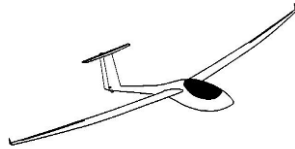


From the home of the *Scottish Gliding Union*

Portmoak Press

Editorial

Today, I had to scrape the ice of the car windscreen. At the weekend, the high hills of Perthshire was waist-deep in snow and, yes, this is 2011 – not a reprint from 2010!



I hope we are not in for a repeat of last winter – unless we get a very long wave season. We have to remain optimistic.

In this issue there is a strong emphasis on safety matters with both the CFI (Bob Petrie) and the Safety Officer (Ricky Jackson) putting pen to paper – or is it skin to plastic?

One of our regular contributors, Frank Smith, has once again been on his travels and has taken the time to tell us how he manages to enjoy gliding, sight-seeing and cycling – oh, and did I mention, he always manages to get some gliding in. How does he do that?

Are you a youngster looking for some funding for your gliding? Check out the item on page 6.

Much congratulations are in order for Colin Hamilton on yet another UK record – more news in the next issue, and to Peter Sharphouse for his excellent fourth place in a Glider Aerobatics comp. Peter has promised us an article about his aerobatic experiences in the next issue too.

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

In this issue:

Editorial..... 1
 Board Members 2011..... 1
 Ordinary Members with Special Responsibilities..... 1
 Ordinary Members with Special Responsibilities..... 2
 Words from the CFI..... 2
 Words from the Safety Officer..... 3
 Words from the BGA..... 3
 Club News..... 3
 Everything Comes in Fours..... 6
 Frank Smith..... 10
 For Sale 10

Board Members 2011

Chairman	Douglas Tait
Vice-Chairman & Secretary	Alan Boyle
Treasurer	John Ferguson
Buildings & Property	tba
Technical	Craig Chatburn
Development Projects	Sally Woolrich
Marketing & Sales	Chris Robinson

Ordinary Members with Special Responsibilities

Safety (Flying)	Ricky Jackson
Safety (Airfield)	Andrew Gordon
Advertising & Portmoak Press	Ian Easson
Tug Master	Tony Brown
Cadets	Kate Byrne
Chief Flying Instructor	Bob Petrie
Airfield Maintenance	David Hyde
Airspace	John Williams
Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection	Fiona Scougal
Drainage	Z. Goudie
External Funding	Malcolm Chalmers



Ordinary Members with Special Responsibilities

Hangar II	Ian Paterson
Membership Retention	Mark Wilson & Chad Henshaw
Promotion Events	Fiona Gillanders
Volunteer Tasks	Mike Cartney
Winch & Vehicles	Ken Moffat
Webmaster	Vic Leitch

Words from the CFI

Appointment of New DCFI

I am pleased to announce that Gerry Marshall has been re-appointed to the post of DCFI at Portmoak as of 1st November.

He replaces Ian Norman who has stood down for personal reasons.

I hope you will all support him in this somewhat difficult task.

Pre-Flight Briefings

This is a reminder to all pilots who have not yet gained a SILVER BADGE.

There is a mandatory requirement at Portmoak for all pilots below this level of experience to receive a preflight briefing before they fly. This is not optional!

Flying without this briefing may mean that your glider is not insured.

This requirement applies to all gliders & motor gliders/aircraft.

This requirement is there for your safety and may prevent you from flying in conditions which either you or your glider/motor glider may not be able to cope with.

If you choose not to abide by the regulations at Portmoak then you have chosen not to fly at Portmoak.

Club Gliders

All, There have been a number of cases of unreported damage to club gliders.

If you think you may have damaged a glider it is imperative that you report it to the duty instructor before the next flight. This is a

safety issue and you may prevent a fellow pilot flying a glider which is not airworthy.

Under no circumstances take the attitude that you will be punished and charged for the damage. The club works on the principle of briefing/further training if you break/damage a glider and is insured at a considerable cost.

If you cause damage to a glider you will have deal with both myself and the safety officer (paperwork and forms to fill in) this is a legal requirement.

If someone is hurt or worse the paperwork is much more complex, so please do not take the easy way out.

