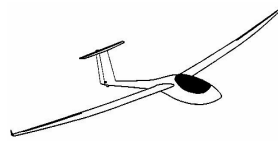


From the home of the *Scottish Gliding Union*

Portmoak Press

Editorial – Ian Easson

Issue 31 is a few weeks late as I have been fairly busy over the last couple of weeks. My BIG news is that I have finally finished writing the book on our club history. It is over 420 pages in length and is currently with Derek Piggott who has very kindly agreed to write the Foreword. With a bit of luck, copies should be available before Christmas. Prices are being finalised and all proceeds will go back into the club. Watch this space.



This issue is somewhat smaller than usual but this is not due my other activities, it is down to a serious lack of material from our members (this means YOU) so I am prompted to remind you to send me your stories and comments. >>> ->

Our new CFI, Bob Petrie, is on the lookout for suggestions for improvement and has issued the following item via Portmoak Instant:

If anyone has any suggestions, complaints or comments regarding any flying matter, email me or speak to me and I will be happy to talk about it. I hear all the various moans 3rd party and nobody seems to be able to supply the true version. Don't just spread rumours, go straight to the top. I am at Portmoak weekends and midweek so am available easily.

Bob.
Tel 01383729323
bobpetrie2@yahoo.co.uk

In the last couple of weeks, news has come through from Feshie that Ian Trotter has passed away following his battle with illness. Ian had been a long-time member and instructor at the SGU before moving to Feshie. This news

caught SGU members still reeling from the news that David Oswald and his wife had been killed in a road crash on the A9 earlier in the month.

Following the last Annual General Meeting, our Board of Directors has changed slightly – see the table below for details.

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 September for October, end of December for January, end of March for April and end of June for July. 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
Club News.....	2
Safety News	2
UK Gliding Grand Prix.....	2
Silver Success – Ian Easson	3
Duty Pilot and Duty Instructor rotas	4

Board Members

Chairman	John Williams
Vice-Chairman & Winch	Douglas Tait
Treasurer	Kevin Hook
Technical & W.O.A.	Joe Fisher
Membership Communications	Alan Boyle
Club Secretary	Alec Stevenson
Buildings & Property	Mike Cartney



Club News

Cross-Country Week

A reminder that this year's Silver Distance & Cross Country week has been confirmed as 8th-12th of September 2008.

Club House Refurbishment

The refurb has now been completed and I'm sure everyone will agree that the whole place looks pretty good – inside and out.

Scottish Tourist Board

We are expecting a visit from an STB inspector during September. His/her role will be to decide if we can continue to hold a coveted Three Star rating as an Activity Centre. This award is given on the basis of a number of criteria, including public access, professionalism of the club "officials" and facilities as well as the overall appearance of the site.

Fournier Club visit

The Fournier Club International (UK Branch) used Portmoak as their base for their Tour of Scotland at the end of July. They brought around 25 motor-gliders from the UK Spain, France, Germany and Italy. Unfortunately, the weather kept them grounded for a number of days but they did get a couple of short trips in. They all left on a particularly good day and their departure provided some excellent photo opportunities.

Club Website

Our club website has a new web-master. Vic Leitch is our man and he is on the lookout for items of interest as well as suggestions for improvements. Check out the site and let Vic know what you think <http://www.scottishglidingcentre.co.uk>

Discus B (388)

Our club Discus is back on site following repairs in Poland. It has been test flown and is ready for club use. Pilots should pay particular attention to the new placard information relating to minimum cockpit loads.

Safety News

There is a disturbing trend for vehicles and pedestrians to take the "lazy" route to the SW wind launch point.

When we are using this launch point, it is normal for aircraft to land adjacent to the overflow car park area, putting these pedestrians at serious risk of injury. Please access the launch point via the peritrack to avoid this risk. If you do have reason to walk/drive across landing areas, please keep a continuous lookout. Remember that there are novice pilots in the air at most times who may not be able to avoid you and who may be put off by an obstruction in their landing area.

