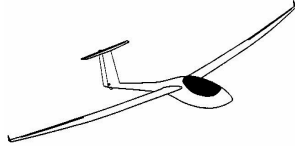


From the home of the *Scottish Gliding Union*

Portmoak Press

Editorial – Ian Easson

Issue 30 is being compiled just after Easter and I hope that, like me, everyone has completed their annual checks and are prepared for epic flights in the months ahead.



Weather has been mixed but visitors and members alike have been able to get a few decent days to explore the conditions around Portmoak.

Some members will go to great extremes to ensure better conditions and one such intrepid group went all the way to Bloemfontein in South Africa at the beginning of the year and Bruce Marshall reports on their experiences.

The clubhouse is undergoing some refurbishment work – the inside is looking great and is brighter and seems bigger, and the outside cladding is being replaced later in the year.

There have been a number of developments on the non-flying activities during the early part of the year and I would encourage all members to at least glance at the Board Meeting minutes on the notice board. Big news this issue is that John Williams & Kevin Hook bagged an impressive haul of trophies at the BGA awards night at the Hellidon Lakes Hotel & Country Club near Daventry. John picked up The Royal Aero Club’s Britannia Trophy for accomplishing the most meritorious performance for his flight of over 1,500km; the BGA 1000k Trophy (for the fastest 1,000km flight), The Enigma Award (for scoring the most points during the year) and the Wakefield Cup (Longest Handicapped Distance). Kevin claimed the L Du Garde Cup for scoring the most points during weekend flights (Weekend National Ladder), the Manio Cup (Fastest Handicapped 300km flight) – which John won last year, and the De Havilland Cup for the highest flight of the year.



Another member claiming a podium spot was Tony Brown. Not at a BGA event, however. For him, this was in a Hang-Gliding competition and his story, originally for the Skywings mag, is included here. Finally, the usual plea to 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. Cut off dates are as follows: end of June for July, end of September for October, end of December for January and end of March for April. 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

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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

Club News

Cross-Country Week

The date for this year's Silver Distance & Cross Country week has been confirmed as 8th-12th September 2008.

Details are as follows:

- Got bronze and looking for your silver distance?
- Done silver and still hoping for a 100km diploma?
- Keen to fly cross-country but don't have anyone to retrieve you?

The aim of the course is to help all of the above. Starting with a briefing at 18:00 on Sunday 7th, we aim to make sure you have all the equipment and planning to make your cross country successful. We aim to set tasks to take best advantage of the weather on each day, but if it is not soarable exercises will be set to convince you of the glide performance of your machine and to ensure that you go home with increased experience of field landings and retrieves. If we suffer non-flying days, we will discuss cross-country theory on the basis of your questions and worries.

Everyone will be expected to be available to retrieve one another, so land outs should be almost completely hassle free. Each pilot will be expected to ensure that his/her aircraft has a roadworthy trailer prepared for use before the first day's flying. Run by John Williams, Kevin Hook and Colin Hamilton, there will be limited opportunities to fly cross-country in a two-seater or to fly on a lead and



follow basis.

Bring your own glider or make use of one of the club's single-seaters. To take full advantage of the weather, there should be no more than two pilots per aircraft and one pilot per aircraft is highly recommended (the courts may not consider this to be a valid reason for murdering your syndicate partners!)

Facilities available for the week:

Junior, FUS

Junior, FFY

Discus, 388

DG505, 5GC when appropriate

Barographs for all club aircraft

Tug with pilot on standby for the week

Met, NOTAM and task briefings each day and...

Encouragement to give it a try

Please make your booking with Irene during office hours.

Duty Instructors

As Neil McAulay and Chris Robinson are now involved in booked flying at the weekends, they are no longer available to carry out duty instructing. Therefore volunteers would be greatly appreciated for the following dates:

Saturday 12th April

Saturday 24th May

If you can manage any of these days could you please email me at: sgcrosters@dsl.pipex.com and I'll update the online roster.

