’ forum has been redesigned and, more recently, the web weather station has been revamped and the club’s 50 year plan was presented at the recent Information Meeting. Yes, the Scottish Gliding Union is certainly a club with an eye on the future, and a club that our members can be proud of.

Cut off dates are as follows: End of December for January, end of March for April, end of June for July and end of September for October. Material can be sent to me either typed or hand-written and dropped in my mailbox beside the payphone, or e-mail me at ian.easson@btinternet.com

In this issue:

Editorial – Ian Easson 1
 Board Members..... 1
 Weight Problems?..... 1
 Gliding on BBC Radio 3..... 2
 Letters..... 2
 The Final Flight?..... 3
 Club News..... 3
 Lost Parachute..... 4
 BGA Newsletter November 2006..... 4

Board Members.

Chairman	John Williams
Vice-Chairman & Winch	Douglas Tait
Treasurer	Kevin Hook
Technical & W.O.A.	Joe Fisher
Publicity & P.R.	John Guy
Membership Communications	Kate Byrne
Club Secretary	John Munro

Weight Problems?

No, this is not an article for those glider pilots having difficulty with the width of their fuselage (aircraft or personal). This is request for every reader (yes, even non-SGU members, who have visited us this year) to check the boot of their car, their trailer or any other personal hidey-hole to see if they have our set of K21 weights tucked away somewhere. We have looked everywhere and have even paid special attention to our grass-cutting activities to look for tell-tale lead lumps. If you find these weights please return them to the launch caravan, or if you are a visitor, e-mail me at the

address shown on the front page and I will arrange to pick them up



and return them to Portmoak. Either way, no blame being apportioned, these things happen.

Ian Easson

Gliding on BBC Radio 3

Gliding will feature in Radio 3s "Between the Ears" programme, this Saturday, 11th November at 1015pm. The feature, entitled Cloudscape, has a section in which John Williams, the chairman of the Scottish Gliding Centre at Portmoak reflects on the meaning and inspiration that he derives from clouds. If you missed the above item, you can "Listen Again" via the BBC Radio web site – select Radio 3, then the Listen Again option, then select the prog from Saturday's listing (*Ed*).

Letters

Not strictly speaking a letter to the editor, but more an open letter to the SGU Board, from Bruce Marshall:

Now that I'm no longer a director, I'd like to join in the normal SGU sport of being a nuisance to the board!

However, seriously, I would appreciate if the board could give some attention to improving the availability of aero-towing at Portmoak. Nowadays there seems to be little chance of getting an aero-tow unless there happens to be an aerobatic course or trial lesson session taking place.

Why is this? Well, we seem to have fewer and fewer regular tug pilots, and most of these generally have other irons in the fire, such as inspecting, instructing or even flying their own gliders or aeroplanes. There is also an understandable reluctance for tug pilots to take the machine out then have no customers, as members seem to have gotten out of the habit of taking tows.

Why do we need aero-towing anyway, when we have an efficient winch launching operation? Well, there are many days at Portmoak, particularly in summer, when a winch launch, however good, is just not good enough. The window between convection starting and the sea breeze arriving can

be very short, and it is very much a lottery whether you can get a winch launch at just the right time to get away - particularly if the soarable window coincides with the winch driver's lunch break, and if there are another dozen gliders trying to get launched as well! Furthermore, no winch launch, however good, will get you to thermals which are popping off over the Ochills, the middle of the Lomonds or even over Benarty, when the air around the site remains dead. Speaking from personal experience, I did a lot more thermal cross-country in the days when we had crap winches and therefore always had two tugs on the go. Not all of us have turbos or self-launchers, but many members have large investments sitting on the ground when they should be soaring. A tow is also valuable for getting into wave, as some of you well know, even when hill soaring is possible, as the transition can be either impossible or lengthy - and winter days are short!

There are now a number of other power pilots regularly on site who are not tug pilots - perhaps some of these can be persuaded to get themselves checked out for towing. Perhaps we need a tug pilot rota to cover the busiest days, which may not necessarily be at weekends. Or do we need to consider having a resident tuggie? Seems a shame to have the Pawnee under-employed, considering all the hard work which goes into keeping it serviceable.

I hope you can all give the matter some consideration at forthcoming board meetings, and I look forward to hearing some options for the way forward.

Bruce Marshall

....and a reply from Kevin Hook:

Bruce

I support your campaign. I believe that aerotowing is a key ingredient to cross country success - that is why we organise tuggies for the XC courses. It strikes me as a vicious circle in which lack of tuggies results in lack of cross country success which results in lack of



ambition which results in lack of demand. I welcome any ideas on how to persuade tuggies to get the machine out and on persuading the glider pilots to use it and discover how much more they can get out of the day after taking an aerotow.