Vehicles taking a short cut over the grass to avoid the car park are adding to the already serious damage to the grass in this area. Please drive via the roads and car park taking the shortest possible route across the grass. We have the equipment to repair damage to the roads, whilst repairing damage to the grass and its drainage system is a much slower and more expensive process.

Cable retrieve vehicle drivers, please remember that the same procedures apply when returning to the winch from the launch point.

Bob Petrie (CFI)

UK Gliding Grand Prix

Hot on the success of the Olympics, our glider pilots are stepping up to the mark to compete in the UK's first Gliding Grand Prix. The following information has been provided by the BGA:

UK Grand Prix Update and Invitation

The UK Qualifying Grand Prix will be held at Lasham from September 1-7.

Preparations are going well and the public day is shaping up to be a fantastic day out - not just for gliding and aviation enthusiasts but for the general public as well. The public website is now live and taking bookings for free tickets and advance car parking tickets along with tickets for the evening party at <http://www.gp2008.co.uk>.

Chris Lewis, the chairman of Lasham Gliding Society, is



inviting all UK pilots to come along and take part in the excitement - you can read his invitation at <http://www.glidering.co.uk/documents/gp08invite.pdf>

Silver Success – Ian Easson

Just as I was finalising the previous issue of *Portmoak Press*, I finally bagged my 50K. As you would expect, I wanted to write about my success but I agreed to give the exclusive to Helen Evans for her final issue of S&G and agreed to hold off printing the item in our own mag until this issue, so here it is.

If at first you don't succeed...

Silver has been my goal for at least the last three years, if not more. Oh I'm not talking about all three legs - it was the 50K leg that was proving to be difficult. The five-hours was the first in the bag, way back in May 2001 when I flew one of the club Juniors around Portmoak – I recall that it didn't have a vario, just an empty hole in the panel. A new experience for me, and a remarkably quiet flight without the chirping and groaning of the vario. I needed two attempts at the height-gain as the first one was without a barograph, but I managed to get Basil's signature on my documents in April 2003. The 50K leg was thought about, talked about, planned, prepared and even attempted during the following years. My first attempt ended with a field landing in the Junior near Elcho Castle to the east of Perth – about 18K from Portmoak. Second attempt was with the club Pegase 101. After an aerotow and a remote start over Dunning, and a couple of decent thermals I set off towards Kippen at the other side of the Fintry Hills. Just as I entered the upper valley of the River Forth, the sky darkened and I decided that I could go no further and set down in a field near the Blair Drummond Safari Park (Lions and Tigers and Bears – oh my!). No sooner had I returned to the glider after speaking with the land-owner and calling the club when I was confronted with a severe thunder storm and as I sat in the cockpit I was a bit uncomfortable when the forked lightning started hitting the ground in the next

field. Peter Clayton retrieved me that day we both got drenched during the de-rig.

March 2008 presented me with a couple of weeks off and I thought I could use the first couple of days to get my annual checks completed then take advantage of any “good” days that came my way. Although the weather was not accommodating, I did manage to fly on most days during that first week and so I did achieve what I set out to do. On non-flying days I gleaned useful info and tips from various instructors and pilots and I was definitely “up for it” the following week. Once again the weather was not helpful but on Wednesday 19th I was at the site bright and early and had my name at the top of the list for the club Discus B. I had been advised not to go too early as the day might improve around mid-morning but being restricted to the club fleet you have to be flexible enough to accommodate other pilots. Fortunately, the only other pilot looking for the Discus that day was Brian Cox and he just wanted to stooze around locally. We agreed that he could take the first two launches and I would wait until lunchtime. The launch line was getting very busy by the time I was ready to go and I had my Colibri and PDA set up with three TPs, each over 50K away. The plan was to head off towards any one of them depending on where the energy lines were. Just before the cable was attached I glanced at the windsock and was very disappointed to see that it had gone completely limp! Here we go again, I thought, another useless day. As the cable dropped away I turned to the north towards Bishop Hill and only managed one pass before finding myself back on the ground at Portmoak. I don't believe this! Back on line for a second attempt and this time the wind is better but from the north now. Chris Robinson attaches the cable and says “Try Benarty Hill this time – and don't come back!”