Vic Leitch

Shenington Expedition

This year's summer expedition is back to Shenington on the 9th to 24th August. This is the same place as last year when we were made very welcome. Their web site is www.shenington-gliding.co.uk.

As you will see they are about 5 miles north of

Banbury in North Oxfordshire on top of a low ridge overlooking

the vale of Evesham. It's a long but quite easy drive with only the first mile and last 5 miles not on motorway/dual carriageway.

They have winch and aerotow, although to get the best out of your time there you should be current on aerotow and have a cross-country endorsement. Bring your own glider or hire one from the SGU. If two people could share the club Discus and only stay for a week each then you would only have to tow it one way!

There are a number of B&Bs near by and the club has a bunkhouse at £5 per night.

So why not come and try those big fat English thermals, do a bit of cross country flying with no anxiety about a retrieve crew (unless we all land out on the same day!) and enjoy some craic.

I will be putting a notice up in the clubhouse in the next few days so just add your name to the list. Or drop me an email if you have any questions.

Mike Forster

Evening Flying

The nights are fair drawing out!

We're turning our planning to evening flying.

At the moment we've got Wednesday evening - aerotow only Colin Hamilton tugging / instructing Kevin Hook instructing with Tony Brown tugging and on Thursday evening - winch launching with Gerry Marshal, Alan Boyle and Ian Norman instructing.

We could really do with an additional instructor on Wednesday and a note of names of those prepared to do holiday cover on some evenings at some point during the 26 week season. We also need experienced, preferably post solo, pilots to help operate the launch point cable & glider retrieve during the first half dozen Thursday evenings until the new-comers learn the ropes.

Volunteers' names and when and how you can help out to me by email asap please.

Colin Hamilton

Out in Africa

So, what's it like then, gliding in South Africa?

Well, for a start, it's flat. *Flat as your hat?* Flatter than that. And it is also 4500 feet above sea level, of which more later. The landscape, in late summer, is a mixture of browns and greens. The dark green bits are usually tall crops such as maize or sunflowers, so no good for landing. The light green bits, of which there are rather a lot, are uncultivated grassland, or veldt, full of anthills, animal holes, rocks and other such nastiness. You will almost certainly break a glider trying to land in that, as one pilot [not in our party] did. That leaves the brown, preferably newly ploughed bits, as being the only safe outlanding options. There are also the white bits, which are salt pans, provided you avoid any soggy bits in the middle, and watch out for fences. And there is also the odd airfield, but they are rather few and far between, like the towns.

Is navigation difficult, then?

Well, the towns are so scarce, once away from the local Bloemfontein area, that there is never any doubt which is which. Main roads are long, straight and prominent, and some of the larger salt pans and reservoirs are helpful, but as many of the turning points are insignificant road junctions in the middle of nowhere, GPS is well nigh essential for finding them.

But what's the weather like? Aren't conditions supposed to be superb?

Well, conditions this year were not quite up to expectations. [Isn't this always so for gliding expeditions!] Having said that, they were excellent at times. Bloemfontein often seemed to be on the boundary between cloud and rain to the north and much better weather in the south. When we were able to get down there, we were rewarded with cloud bases up to 10,000 feet above ground level, which gave the opportunity to enjoy final glides of 70km or more, and to experience the odd sensation of thermalling on oxygen! However, cloud bases of "only" 5000 to 6000 feet above ground



level were more normal in the task area, between Bloemfontein and Kimberly. Particularly during our last week, high trigger temperatures meant a late start to convection, and the moist air often resulted in over-development into showers or thunderstorms only a couple of hours or so later.

Sounds a bit disappointing. Was it worth the trip?