Kevin Hook

The Final Flight?

I'm finding it increasingly hard to make time to fly but the forecast is good so I leave work and arrive at Portmoak to locate the Pilatus tied down in the South Field.

The DI shows that the tyres require inflation but otherwise all is OK and by mid-morning I've winch launched and I'm working some punchy, broken thermals on the north face of West Lomond.

After about 30 minutes I establish that the best lift is to the south of Auchermuchty but repeated attempts fail to make contact with any wave lift in front of what is obviously a wave induced cloud with a base of around 4,000ft.

As I fly under the cloud to about half a mile down wind of the leading edge, the lift becomes a steady +5 knots so, with the T&S wound up, I turn north, increase the airspeed to 60 knots to ensure a northerly track and climb steadily up through the cloud for a few minutes until I fly into clear air again at about 6,000ft in +6 knots.

Climbing steadily past the cloud tops at 9,000ft, I continue a normal wave climb to 14,000ft on oxygen, find a weak point in the wave then head north towards the next likely looking area of lift. I re-establish in 4 knots at about 11,000ft and tracking steadily southwest with occasional glimpses of the A9 I continue climbing to 16,000 ft well to the north east of Dunblane.

I have now been flying for more than one and a half hours and although, unusually, the cold is not too bad, I am minded to check my supply of comfort bags – none!

More importantly, 16,000ft allows a good overview of the cloud tops 7,000ft below and although I still have a very oblique view of the Kincardine Bridge through a small gap

away to the south east, it is obvious that to the east any gaps are now becoming few and far between. Heading back towards the general direction of Portmoak I ignore any lift and set my speed to 70 knots. When I confirm Auchterarder over to the west I am at 12,000ft and it is now time to dump some height doing what the Pilatus was built for. A few loops, Spins and stall turns (not very crisp as the Pilatus has a small rudder which seems rather ineffectual at this altitude), then back onto a heading for home.

I settle down on the T&S and compass as the cloud tops come up to meet me at about 9,000ft. Patience is the name of the game – and trying to relax as much as possible.

After a time, which seems like forever, and with about 7,000ft on the altimeter, I catch sight of the ground giving me a reassuring positional check. I select half airbrake, trim for 70 knots and estimate that I have a further 3,000ft to lose before seeing the ground again. At about 6,000ft it starts to rain but it doesn't last long and with a bit over 4,000ft on the altimeter, I catch some glimpses of the ground – and then Loch Leven ahead.

I lose height over the loch in an enjoyable manner, check the circuit etc., lower the undercarriage, trim to approach speed and complete a leisurely circuit, turning finals into the South Field where the Pilatus rolls gently to a halt and I lower the port wing onto the ground.

I push the glider a few yards and tie it down. I don't think I'll be flying again.

John Whitfield

Club News

The winch will be going off line as at close of play on Sunday the 19th November and is scheduled to return to use on Saturday 2nd December. This is to carry out the refurbishment programme outlined at last Saturday's Information Meeting. Should there be any changes to this plan they will be communicated through *pmkinstan* and the Club

Notice Board.

Following a reduction in the cost of Avgas, the surcharge for aerotows



will be reduced with effect from 20th November by £1.10, making the cost of a 2,000' tow £16.10 to members.

To allow us to meet the need for aerotows over the period of winch incapacity the club needs tug drivers. Please let me know if you can help in this capacity as I would like to put a rota together and avoid the obvious pitfalls. You can get in touch with me on 01505 690967 (my home telephone number) or by e-mail at douglas.tait@btinternet.com

Douglas Tait

with ear flaps, wired visor and fleecy lining in the launch caravan one morning this month just before launching. When I got back it seemed to have vanished - I was wondering if it dropped out of my bag and someone thought a warm hat was just the ticket for this month's cooler days.

I'd love to get that cap back - if anyone finds it could they hand it in to the office for safekeeping please.

Thanks.

Sally Woolrich

I've put a new topic on the Club News section of the Members' Forum, about a meeting that was held on 14th October for people who joined the SGU within the past year or so. A number of suggestions were raised, and this message is to invite any other members to add your thoughts if you wish, via the Forum (or email me).

Kate Byrne

Lost Parachute

The private parachute used by Bob Adamson and myself when flying KCW has gone missing. Its last known whereabouts was the hangar parachute store on 29 Aug 06. The parachute cover was still in the store, lying loose. We have given it a short while to surface, but now need to look a little deeper.

It is a 1996 GQ, Red, no real distinguishing features except that it used to have an inflatable lumbar support balloon which is still there but the rubber hose has broken off short so the bottom of the pack is permanently deflated. It also used to have a fleece backing which has been discarded but you can still see where it was velcro'd.