The safety officer and I spend hours of our time working for the best interests of the club and we would both prefer just to fly and enjoy ourselves. The team of inspectors who maintain the club fleet do so in their own time to ensure that when you decide to fly at Portmoak the full club fleet of seven gliders are serviceable.

Someone has to look after member's safety so that they can enjoy their flying safely.

Downwind Calls

All, If you have a radio fitted to your glider. On turning downwind, make a downwind call stating,

1. Portmoak traffic : Callsign XXX
2. Downwind (Righthand/Lefthand) for the (North field, Centre strip, South field) landing area.

If you need to change the landing area for any reason you need to Aviate first and another radio call is not a priority.

The reason for this original call is to inform other pilots of your intentions and to help with situational awareness. There have been a number of cases of pilots not seeing each other while in the circuit and this downwind call should help prevent this.

We must keep a good lookout in the circuit and especially after having turned onto final approach as at this point tunnel vision takes over and we appear to be only looking at the reference point. We are all reliant on each other to maintain a good lookout at all times.

Thanks for your help in improving safety at Portmoak.

Bob Petrie - CFI



Words from the Safety Officer

In the interest of avoiding damage and accidents on the ground, would members please be reminded that:

- Wing-holders should hold the downwind wing while winch launching a glider in a crosswind
- Wing-holders should hold the upwind wing while a glider is being towed by a vehicle with a rope. Whenever there is someone available, there should be a second person walking alongside the nose on the left (port) side to open the canopy and pull the cable release in an emergency. If a tail dolly is being used, there must be a second person walking alongside the nose on the left side to prevent the glider weathercocking into the towing vehicle in the event that the vehicle stops. In all cases, the rope must be of sufficient length to allow the glider to rotate 90 degrees on its main wheel without risk of its wingtip colliding with the towing vehicle.
- Drivers of towing vehicles must remain alert with the windows open and radio off, listening for instructions from those walking with the glider
- Wing-holders should maintain the nose in a central position behind the towing vehicle while a glider is being towed
- gliders should be towed by their belly-hook and not by their nose-hook unless there is only a nose-hook available
- The driver of the towing vehicle must stop before any part of the glider being towed is within half a wingspan from any other aircraft or obstacle. If it is essential to tow through a narrow gap, then this must only be done at crawling pace and with guidance from a person who is checking safety clearances on both sides.
- Gliders joining a launch queue must be manually pushed along the final half-wingspan length and not towed or pushed by a vehicle into its position in the queue

Ricky Jackson
Safety Officer (Flying)

Talking at the launch-point at various gliding clubs I have visited, and at the one I'm a member of, the subject of S&G often comes up.

Comments are usually along the lines that the magazine is excellent value, that glider pilots really do need to be aware of much of the content and, in any case, there's always content that's of interest to just about anyone who touches the sport in some way.

However, it is also not unusual to hear comments from people who say that they have unintentionally let their subscriptions lapse and really ought to do something about it. With that in mind, I wonder if you could help club members by giving S&G a plug through your club communications.

I would be very grateful if you could raise the profile of S&G in your club email alerts and/or newsletter, highlighting the subscription page on the BGA website and please note the Special Offer <http://www.gliding.co.uk/sailplaneandgliding/subscriptions.htm>

[As a regular reader, and contributor, I can only echo Pete's sentiments – Ed]

Thanks and regards

Pete Stratten

Club News

Meetings

On Friday, 2nd December at 19:00 there will be a meeting in the clubhouse to discuss further new hangar projects.

The Annual Information Meeting will be held in the clubhouse on Saturday, 3rd December at 16:00.

Douglas Tait

Friday Evening Lectures

This winter's Friday evening lectures/talks begin on 11th November 2011. The first talk of the evening is a timely, "Gaining A Radio Licence" by Neil McAulay, and following the break for refreshments George Ross will give a presentation on Thermals. First talk starts at the slightly earlier time this year of 7:00 p.m. in the Briefing Room.

The Radio Licence is a structured course running every second week and intending

Words from the BGA

Volume 2K43
SGC Page 3 of 10



© Ian Easson

“students” should add their names to the sheet on the notice-board or contact Neil McAulay directly. The remaining winter programme will contain presentations on topics such as “Planning and Executing a Wave Flight”, “Becoming a Bronze and Cross country Pilot”, “Phugoids, Airbrakes and PIO”, “Rigging and Retrieves” and “Stalls and Spins” to name a few. The full Friday Evening Lecture programme will shortly be available to view on the SGU web site.