Most certainly, particularly when we heard that Portmoak was flooded and unusable! In three weeks, I flew a total of 33 hours and 1700 km cross-country, 1000 of them solo. The two master classes I had in the ASH25 with Dick Bradley, the proprietor of Soaring Safaris, made the trip worthwhile in themselves, although I'm not sure how much of what I learned will be transferable to soggy Scotland with 3000 foot cloud bases! I also achieved my first 300km in thermal, only 28 years after my first wave one! George, John and Trevor all also did 300s, and Hamish covered 100 km before having to make a precautionary field landing to escape from a developing storm.

So you had some good flying then. Any adventures?

Well, every aero-tow was an adventure, owing to the density altitude and the strong convection.

Experience of wild tows gained at Feshie came in particularly valuable!

Retrieving John from a field on the fringes of the mother of all thunderstorms certainly counted as an adventure. Torrential rain and lightning strikes only a few km away were a great incentive, and world records for de-rigging an LS7 and loading it into its trailer may well have been set!

I also fell victim one day to the effects of the Bultfontein Triangle, where an irresistible force field can drag the unwary glider pilot down to the ground, and he will then become beset by myriads of tiny alien creatures, which are intent on extracting samples of his blood. The aero-tow retrieve could not come quickly enough!

Would you go again?

Certainly tempted. I now feel much more confident of being

able to make a decent stab at a thermal 500, if the conditions were up to scratch [although I still harbour an ambition to get my third diamond, like all my other badge flights, from Portmoak, in a standard class glider]. Dick and his team run a most efficient operation at New Tempe, with extensive briefings and task setting every day, and we found everyone very friendly and welcoming. The exchange rate means that food and accommodation costs are low, although glider hire and launch fees are similar to European levels. The journey time is about half of that to Australia, and the time difference is only two hours, so no jet lag. I would definitely recommend the trip to anyone wanting to improve their thermal cross-country skills, or even just to escape from the UK winter.

More information from www.soaring-safaris.com. New Tempe airfield can be found in Google Earth [in high-resolution] at S29 02' 20" E026 09' 30"

Bruce Marshall

Midlife Crisis

A friend of mine once likened his life to a game. "The one with the most toys at the end wins", he said, and I can't help thinking that we have a lot in common!

Nearer 50 than 40 now, with the crisis deepening and with the 'born again' motor biking and open top sports car phases behind me, my girlfriend Sarah could be forgiven her sighs as I 'rose to the bait' whilst crewing for my brother Malcolm in the UK Hang Gliding Nationals at St Andre in 2006 and committed to a hang gliding comeback!

The beer had played its part, as had the prospect of some sibling rivalry but with the chosen venue being the 2007 Belgian Nationals, a comp Malcolm had won for the previous two years, it wasn't long before reality dawned! Although my roots are in hang gliding and I have been actively flying sailplanes on and off for most of my adult life, it was already the end of the season, I had just 11 months to prepare and I hadn't been near a hang glider for a little over 17 years! I had very little time

with which to build on my previous 250hrs



experience and the clock was ticking. Living in Scotland was always going to pose its problems. Ronnie Freeman and Northumbria Airports were a little over 100 miles and 3 hrs driving away, but this was the nearest prospect for tuition and Ronnie's warm welcome would always make the journey worthwhile. October weather had its moments but 2 days of flying under Ronnie's relaxed though expert supervision soon saw me progress from short glides on the slopes of Moneylaws Hill to ridge soaring an Aeros target training glider at Longknow. The 'Club Pilot' theory examination Ronnie hit me with by announcing it on the morning of our second meeting was a bit of a shock, but my confidence was high and this, combined with three training sessions in total, saw me heading home in November with a 'Club Pilot' rating, 70 minutes airtime and eagerly awaiting the delivery of a shiny new Discus (intermediate Hang Glider). So far so good!

The next few months would see me doing very little Hang Gliding as family commitments, work and flying sailplanes at Portmoak all took their toll on my free time. The weeks passed quickly (as ever) and six hours of soaring the Discus at Bishop Hill, Glencoe and Carlton Bank and a couple of aerotow flights with Andy Buchan at Notts Aerotow club were all I could manage over the first half of the 2007.

