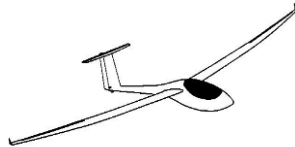


From the home of the *Scottish Gliding Union*

# Portmoak Press

**Editorial**

Who would have thought it? Here is issue 40 of Portmoak Press. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the club mag over the last TEN YEARS! We have had some excellent stories and articles from new members as well as a reliable band of regulars providing alternative slants on all things even vaguely associated with our excellent sport of gliding. As every editor knows, the content is nothing without contributors and readers and I feel very fortunate to have access to club members who are not shy about putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboards. Thank you.



So, what's been happening since last issue? No-one needs to be told about the weather and its impact on our ability to operate but I need to apologise, in advance, to everyone who has recorded their achievements on the club notice board since October and are expecting to see their names in the next issue of *Sailplane & Gliding*. As S&G deadlines approached, I penned some general news and expected to copy down the names from the list in the club house but, alas, the weather got the better of me and I was unable to get over, or indeed to phone as no-one else had made it to the club either. Rest assured, your names will be in the second S&G of the year.

As I compile this editorial, I see from John Williams' blog <http://scottishglidingcentre.com/argentina2010/> that he is awaiting confirmation of a new UK 3 T/P record of 2205km. Well done John and good luck for the rest of the Argentina "season".

Kevin Hook is moving to take up a new post at Denbigh Gliding (<http://www.denbighgliding.co.uk/index.html>)

and I would like to thank Kevin for his help and support over the years and

wish him well in his new venture. Well done to Pete Benbow as he takes over Kevin's seat in that nice warm office.

I don't want this to sound as though I am "touting", but...

I recently visited the Blood Donors (first time in more than 30 years!) and, over a cuppa, I had a chat with the publicity lady. I mentioned that I had seen the TV advert and that "it had worked for me". She explained that, due to budget cuts, the whole TV ad campaign would be ceased and she was on the lookout for other ways to bring their need to the attention of "the public". We talked through some options and I offered to include a small ad with a link to their web site in Portmoak Press. I am awaiting some art work with the Blood Donor logo but until that arrives, can I ask anyone interest to check the following link: <http://www.scotblood.co.uk/> 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*. 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](mailto:ian.easson@btinternet.com)

***In this issue:***

Editorial.....	1
Board Members 2010.....	2
Club News.....	2
Safety Officer.....	2
Wanted – Software Developer(s).....	2
Double Dutch.....	2
Why I wish to fly.....	4
Photos.....	6



**Board Members 2010**

Chairman	Douglas Tait
Vice-Chairman & Membership	Alan Boyle
Secretary	Alec Stevenson
Treasurer	John Ferguson
Buildings & Property	Pete Benbow
Technical	Craig Chatburn
Marketing & Sales	Chris Robinson

**Club News**

Friday evening lectures are behind schedule due to the weather. Please check the notice board and website for the up to date list. These are lectures/talks on a variety of gliding related topics held over the winter months. They are pitched primarily at new pilots through to pre-Bronze and pre-Silver, although they are open to all members and some topics may have a wider appeal. The talks will normally be held in the Briefing Room with the first talk starting at 7:30 p.m. There is a break for refreshments before the second talk and we aim to finish around 10:00 p.m.

A reminder that anyone wishing a meal at the club before the start should contact Irene, preferably a day before.

Dave Thompson [d\\_thompson@btinternet.com](mailto:d_thompson@btinternet.com)

**Safety Officer**

Please note that a CAA Safety Evening has been organised at the clubhouse on Tuesday 22nd March 2011 (time, and exact venue to be confirmed – details will be published in due course.

Ricky Jackson

**Wanted – Software Developer(s)**

As a result of some conversations with John Birch at the BGA Conference, I said I'd see what could be done about gathering some interest in developing an electronic logging system for club use.

The proposal is that we should develop an electronic log keeping system that:

1) Removes the need to transcribe log

sheet entries to accounts

2) Makes life as simple as possible for log keepers and instructors in two-seaters

3) Uses Smartphone type devices to call web server back end facilities (via wifi) to create the entries, pilot details, glider info etc.

4) Allows a bare launch point - if required - i.e., the Instructor can by pressing the odd button record the pilots, glider and the launch and land single-seaters wouldn't have a facility to self log so to speak.