The evening talks have been advertised for a couple of weeks on the notice-board in the clubroom. If you know of anyone who might wish to come to the talks, please pass on this information to them. A reminder that anyone wishing a meal at the club before the start should contact Irene, preferably a day before.

Those interested in attending any talks this winter might let me know with a quick reply to me at d_thompson@btinternet.com. It would be good to have some idea of numbers in advance, especially for the first evening. Suggestions of topics for future talks would also be welcome.

Since some of the intended audience will be new members here is some information.

- What are the Friday Evening Lectures?

They are lectures/talks on a variety of gliding related topics held over the winter months.

- Who are they for?

The Friday Evening Lectures 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.

- Where are they held?

SGU club Briefing Room (or sometimes the main club room) at Portmoak airfield.

- When are they?

The first talks of this winter’s programme are on Friday 11th November 2011 and they are generally held fortnightly with a break over the Christmas/New Year period. The full programme will shortly be advertised on the SGU web site.

- What time do they start?

The evening starts a little earlier this year at 7:00 and continues

until about 9:30 p.m. The normal format is that there are two presentations with a break for refreshments in between.

Dave Thompson

Women’s day

The Scottish Gliding Union celebrated Hilda Hewlett's Centenary with an Open Day, and as well as flying we had an exhibition of photos of a centenary of women flying (mostly provided by Liz Douglas), and a gliding simulator running Condor and using the fuselage from a decommissioned glider.

The weather forecast was awful - strong wind and heavy rain all day - but thankfully it was wrong and whilst it was breezy and cold we were, eventually, able to fly and soar. Looking at the rainfall radar once I got home showed how lucky we were with a patch without rain centred on Portmoak.

We had the three 2-seat gliders out and DI'd by 9:30 and then put them all back in the hanger as it was looking too windy. However a little while later the wind dropped slightly, plus a private glider launched and reported back that whilst breezy it wasn't rough, so we got the 2-seat gliders again. Our Omarama-style hanger made this much quicker and easier to do than a traditional hanger pack would have.

We started flying and were able to continue until everyone who wanted to fly had done so. In all 15 different women flew 21 times, including a flight by a wheelchair pilot using a hand rudder. Many of the women were having their first flight, one was a currency check flight, and there were some pre-solo training flights as well.

We had normal club flying running alongside this, and one woman flew her DG300 to Fife Airport to join their celebration of the event as did our tug, so she could fly back rather than have to derig the glider into its trailer and tow it back. As well as the real flying, the simulator was fairly busy as well and the display was popular.

The day was only possible because a great deal of help was given by club members. Apart from the Instructors, nearly all



the helpers were relatively new to the club which suggests that gliding at Portmoak is in good health.

Sally Woolrich

Affiliate Membership

Perth airport are launching a new affiliate membership for full members of other flying clubs for £25 a year you get Free out of hours landings + Discount landing fees + many other benefits including full use of the. Scottish Aero Club facilities. A poster has been put up at Portmoak notice board regarding the fly in, for a electronic membership application form contact David Martin secretary@scottishaeroclub.org.uk or write to David at Hanger 1, Perth Airport, PERTH. PH2 6PL

George Ross

Early Morning Launches

On occasions it can be advantageous to launch early to get a wave cross country flight. In the summer months one can get a decent wave flight in before thermal activity exerts its influence. In winter launching first thing can enable one to extract the most out of the day. With this in mind early morning winch launching has been arranged along the following lines.

Weekdays

At a cost of £12 per hour for each hour before 0900 local plus the normal winch launch fee one can get an early morning launch. If for example 4 people launch between 0600L & 0900L (3 hours) the cost for each pilot would be £9 plus winch launch; if it were 2 pilots £18 etc. etc. The payment of the extra cost would be split up between the pilots and paid on the day.

Weekends

The club has agreed to subsidize the cost to initially £10 per hour split between participating pilots plus, again, winch launch. If we get sufficient numbers at the weekend then the club would consider absorbing the extra costs. Payment would be through ones normal gliding account. Under the best of conditions the earliest one could get away is 0500L but realistically 0600L is easily achievable in the summer months as has already been proved.