Pretty soon it was July. The Discus was gone and I had a full 'Pilot Rating' (more exams!) with two launches and a total of one hour on my new Aeros Combat competition glider. (the Aeros Combat manufactured in Ukraine will stall at about 30kph, has a top speed of 110kph+ and LD of around 12:1) Judging by my two 'less than perfect' landings on the Combat so far, my two spare uprights (control frame) and one spare base bar were not going to be enough for a week of serious competition in France! But did I care about that? We were in Laragne which borders the French Alps 20km north of Sisteron and this was going to be great fun! Those of you who have been to France and flown in the Buche and Durance valleys will know what I mean. Hot sunshine, beautiful scenery with lots of high stuff and sharp bits, very useable

10/12,000ft cloud base (when its not blue), but most importantly (especially for a rookie like me) loads of landable fields! Hopefully though I wouldn't need these as I planned to make goal every day! Our arrival a week before the competition, coincided with strong winds and unseasonably cold, sometimes wet, weather which prevented much of the meaningful practice I was so desperate for but, as ever, Malcolm and I were cautious and our patience was rewarded with two good flying days. On the second of these, a 60km O/R flight in winds of 11-19km/hr to Pic De Bure (a 7500 ft wall of rock rising out of the valley west of Gap) ended for both Malcolm and myself after 4 hrs and 6 minutes with a synchronised arrival at the campsite landing field even though we had taken largely differing routes. This was only my third outing with the Combat and already a personal best. Game on! Three days later it was day one of the competition and I was being spurred on by Malcolm's wife Nicola and her belief that I could 'whup his ass'. Her words not mine and I couldn't help feeling that perhaps I was being teased.... just a little. Anyway, sticking close to Malcolm because I wasn't yet fully confident in rigging my glider unsupervised and my learning curve was still so steep I was straining to keep up with all the new information heading my way. I had a Brauniger Compeo flight computer but still didn't know fully how to process the task and enter waypoints into a route let alone utilise the vast array of functions in flight (The Brauniger is a top of the range instrument mounted on the control frame enclosed in a carbon aerofoil section pod and offers all of the functions of a modern soaring flight computer system with GPS). The first task was a mere 65 km and although I believed in my ability to get round, in all the excitement I failed to ensure that I was fully briefed on the local geography and likely thermal sources en route and took off armed with too little information.

Around the first two turn points and up with the front-runners I was facing a glide out to the next TP 20km away. We were fighting a strong crosswind en route and



the mid glide climb I so desperately needed did not materialise. At 500ft and still not sure of my landing field I glided out over a large deep rock quarry which was in full sun...surely here I would find my elusive thermal...but there was nothing, and soon the pull from below overcame my determination to stay airborne and I was on the ground and reflecting on the day.

It turned out that most of the field took the safe but longer route via high ground and ridge lift to complete the task. Of course Malcolm wasn't one of those taking a similar direct route to myself and finding my elusive thermal just where he needed it, eventually finishing 1st. I on the other hand was lying 16th out of the 29 competitors and needing to pull my finger out ...just a bit!

My inability to stay centred in some of the stronger thermals even with full control input was giving me cause for concern and matching the climb rates of others was proving difficult. It was previously noted by Malcolm that I was hanging high in the 'A' frame and the loan of a replacement hang strap brought me closer to the base bar, though still a tad too high. He joked (I hope) that if I showed improvement I would get to hang even lower for the later tasks and compete with him on equal terms. I, however remained unconvinced and was sure that my glider also lacked directional stability at speed indicating a more sinister problem. I opted to leave the hang height where it was, at least for now..... Stupid boy!