If it all goes horribly wrong we revert to paper logs. Any real-time developers out there who fancy a bit of a challenge?

The work would be open sourced, sorry can't promise pay, just kudos.

I'm anticipating that some of the Edinburgh students might stick their hands up and that a larger group of Uni students, e.g., maybe including the students who visit from Bicester might be a good set.

Anyway, please let me know if you have the skills and are up for the challenge.

John Ferguson [john@the-fergies.com](mailto:john@the-fergies.com)

PS Non student types welcome too

**Double Dutch**

Having visited Austria with 'Molly' Motorhome in 2009 it seemed an interesting idea to see what Germany had to offer in 2010. One thing for sure was the abundance of gliding clubs and once again, as on other trips abroad, Margaret searched out a few sites which lay close to our intended route. After a ferry crossing from North Shields to Ijmudien in Holland we stopped at a campsite near to the town of Venlo which lays to the Southeast of the country and not far from the border with Germany. It had been our intention to only stop a couple of nights but battery problems caused us to prolong our stay. So we took the opportunity to use our bikes and cycle into Venlo where we wandered round like good tourists do admiring the sights, then took time out to have an ice cream sat overlooking the river. It was a beautiful day and there beneath a

towering cumulus cloud just happened to be a glider throwing lazy circles in the sky.



Margaret caught me looking up and gave me that look. The glider was a good mile high and could have come from an airfield some distance away, nevertheless on our return to the campsite I enquired of the site owner whether there was an airfield nearby. Indeed there was he said, to the southeast of Venlo and believed they had gliders there.

Back in the motor home fired up the laptop and found their web site with a contact number and the next day which was a Sunday I gave the club a ring. Unfortunately all the slots for guest flights had been booked, perhaps if I rang tomorrow, now where have I heard that one before. We spent the rest of that day cycling, which is always a pleasurable pastime in Holland especially as it's all on the flat. We rode our bikes along leafy lanes and breathed in the heady scent of wild flowers, drank coffee at a small roadside café, sat outside with the sun warm on backs.

Come the Monday morning and it was back to the serious task of phoning the gliding club. Eventually someone answered and I trotted out the usual request with this time a positive result, be there between three and four o'clock. We had an address, so with the TomTom set for bicycle mode off we went. All went well 'till we hit major roadworks barring our path, nothing for it but to backtrack and with Mr Tom's (that's what we call the device) help we eventually found the airfield.

The club operated from a very large grass airfield with their hangars etc. set off to one side. I made myself known to the duty instructor who in turn introduced me to another instructor named Luke who had an unpronounceable surname. Luckily he spoke very good English like many of the Dutch people. He told me that as soon as a two-seater landed we could fly.

While we waited, there was a chance to chat about gliding in our respective countries. They were a winch only site but sometimes took their machines elsewhere to aerotow. While the disruption caused by the volcanic ash was taking place the Dutch Aviation Authority grounded everything, including gliders.

Luckily the German border was very close by and as there

was no ban on glider flights there, Luke and others from the Venlo club trailed into Germany to continue flying.

It wasn't too long before a K21 appeared in circuit, landed and I was soon strapping myself into the front seat for my jolly. I'd told Luke of my gliding experience and he kindly allowed me to do the launch. He said some nice things about the way I was handling things until some three quarters of the way up he suddenly said something about height and literally heaved back on the stick, which no doubt gave the winch driver a great plan view of the glider, but did very little I suspect to enhance the climbing abilities of the K21. But hey! If that's the way they like to do it. I must admit I fully expected a bang and a parting of the ways, but no - we sailed on up and released at about 1300 feet. Whenever you fly abroad you're faced with instruments which read in metres for height and kms/hour on the ASI. This leaves me struggling to convert to imperial units for the whole flight.