Qualifications Required.

Silver C & self authorizing. If using a club aircraft, sanction by a club instructor is required. Checking of Notams, etc. would be the pilots own responsibility.

Launching would be done by radio. If necessary a handset can be available for launching.”

Wingman

The last pilot launching would have the problem of requiring a wingman. This would have to be organised ad hoc; i.e. volunteer, anyone staying over at the caravan park, clubhouse, local etc.

Realistically the last person should get away by 08:00.

Communication & organisation

An email group will be set up. All members email addresses in the group will be visible in the ‘To’ line to aid liaising.

Conclusion

Obviously the more pilots participating on a particular day the cheaper it is for individuals involved. Any individual in the group will have the ability to organise a particular day. The last opportunity to cancel would be 1600L the evening before otherwise payment would still be required as we can’t mess the winch driver about. If a day has been organised then those agreeing to participate would be expected to pay the ‘hourly rate’.

Realistically, given weather conditions and the current lack of wave days I reckon we would be lucky if we got 6 days per year, however the facility is available should qualifying pilots wish it.

Those interested in joining the group can contact me at santcervantes@btopenworld.com.

Sant Cervantes





THE ROYAL AERO CLUB TRUST
Advancing the cause of air sport and aviation

2012 ROYAL AERO CLUB TRUST
BURSARIES

- Aged between 16 years and 21 years?
- Got a basic air sport qualification?
- Want to advance your air sport qualifications but lack the funds?
- Would £1,000 help you realise your air sport ambitions?

The Royal Aero Club Trust announces its bursary scheme for young people for the 2012 season. The bursaries include The President's Scholarships (2 bursaries each worth up to £750), the Peter Cruddas Foundation Scholarship worth up to £1,000, the Breitling Bursary also worth up to £750, and the Bramson Bursary which is one of a number of additional bursaries worth up to £500 each to anyone between 16 and 21 years of age wishing to progress their interest in either air sports or aviation. The closing date for applications is **31 March 2012**.

The Royal Aero Club Trust has been offering bursaries for twelve years and a wide range of grants have been awarded. Activities available in the programme include gliding, ballooning, paragliding, hang gliding, parachuting, flying microlights, motor gliders, light aircraft and helicopters, and building and flying model aircraft. Bursaries are also available for Personal Computer or Flight Simulator pilots wishing to have their first experience of an air sport.

Applicants must be UK citizens, resident in the UK, and training and flying can only be conducted at Clubs, Associations or training establishments in the UK. Applications, which must arrive at the Trust by 31

March 2012, are to be submitted through a Sponsoring Organisation, Club or Association.

Full details, rules and an application form are available on the Royal Aero Club Trust web site, www.royalaeroclubtrust.org

The Trust is very grateful to its sponsors who generously provide the funds for bursaries. If you, or your organisation, would like to assist young people in this way by becoming a Trust sponsor, please make contact with the Trust or click on "Donations" on the Trust website, www.royalaeroclubtrust.org

Contact:

David Bills

Royal Aero Club Trust Bursary Administrator
(Bursaries@royalaeroclubtrust.org)

Everything Comes in Fours

The saying goes that everything comes in three's, well this year on holiday I got lucky. Once again Margaret and I took off for a holiday in 'Molly' motor home, heading once again for Germany. Last year's trip to the Baltic region was a complete success and with so much still to see and explore in this large country we decided on a further visit, so after leaving the ferry we travelled down through Holland and stopped at the town of Aachen. This particular German City has the most impressive Dom or Cathedral, almost the entire stone work in the building is faced with the most wondrous patterned marble veneer.