Four more competition days followed along with some memorable moments:

- The loud audible 'twang' from my glider bracing wires whilst fighting a punchy 10knotter as I transited from weightless to 2 G. Hang gliders ARE very strong after all!
- A timely reminder received over the radio from Malcolm to leave lift well before reaching cloud base at 11000ft. No luxury of spoilers here or an excess of speed to race out of danger. Make no mistake...but for the warning, I WAS heading into that cloud!
- A 15 km final glide on day 2 with the bar



full in and a 10km/hr headwind component and loosing a total of only 1500ft over the distance. I only wish that the wave had been marked by cloud!

- The realisation that physically this IS a demanding sport and old age is a terrible thing! By the end of day three and a cumulative total of just 9hrs of competition my arms were so weak I could barely lift them to remove my helmet!
- Perfecting a method of taking a pee whilst in the air and no mess!
- The realisation that my new Viper S harness was too small and the only option available to me in order to avoid what proved to be mind numbing pain in my legs on longer flights was to fly without glider bag or packing making a land-out very problematic. (no pressure to make goal then!)
- Piling into the goal field having executed a flare too early and too fast. Worried onlookers noting my lack of motion became quickly concerned. Further investigation revealed the cause.... my head half buried in the soil and pinned to the ground by the front rigging wires!
- Getting the wind up my bum whilst carrying back over the goal field after landing and being unceremoniously rolled inverted and dumped in the sail. I would not get assistance until the laughter had subsided.

What was to be the final competition day quickly arrived. Well into the groove by now and enjoying the competition I had, in addition to my first day score, achieved a 6th and two 4th places. I was lying in 4th position overall and the podium place I had 'joked' about was actually within reach! We had flown tasks ranging from 65 to 113 km and with two arrivals at goal things were starting to come together. Today's 70k task was looking like a walk in the park!

Lift was patchy and there was no sign of Malcolm for a while after crossing the start line. Although I didn't know it, I was leading the field for the first 30km but the

inevitable of course happened and Malcolm caught me up. I had a sudden greater sense of urgency now as he joined me low down in my 6knot thermal and eventually out climbing me as I wrestled to keep centred. Flying the second half of the task together and maintaining our lead it was agreed in true 'Team Ferrari' fashion that I would cross the finish line first to take the day! Malcolm was more than 1000 points clear of the whole field before today and didn't need the score. A 10km final glide (more for me with my 'directional instability') and I'm into goal first by a few seconds against the odds!

This then, it seems, would be a good place to leave the story... a third place in the competition overall and a great final day finish to end on a high!

However, I cannot lie as all was not as it seemed. A mere 10 lead points (he was nosing ahead for much of the second half of the task) ensured that that brother of mine had taken the final day from me by a whisker after all. It would seem that even when he is trying to lose, he still ends up winning!

My glider now takes up much needed space in my garage. The same is true of my harness and other hang gliding 'toys' in the house. (Sarah sighs again). At this stage and in line with the normal mid life crisis stereotype, they should all by now have been offered for sale to make way for my next 'project'. But Hang gliding deserves different treatment. The freedom, the flying, the people all come together to make this a fantastic sport and so, for me at least, this part of the game is not yet over.

Maybe mine isn't a midlife crisis after all, but a midlife quest. For what, I am not sure, but the delusion continues.

Tony Brown

Give Your Glider a Break

No I don't mean you should take an axe to your toy, or even, God forbid, deliberately bump into someone. No, what I really meant was, why not take your shiny piece of plastic for a holiday one of these years. I know many folk already set fourth for destinations anew with and without their gliders.

This article is aimed at those members who haven't yet, but might, with some



encouragement, like to try it.

For a number of years now there have been club expeditions to various airfields in the south. Usually it's a fortnight affair with some pilots going for both weeks, others just the one. Some of the clubs visited have been the Cambridge Club at Gransden Lodge, Soaring Centre at Husbands Bosworth and Bidford Gliding Club.

In 2007 it was the turn of Shennington to be invaded. Their site is situated on the Coxwolds near Edgehill, with the town of Banbury famous for its cross, some five miles away.