Recently, the red GQ of Walking on Air was found in the store in our parachute cover, giving an all-too-brief moment of hope.

If you have a red parachute in your possession can you please check that you do not have ours by mistake. In particular if you believe you have WA1's red GQ.

Keith Morgan

I believe I left a blue cap waterproof cap

Keeping a similar theme, the first item in the latest BGA Newsletter had me surprised. I can understand losing weights, hats, and even a parachute but

BGA Newsletter November 2006

BGA Stand

The new BGA exhibition stand has gone missing! If you know of its whereabouts please contact Debbie (debbie@gliding.co.uk) at the BGA office urgently. The stand is of the pop up variety and is packed in a black plastic container, not unlike a wheelie-bin.

Mode S Transponder Consultation

The BGA response to the CAA mode S transponder Regulatory Impact Assessment continues. We have previously stated that there may be occasions when we will request further input from our members - this is one of those occasions. We would be grateful if any individuals, or clubs, would post or E-mail (office@gliding.co.uk) a copy of any response received from their MP following recent contact regarding mode S. It is important that you identify the MP.

BGA Conference & AGM

The 2007 BGA Conference and AGM will be held on Saturday 10th March at the Hellidon Lakes Hotel & Country Club, near Daventry. As always, there will be a full programme of talks, working sessions and an exhibition. The annual awards ceremony and dinner will be held in the evening. More details, including on line booking, are on the BGA web site at <http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/notices/conference.htm>

2007 Competitions

Calendar

The competitions calendar for next year is



now available at

<http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/competitions/calendar.htm>

Good Practice Awards

The BGA wishes to encourage clubs to develop and share good practices in all aspects of their management and operations. Clubs, although to some extent in competition with each other, have demonstrated in recent years that they are willing to share ideas. To encourage clubs to help build our information bank, we are offering annual awards for the best contributions. For more information, see <http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/clubmanagement/documents/cub-good-practice-awards.doc>

Regulatory Responses

The BGA, in very close co-operation with our colleagues in UK sporting aviation and the European Gliding Union, has responded to two recent EASA Advance Notices of Proposed Amendment: NPA 06 2006 regarding future regulation of aerodromes; and NPA 14 2006 which raises the possibility of a number of significant and helpful changes to existing and planned European legislation affecting sporting and recreational aviation. The responses can be viewed at <http://www.egu-info.org/news.htm>

BGA Trophies

Would all trophy holders please remember to return these to the BGA office by the end of December.

Volunteer Safety Committee Chairman

The BGA Safety Committee remit is to maintain and develop policies for the achievement of an appropriate level of safety in gliding and soaring in the UK. Safety Committee output is an important element of the BGA Safety Management System. The BGA is seeking applications for the voluntary role of Safety Committee Chairman. The ideal applicant is likely to have previous aviation related risk management experience and significant sport gliding experience. Applications including a brief CV should be forwarded to Pete Stratten (pete@gliding.co.uk)

Women's Development Meeting

The Women's Development initiative continues with a meeting at Husbands Bosworth on 11 November, from lunchtime until 3.30pm. All are welcome: the agenda will include a debrief

of the season just past, feedback and ideas for development events for the year to come and some inspiration to fire you up through the cold weather with X-C techniques you can work on through the winter. If you are unable to attend but have some feedback on previous events, your achievements during the season, or suggestions as to what development events you would like to see offered during the coming year, please email Liz Sparrow (ebertoya@iee.org).

New Fire Safety Requirements

New fire safety rules affecting all non-domestic premises in England and Wales came into force on 1 October 2006. Clubs need to act now to ensure they have a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place. Guides and other assistance are available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162101>

CAA General Aviation Safety Awards

The CAA is inviting nominations for its General Aviation Safety Awards for 2006. The awards are presented in recognition of good airmanship or practical skills and abilities when faced with potentially serious incidents directly related to flying. Only one-off incidents that occurred during 2006 will be considered; awards are not presented for life-long service to aviation. Nominations must be submitted by 15 January 2007. These can be submitted online via the CAA website http://www.caa.co.uk/ga_award.

Advanced Met Course for Soaring Pilots

Lasham have announced dates for another of their two day Advanced Met for Soaring Pilots course. The course will be held at Lasham on 20/21 January and costs £89. This is a practical course tailored to the specific needs of soaring pilots, presented by someone who has had an extensive career in hands-on aviation forecasting in the Royal Navy. Full details at <http://www.lasham.org.uk/learning/met.asp>

CAA Safety Evenings

A reminder that the winter series of CAA safety evenings begins this month. A full list of dates and venues is at <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=224&pagetype=69>

Alec Stevenson