The first part of our journey saw us heading generally southeast making for the Bodensee or Lake Constance and the town of Meersburg. Our campsite lay high above the town near to the village of Stetten. During our stay we were regularly treated to the sight of an airship nosing almost silently above us as it took well heeled passengers for a thirty minute ride above the lake from the airfield at

Friedrichshafen for 200 Euro. Bit too dear for my pocket so we did the next best thing and paid



a visit to the famous Zeppelin Museum. I really had only a sketchy idea about Airships. Old photographs of the Graf Zeppelin flying over Wembley Stadium in 1930 during the cup final and the demise of the Hindenburg in 1937 and that was about it. A visit to this very famous museum changed all that. Armed with an audio guide we were able to trace the whole history of the airship. Fascinating stuff, following Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin's achievements in constructing various airships each an improvement on the last. The first took to the air in 1899. The Count died in 1917, but further airships were built leading to the famous round the world flight of the Graf Zeppelin in 1929. It first flew in 1928 and during the next nine years crossed the South Atlantic 136 times on regular passenger and mail runs to South America. The Hindenburg disaster brought all this to an end. If you're ever in that area it's worth a visit to the museum.

We now travelled north to stay at the small town of Treuchtlingen, specifically to use the Altmuhl River Valley cycle Route which passed nearby and followed the river through some lovely countryside. To make a change we also went sightseeing at the larger town of Eichstatt using the motor home. Leaving the wagon in a car park on the outskirts we were wandering through some parkland towards the town centre when this tug and glider passed across the sky. Margaret gave me that look which said "how do you do it". I just shrugged and pretended not to notice. However later at the Tourist Information Centre we were shown on a map the location of the gliding club. After a decent interval of admiring the local Architecture, drinking cappuccinos we made our way back to the motor home and set off to find the club.

What the nice young lady at the Tourist Office hadn't told us was that the road was very steep and also very narrow. But then again we didn't tell her we were driving a motor home. The gliding club was located high up above the town of Eichstatt. The members were very friendly and were only too keen to take me flying. I was soon strapped in to the K21 and the Robin tug took up position for take-off. Interestingly there

was a short piece of tarmac which the glider rested on, presumably to allow a smoother acceleration and possibly to prevent the wheel digging in during wet conditions.

Charlie, my pilot said he would do the take off and then hand over. Soon after we were airborne the combination passed over a forested area where we met the most vicious rough air, luckily I'd pulled my harness very tight otherwise I'm sure my head would have gone through the canopy. It was a thermal day and after release Charlie let me spend a pleasant half an hour soaring away. Interesting to see some of the places you visit from the air, earlier we had been to the Cathedral, now as Charlie took over for the landing I was able to photograph this magnificent building with its distinctive twin towers from my lofty vantage point.

Looking over Charlie's shoulder (I was in the back seat) I could see what he was faced with on his final approach. We would be landing towards and over a very steep wooded hillside with the runway perched on the very edge and just to liven things up there was a stiff breeze blowing. Charlie did an admirable job of getting us down safely, and afterwards he took me to see their very professional home built winch.

It was time to move on from our campsite at Treuchtlingen and after a few days at Riedenburg for more cycling we travelled north to the historic city of Bamberg. As ever there was a Dom or Cathedral to visit, a masterpiece of man's creativity with its four spires reaching into the sky. During our stay we cycled out to see one of the nearby Castles, Schloss Seehof, a grand affair where the Prince Bishops of Bamberg stayed. It was as we were pedalling along that glancing to my left I saw a tug and glider in the gap between two houses, I almost fell off the bike. Then when wandering round the grounds of the castle I spied three gliders soaring above. There must be an airfield close by. On the ride back at a busy road junction I was amazed to see a glider pass over our heads on final at no more than 50 feet.