The expeditions tend to be in the month of August, usually the last two weeks. By this time the cereal crops such as Barley and wheat have been harvested, leaving rather large areas of countryside for us glider pilots to use as airfields if necessary. This takes all the hassle away from landing out, well nearly all, there's still the retrieve.

Why go all that way south you may ask, well mostly on a reasonable day the thermals start earlier and go on longer with higher cloud bases and stronger lift. Also the conditions cover a much larger geographic area, the terrain is friendly and so are the pub landlords.

So it was, that having spent a good part of the summer with Margaret touring round Greece and Northern Europe with 'Molly' motorhome, the way was clear to indulge myself in two weeks of gliding with the Vega at Shennington. I had a trouble free run down to the club site on the Thursday, though even with the Tom-Tom I got rather lost in the last couple of miles. After parking the trailer, I asked around for someone called Lee who was the contact person at the club, only to be told that he had landed out. Never mind I'd catch up with him later. For the first two nights I was staying with my brother who lives at Milton Keynes (somebody's got to) and I didn't get back to the club till the Saturday morning.

This was the start of Shennington's task week, so arriving early at the airfield I attended both the site and task briefings. These were very well presented

by Mark. There were two tasks, one of 240

km and a lesser one of some 150 km.

Shennington airfield has a very interesting history, starting life as a world war two bomber station, flying off Wellingtons and also played host to some of the earliest flights by planes powered by jet engines.

These days the relative quiet of the glider site operations is at times made up for by the roar from the large Karting track nearby. It's well worth a visit to the club's web site and clicking on history.

Anyway back to the flying. As I still needed to sort out a few things before take-off, I thought I would tackle the smaller task which was Edgehill - Bicester - Rugby. Taking an aerotow into a reasonable looking sky, I released at 2000 feet and was soon climbing towards cloud base, which was at about 3500 feet and later rose to over 4000 feet.

This was my first flight from Shennington Airfield, though I'd overflown it the previous year when flying out from Bidford. I'd also been on the airfield that year when on a retrieve.

It was a lovely day to be flying, warm, sunny and all the cumulus cloud activity seemed to be working. Visibility was good as I made my way east. There was no hurry and I wanted to take a look at the market town of Banbury before heading south towards Bicester. When flying from any new site I do like to orientate and familiarise myself with the surrounding countryside close to the airfield, picking out any likely looking fields for landing out. A useful exercise when faced later with a possible marginal final glide.

No thought of landouts today though as I cruised over the southern outskirts of Banbury. As the visibility was very good I could see extensively up and down the M40 as it snaked its way past the eastern side of the town. I don't know about you, but there's something rather smugly satisfying to be thousands of feet above a crowded motorway watching the masses struggling along. This sunny Saturday was no exception with lines of heavy traffic in both directions.

Time to turn right for the run down to the first turn point. Navigation was really simple, keep the M40 in

sight and drop off as it came abeam Bicester town, this time passing to the west. I was approaching the airfield from the Northwest and nearer to the club site I could see two gliders climbing away, joining overhead I saw that one was a Dart and the other a Kestrel. I hadn't seen a Dart for quite a long time, never flown that type. They were produced by Slingsby's and first flew in 1964 following on from the Skylark series of sailplanes. So there we were, Dart and Vega, wood and glass, from different decades but from the same stable, slowly milking this English of thermals.

Like Shennington, Bicester airfield has a fascinating history which again is admirably covered on the club's web site. From the earliest known landing on this area by a Bristol Box Kite Biplane in 1911, to the formation of a bomber squadron right at the end of WW1, Bicester has played host to numerous types of aircraft including the Blenheim, Beaufighter, Mosquito and Super Marine Spitfire. The first Handley Page 'Halifax' was assembled at Bicester and made its maiden flight from here on the 25th October 1939. During WW2 the aerodrome performed a training and maintenance role. Gliding operations commenced in 1956 and have continued till this day.