We hunted for thermals but without success and we were soon joining the circuit. The flight had cost me thirty euros. Luke insisted that he paid for a second one saying that I couldn't go back to Scotland after just one circuit which I thought was very generous of him. So back in the cockpit and once more we're travelling up the wire. I'm on the controls. We'd arranged before take-off that after the launch Luke would take over and use his local knowledge to hunt out any thermal activity. As we neared the three quarter point of the launch I knew what was coming and in fact I was going to beat Luke to the punch, but I just couldn't do it. Sending the K21 vertical seemed drastic in the extreme, Luke obviously thought otherwise. The day looked quite promising but even with Luke's prowess the glider sank lower and lower until, with no evidence of lift, it was almost time to head back. Then we ran into a patch of very weak lift quite close to the overhead of the winching operations. Rather than move away, Luke radioed down to the launch point to warn of our close proximity. With infinite patience and skill

Luke gradually climbed away, this allowed me to run an eye over the



surrounding countryside. Later I took over and we climbed to 4000 feet.

I'd mentioned to Luke that we were staying on a campsite near to the large village of Grubbenvorst so Luke pointed me in the right direction and we set off on a mini cross country. Once over the village I could clearly see the site of Camping Kompass, our motor home and the very distinctively shaped potato field next to it.

On the return part of the flight we flew along the River Mass with Luke pointing out various features including a running track which he used. Then it was time to lose height with some side slipping to bring us into the circuit. As we were coming down final Luke thought we were rather high and I pulled out more airbrake which had us I thought in an undershoot position, but Luke seemed to be happy enough.

It had been a very enjoyable experience flying in another country or should I say above another country. We chatted some more as we waited to be retrieved, he was telling me about his own glider, an Antares just like John William's. In fact he knew all about John's activities.

Back at the launch point Luke apologised to Margaret for keeping me away for so long, which nicely took the blame from my shoulders. Another country listed in the log book, funny thing I never did get to fly in Germany, maybe next year. I did mention to Margaret as we were leaving Germany that I should like to visit their famous site at the Wasserkuppe, she said what do they do there, I replied 'Keep Chickens'. So two flights in Holland, hence the title - 'Double Dutch'.

Frank Smith

**Why I wish to fly**

- a flight with John Dunnington.

A few years ago I was staying near Seyne, a small town in Haute Provence, at the start of May for few days. On my second but last day, I noticed there was a gliding club along the road so went and had a nose around, which resulted in an invite back the next day if wished to experience

a flight. Next morning the weather was poor. However, that afternoon I managed couple of what I now know as "circuits". Just as I was leaving the launch point the pilot called me back and said we should go again. We flew for around 90 minutes over a landscape of snow covered mountain tops only returning to the airfield as the lights of various near-by villages started to appear out of the dusk, - the flight was fantastic. Having had this wonderful experience, along with couple of flights with the ATC as a teenager, it has taken me a wee while (20 years or so) to follow up a dream that I have always felt is beyond my reach or out of my confidence zone.

About two years ago I came to the Scottish Gliding Centre to enquire about courses and membership with the intention to do something about this interest. Yet I still did not join immediately despite Irene's warm hospitality and welcoming talk. So one Saturday this August, I came to the club with a mission that I wish to learn to glide, so Irene "warmly" welcomed me and then fobbed me off to a club member by sending me to launch point. With my name last on the flying list, I observed the goings-on and procedures at the launch point and started to muck-in if possible. I was rewarded with a hanger flight at the end of the day and on returning to the clubhouse I signed up for "The learning to glide package" and returned the next morning at 08:15.

For my own reasons I decided to throw myself into to gliding with a mixture of flying at weekends, Thursday evening and some booked flying as I was keen to learn intensely before the end of the three months. I had been getting in a lot of positive instruction and finding the Thursday evenings great as well as meeting a great bunch of people. Having had a couple of my booked flying days cancelled due to bad weather, I was keen progress with my instruction with Chris Robinson. This particular Wednesday the weather was fine and I'd had a couple of flights that morning and after lunch the launch point became busy with gliders along with the University flying freshers, it was the



busiest day that I had experienced.

I was busy helping out at the launch point when I saw the Duo Discus come across from the hangar, I had seen this aircraft in the hangar and had much admired it. As John Dunnington was preparing the glider to go online, he asked "if I'd flown today", I said that I was on a course with Chris and I'd had a couple of flights that morning. At that point John kindly offered me a seat in the Discus if I wished for a flight. At this point I couldn't believe my luck but also felt in a difficult situation as I was committed to the one-day course. After a quick chat with John I radiod Chris asking if he would mind if I dropped off the course as I'd been offered a seat in the Duo Discus.