I could have pressed Margaret into going in search of the field, but



I'd had my fun the other day and if all worked out I would be flying again in a few days time anyway. Leaving Bamberg we travelled Northwest, to our next destination the small town of Gersfeld. This was to be our base for visiting the famous German Gliding Centre located on the Wasserkuppe mountain. I'd read many articles about the development of the sport at this historic site and the many famous named pilots who had flown there. We hadn't been at the campsite long before the steady drone of an aircraft filled my ears, looking up revealed an aero tow combination climbing up to cloud base. As I watched, the glider pulled off and turned to the right. As we sat outside the motor home having lunch several other tows took place. The Wasserkuppe lay to the north and only a few kilometres away from our campsite, most of it uphill. At 950 metres it is the highest mountain in the Rhon region with spectacular views in all directions. On the day we visited it was very busy with many car parks full, but we managed to squeeze ourselves into a space not too far from the gliding operations. As well as the gliding fraternity this is the place from which many walks radiate out to the various parts of the Rhon area. It's also a favourite haunt of the aero modeller and there were a number flying their authentically scaled models above the slopes. The top of the Wasserkuppe is rather like a vast plateau and houses not only the Gliding Club buildings and Museum but also a Hotel, Snack Bar, Gift Shops, Radar Station, Mountain Rescue Centre and housing for youth activities. The slopes of the Wasserkuppe are used for Skiing and tobogganing in the winter. Having parked, it was time to see if I could manage to get into the air. I spoke to a guy who, luckily, had very good English and he said no problem, but I would have to wait perhaps an hour. Back to the motor home for a coffee and watched operations. There was certainly no lack of numbers wanting to go for a flight. The weather, which hadn't been very good, now produced rain and I thought they would stop operations. But no, they carried on with tug and glider disappearing into the gloomy sky, thoughts of wet

wings et al obviously didn't figure high on the agenda.

Anyway with conditions not improving we thought we would visit the Museum instead. Here was a fascinating record of early flight in gliders and the pioneers who took part. There was an incredible collection of vintage gliders all in superb condition, some displayed on the ground, others were suspended from the ceiling. Photographs of all the famous names from the past together with other paraphernalia telling the story and the men behind the progressive build up of gliding in Germany at the Wasserkuppe. It was all impressively laid out. As well as the gliding element to the museum there was the most extensive collection of model aircraft on display.

Leaving the museum, the weather had brightened somewhat and taking advantage of this break we walked out to the highest point of the Wasserkuppe. We sat on a seat and admired the marvellous views which surrounded us. At this elevation we could see for miles in all directions. We could also see the famous bronze eagle perched atop rocks set on the western slopes of the Wasserkuppe. This memorial honours pioneer pilots who had died pursuing silent flight.

Back at the launch point I enquired once more about a flight and this time was lucky. My pilot was to be a guy named Wolfgang and we would be flying in the Duo Discus, a new type for me. I explained my level of experience and on hearing this he said I could do all the flying, albeit he would follow through in the early stages of the aero tow. The paved runway at the Wasserkuppe slopes gently downhill and there was a need to chock the glider's wheel once we'd lined up. The parachute harness was very different from anything I'd experienced previously but soon I was buckled up and seated in the deep front seat of the Duo. Our tug soon appeared and, with chock removed, we were quickly rolling down the runway. At first I could feel Wolfgang on the controls but as we gained height and he'd ascertained I wasn't going to do anything silly he let me get on with it. During the tow Wolfgang told me I was



doing excellently and that he would have no hesitation in letting his daughter fly with me. Felt like asking him how old his daughter was.

At one point we passed through broken cloud and released at 2500 feet. The Duo Discus was a lovely machine to fly and we spent the next twenty minutes or so circling over this magnificent countryside and chatting about gliding. Looking down I could see the bronze eagle and reflected on all those pilots that had soared these slopes before me.

It had been a rich and rewarding experience but soon we had to land and Wolfgang talked me round the circuit until we were lined up on final. He made the point that we would be landing uphill and need a little more speed to effect round out and then we were down. So last year's dreams of flying at the Wasserkuppe were now realised, it just remained to have a photo shot with Wolfgang by the Duo, then it was back to 'Molly' for tea.

From Gersfeld we travelled east and camped at Rathen a small town straddling the River Elbe and right on the Elbe Radweg (cycle route). Like Holland and Belgium, Germany's cycle tracks are excellent. Just across the river from where we were camped was the Bastei a very famous landmark in Saxony Switzerland. The spectacular rock formation towers 194 metres above the waters of the Elbe. I can vouch for every metre as we made it to the top. This area featured in Julia Bradbury's TV programme 'Wanderlust'.

Rathen is not very far from Dresden the town that was flattened in 1945 by allied bombing. Both of us wanted to see the town all these years later. It is now a vibrant cosmopolitan place which has seen a massive restoration programme over the years, with much of the older parts faithfully rebuilt.