Anyway on with the task in hand. First turn point accomplished, now for Rugby, situated somewhere up there to the north. The good weather seemed to have brought out a dearth of glider pilots, for as I headed back up the M40 there appeared to be a prolific number of machines in the air. There was also the Mafia, three sleek and very slippery, mean looking craft tore across the sky in front, their competition pilots pouring on the speed as they strove for aerial supremacy.

Me? I'm quite content to trundle along at a grandfather pace these days enjoying the scenery. Though every once in a while increasing the speed a tad when the vario couldn't be ignored anymore. Keeping the motorway in sight on my left, I skirted by Hinton in the Hedges and flew back up past Banbury, but this time keeping to the east of the

town. Leaving the friendly M40 to wing its way even further to the



Northwest - great assets motorways , as long as you're following the right one - I looked ahead to pick out the small lake to the north of the old airfield at Chipping Warden and smack on track.

There's the lake but what's happened to the sky, no fluffy white cumulus, just vast empty patches of blue. What to do? When I was younger I would blast out on track and hope something would develop. Not now, now I tip toe out for a few km and if no cu appears on track, it's back to the energy line.

It was a case of staying high and waiting. Eventually friendly thermals were triggered off and I was able to progress towards the 2nd turn point at Rugby. I was flying under a FL 45 airway with the Birmingham CTA class D airspace crowding in from the left. So a need to watch the navigation and height. However there's a rather large expanse of water to the southwest of Rugby and the M45, which is visible from a considerable distance away, all of which makes life a lot easier. Into the turn point and the run for home.

With Edgehill as the goto feature in the GPS I just turned the Vega southwest and followed the needle. With a straightforward flight back to base it was time to relax and eat the last of the food items I'd taken - a banana. Great temptation to drop the skin out of the DV panel.

After a short while I realised that progress was considerably slower than previously. Checking with the GPS it was immediately apparent that I was flying into a freshening headwind. Funny how at these times clouds that worked, now don't, or disappear before you get to them. Back to concentrating again and a survival mode of flying. Anyway the Vega got me safely back home after a very enjoyable two and a hours aloft. Though that proved to be the best day of the fortnight, there were still some other interesting flights. One of these on a day when only two of us flew, towed up behind the tug flown by Mary Meagher. At first the thermals were rather ragged in the freshening wind but then gradually they arranged themselves into a band of solid lift, rather like a clouds

street but lined up across the wind. This band stretched many kms in length and it was possible to fly up and down in the lift rather like ridge soaring. However the whole energy line was drifting very slowly downwind and it was just a question of time before the airfield was out of gliding range. It had been one of those engaging flights, just an hour aloft but totally absorbing.

Many thanks are due to Shennington Gliding Club members for making us so welcome. Great hospitality which spread to producing some marvellous in-house meals that we were invited to in the evenings. Throw in some good local village pubs, beautiful scenery and it all added up to a very rewarding experience. I was even helped to de-rig the Vega at the end of my holiday by the winch driver. Thank you Kathy. So why not try it one year and give your own glider a break.

Frank Smith

[Note that this year's Shennington expedition is confirmed, so if you are interested, add your name to the list in the clubhouse – *Ed*]

Stop Press

I've noticed that the Photo Display board at the clubhouse entrance is getting a bit faded with the sun and I have been considering an alternative. I'm sure most people are familiar with the Digital Photo frames that are available nowadays and I thought it might be a good idea to position one of these inside the office just at the window into the lobby and have a constant cycle of photos changing every few minutes or so.

There are a couple of opportunities here...

1. Does anyone have a Digital Frame that they are prepared to donate to the club (suitable acknowledgement for the sponsor)?
2. If you want your photos to be included, please send them to me. I can take digital or original prints for local scanning (prints will be returned). I will need details of the subject as I will add suitable text to each image before loading.

Ian Easson