At the top of the launch, I spot a couple of gliders soaring the face of Benarty and set off to join them. After a couple of beats I am at the top of the stack and well clear of the summit. I find a narrow core of stronger lift and get a healthy climb in company with Z Goudie



in his Discus. As this lift peters out I push north over the loch and fail to find anything decent so scuttle back to the hill for another top-up. I repeat this cycle for almost an hour and nearly give up. Then on yet another push over the loch I centre under a good thermal that takes me to cloudbase of around 3,000ft. I move along to the upwind side of the cloud and find zero sink at the edge. It's very weak but it is smooth so I hug the side of the cloud with my wingtip just on the edge and after a couple of beats I am "established" in one-knot, but at least I am not sinking. It takes me almost another half-hour to make anything out of this but by looking at the cloud shadows I spot another gap to the north. I can't see it over the top because of the clouds ahead of me so slide out of the end and make a gentle dive through the equally weak sink and pop up the other side in the, by now familiar, one-knot lift band. At about this time I notice that my Colibri is telling me that it has no satellites and therefore does not tell me where I am in relation to my TP, oh and by the way, my PDA has also decided to switch itself off due to low battery. OK, back to the good old fashioned map-and-eyeball. I see Perth to the west and the Errol parachute centre to the east and I know roughly where Drumshade and Forfar (two of my TPs) are so set off towards that general direction. The area is easily recognisable thanks to a number of uniquely shaped lochs so I am very relaxed about the whole thing. By using this very weak wave system, whose wavelength is small enough for me to meander upwind without losing too much height I enjoy panoramic views of the snow-topped mountains to the west and the Montrose Basin over on the east coast. I notice that the Colibri is back on-line again, though I cannot work out what has caused the problem in the first place, and it confirms that I have less than 10K to run for my first TP of Drumshade (Angus GC). OK, do I just round the TP and head home? What happens if I do this, and make it back to Portmoak only to discover that the logger has no trace of me ever being here? Decision made – I'll round the TP then land a couple of kilometres further north just to make sure of my 50K. The Colibri steers me

right over the TP and bleeps almost apologetically at me – despite the fact that I am turning overhead Drumshade, I have great difficulty spotting it until I see a couple of trailers behind a hangar. The Angus GC is only a weekend club and I would like a few more km just to be sure, so I set off towards Forfar. I arrive overhead south of the town at around 3,000ft and have a long leisurely look at the fields below. There are plenty to choose from so I select nice long field with a slight uphill slope and no obstacles - next to one that has a tractor rolling the soil and providing an excellent wind indicator for me. My field has very early barley so I land along the gap between the young crops. I speak to the tractor driver who gives me the phone number of the landowner. I ring him first and he asks if he can bring a couple of children to see the glider and, of course, I agree. I phone the club and Irene, after establishing that a) I was OK, and b) the glider was OK took control and within minutes John Williams was on the phone. Where was I, what sort of field was it, would he be better with the 4WD? Sorted, and within an hour and a half he and Kevin Hook were turning into my field. So, for me, an epic flight – nothing compared to John and Kevin's normal "milk-runs", but boy did I enjoy that flight – and that's what it's all about. My thanks have to go to John and Kevin for fetching me and to numerous instructors and people at the club who have encouraged and taught me throughout. I wonder how long it'll take me to get my Gold badge?

Ian Easson

Duty Pilot and Duty Instructor rotas

These rotas are now interactive and are available from the club website. The following link takes you straight to the rotas page. It's easy to follow...

<http://www.dutyman.biz/dmmain.aspx?id=S0001434>