Our next stop took us west to a Stellplatz (campsite) near to the town of Ballenstätt. We were right next to an airfield, in fact the campsite was owned by the airfield authorities. We arrived in the middle of the afternoon and were told that to book in we would need to go to the tower. Unfortunately it wasn't manned. Found a local guy who showed us where the various services were. On asking him whether it would be

possible to have a glider flight, he replied that the gliding club only operated at weekends. We'd arrived on a Monday. But there would be every chance of flying in a motor glider the next day. The airfield was quite large and used for gliding, power flying and micro lights, with power using the paved runway and gliding keeping to the grassed area. The next day dawned with a clear sky and I went for an early morning walk. The only other living thing in sight was a Red Kite lazily flapping its way across the hillside, its colours highlighted by the early morning sun. In the distance out to the west I could see the outline of the Harz mountains.

After breakfast outside the motor home we strolled down to pay our dues to the man in the tower and book in. He spoke perfect English and when we said we were from Scotland he pointed to a sticker on the wall which had 'Portmoak' written across it. He told us that in 2004 himself and friends had visited the club with their Antonov - AN2 - the largest single engine bi - plane ever built. I wonder if any of our members remember this plane landing at Portmoak. Built in huge numbers by the Russians, Poles and Chinese it is said to have very good STOL capabilities. Later in the week I watched as he and a friend pre-flighted this beast of an aircraft before it took off for France.

Later in the morning I chatted to our local man who lived on site about that flight and he said it would be better to fly later in the afternoon. Which is what we did. His name was Torsen and what followed was a memorable flight over the German countryside on a beautiful summers evening with the sun slowly arcing down in the west. Torsen climbed the 'Falke' to 4000 feet and then cut the engine saying 'all yours'. It's been quite a while since I've flown a Falke, but he seemed quite happy with my efforts. We repeated the climb on power and glide before joining the circuit for a landing on the paved runway. I tried to hand over control as we lined up on final but he wouldn't have it, saying 'no your doing very well'. So be it. Anyway we got down safely and taxied back to the hangar. I think we'd both enjoyed the flight, I know I had.



It was time to be moving on from our campsite as we neared the end of our stay in Germany. Just one more stop before we crossed over the border into Holland, this was at the town of Rinteln located on the banks of the Weser River a very pleasant place with its half timbered houses. Picking up leaflets at the Tourist Information Centre which were printed in English I couldn't help but note that one had the picture of a glider and suggesting that a flight in one would be a very good idea. I suggested that it would be a very, very good idea. Margaret was frowning. Later, in one of the tourist maps I discovered the location of the airfield and as it wasn't very far away we cycled out to find it. The place was deserted when we got there. Asking a local dog walker about the gliding operations he told us they only flew on Sundays. Today was Friday. He was wrong though. While we were in Rinteln the next day I saw an aero tow taking place. After releasing from the tug the glider seemed to hurry back towards the airfield ahead of some nasty looking conditions blowing in. The glider appeared to be side slipping to lose height.

There was a period of rain but it cleared, so we cycled back to the airfield and found they were indeed flying. Introduced myself at the clubhouse and a friendly member took me across to where they were launching. I chatted to the folk there until it was my turn to fly. Soon I was settled in the back seat of their K21, up front was my P1, a young man named Erik. He did the aero tow and landing while I did all the flying upstairs. We pulled off at 700 metres and I stooged about looking at the surrounding countryside and especially taking a good look at the old town of Rinteln. The weather wasn't brilliant with heavy cloud preventing any thermal activity but it was still an enjoyable flight. Couldn't help but note that the approach was over a field of ripening rape, what price an undershoot. Mentioning this to Erik, he just gave a wry smile. A few days later we were homeward bound on the ferry from IJmuiden across the North Sea. I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that I'd only been asked to fill in a form at one of the sites I'd flown from, quite refreshing, just like the old days.

So for once the old adage 'Everything Comes in Three's' was wrong. This time it came in Fours. Eichstatt, Wasserkuppe, Ballenstatt and Rinteln.

Frank Smith

For Sale

The Astir 648 Syndicate has a GARMIN GPS 90 with Portmoak Airspace and map + the Scottish Turnpoints for sale. Just connect to EW Barograph and you are ready for any badge flight claim as this GPS is FAI approved. Offers to me at this email address bobpetrie2@yahoo.co.uk or call me on, 01383729323.

Bob Petrie