Lucky - Chris's reply was "Go for it". John explained that he wasn't planning on being back until after seven and was looking to get to 12000ft, was I okay with that? - I replied "of course". John found me a parachute while I got a drink, an extra bit of clothing and found a camera; we got settled and strapped in, did checks and waited for a cable.

As "take-up slack" was called I still couldn't believe my luck as we launched off the winch, we turned right at the top of the cable and headed towards "Bishop", there were gliders already working the hill and we joined them. This being the first time as a P2 I was in the rear seat of the glider the experience was totally different as well as a different aircraft. We gained some lift from the hill and worked it for a beat or two, while looking for some thermal activity, we got to about 2500 feet and headed slightly north of Bishop, we had already got higher than I have been before and further out from the airfield. John explained that he really was looking to try and get into wave but needed to get to just over 3000ft and he would use the engine if we couldn't find any more thermal activity. So a wee while later he motored up to 3000 feet and in the direction of the RiverTay where we started to experience some good thermal activity which looked like it was pushing us towards some of the wave that was forming. John kindly explained what he was looking for and how to get into the wave.

Virtually at that point we got into the wave

which was confirmed by the Vario making a noise that I had not experienced before in such a sustained manner.

John worked around the estuary of the Tay and back towards Perth avoiding the drop zone for the parachute club and kept on gaining height. Before long we were at 9000 feet, the wave becoming stronger and so smooth. The views were amazing, a beautiful clear late summer afternoon and the view as far as you could see. Before long we could see Dundee, Leuchars and St Andrews. Still climbing John took the decision to head towards Dundee keeping clear of the various Airways & Airspaces. As we headed towards Dundee you could clearly see runways at RAF Leuchars. We reached our height of 12,000 feet in what seemed no time at all any further height again was inhibited purely by the fact that I didn't have an oxygen mask. Over the radio there was some chat from other glider pilots who were up at 14000 feet + and further north. To me it was a very different world and totally different experience - I was bowled over.

John suggested that we should maybe go a little further as we had time, so we headed north east still in good wave. He also kindly gave me control, so allowing me experience flying in wave, which was totally different from what I'd expected – fantastic. It felt like we had only been up for short while when John commented on the outside temperature being minus 5 and that we were around 60 miles from Portmoak.

He navigated his way around the airway and decided that we should head towards Montrose and to make that our turning point so we flew to Montrose turned and reluctantly headed back towards the airfield. I believe we are approximately 75 miles to run at this point.

As we started our return leg I notice that the clouds had changed somewhat in the direction we were heading but we still had a good amount of height. We worked our way back towards Dundee travelling slightly further inland to cross the Tay. It was fantastic. Scooting around the different cloud

formations and looking for the openings that would allow us so drop





below the cloud level with good visibility to complete the home run. I was unsure whether we would find an opening but John's experience was wonderful and sure enough where he said there would be an opening there was. We drop from a very bright environment to below the cloud level into almost an overcast landscape with theatrical rays of light breaking through the clouds onto the familiar looking landscape of Perthshire. In the distance we could see the light dancing on Loch Leven, so with good height we headed in the direction of the Loch at 80 knots. We came alongside Bishop and could see the airfield still with plenty of height in the bag, so we lost the excess and started our circuit we finally landed on the South field at 7:10, 3.5 hours had just passed like that. We got out and pushed the glider off the main part of the landing strip. John went for the car and I stood by the glider, a bit stiff from the flight but not quite knowing how to express my absolute joy of this experience.

After putting the glider into the hanger we went to clubhouse, I thanked John before he departed and sat for a while trying to absorb everything that I had experienced before driving home. During the flight and throughout the whole experience with John he explained how he came to gliding and his journey so far. I found this so helpful and so inspiring not only did John give me a wonderful experience through his generosity he also gave me confidence and the belief that my own confidence could allow me to be in a similar situation one-day. That night I went to my bed like a small schoolboy who had had all his Christmases delivered at once, I did eventually get to sleep. Next day I had to pinch myself, not only had my flight with John been real but I had been dreaming of gliding during the night too - I was hooked, and thank you John.

Martin Phillimore

**Photos**

First one shows Euan after his first Solo – being congratulated by CFI Bob (Photo Martin Phillimore) The others, from Malcolm Chalmers are “open to suggestion”.

