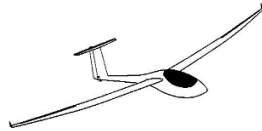


From the home of the *Scottish Gliding Union*

# Portmoak Press

**Editorial – My Final Issue**

After much soul-searching, I have decided to hang up my flying suit and this will be my last issue of *Portmoak Press*.



I will not go into specific reasons for my decision but suffice to say that, over the past few months, the negative aspects have far outweighed the ever-diminishing positives. As an old(er) instructor once said to me “This is a leisure activity and when you stop enjoying it, it’s time to stop”.

I joined the club in 1994, after returning from living and working in Singapore, and I attended a course in the summer. My first gliding solo was on 1<sup>st</sup> August that year and I have enjoyed 18 years of flying since that never-forgotten solo. My heartfelt thanks go to those instructors who have helped me master the art of gliding and NPPL flying.

My first Issue of *Portmoak Press* was in October 2000 and, as you can see from the header, we are now at Issue 48 - some 12 years later. Of course, this mag would not have been possible if it wasn’t for the contributions from members past and present and, for this, I extend my gratitude and thanks – you have all made the mag what it is today and I wish every success to whomever picks up the editorial pen to continue it.

One last point – I have a number of avionics items that will be up for sale in the New Year so if anyone is interested, e-mail me for the details. Items include:  
 LX Colibri USB Flight Logger [Link to Logger Spec](#)  
 Garmin Aera 500 GPS [Link to Garmin Spec](#)  
 ASA Headset [Headset Spec](#)  
 Full set of PPL books for NPPL exams  
 Dave Clark Headset (refurbished with new mic)  
 Cannula Oxygen set [Link to Spec](#)  
 Various other bits and pieces

So, a final thanks to all of my friends at Portmoak and across other gliding sites and I wish you all the best for the future. I am heartened by the good wishes I have received following my decision and my final communication now has to be...

“India Kilo Echo – Ready for Departure”

Safe Soaring

***In this issue:***

Editorial – My Final Issue.....	1
Words from the CFI.....	2
Club News.....	2
Cadet News .....	3
Club Expedition to Hus Bos, Summer 2012.....	3



## Words from the CFI

At our last Instructor Meeting, a number of changes for 2013 were outlined.

Detail changes have been made to the Currency and Privileges requirements and a 24 month check is now in place for all Bronze plus pilots. Any member who had a "12 month check" in 2012 is given the 24 month period retrospectively. This excludes friends and family and Basic Instructors.

Type currency and ownership requirements have also been updated. (See notice board)

It is good practice to stay current throughout the year and the instructors who can carry out your currency check flight or renewal are detailed on the notice board.

In response to member requests, from February 2013, Chris Robinson will be acting as Club Duty Instructor on Tuesdays only, with booked flying on the other days of the week. The success of this change will be assessed on an ongoing basis and subject to review by the CFI on behalf of the board. Ian Norman, DCFI, is setting up a revived Flying Committee in the club (details on the notice board).

In January 2013, New Site Briefing Notes will be published and it is vital that all members read and sign when in receipt.

Finally, a significant change is to be made to the weekend Rota system and eight teams are being formed with four instructors, five possible duty pilots and a tug pilot available very weekend. Our aim is to make more flying more available to more members more often.

This is a significant commitment by the Rota members and it is planned that from 2014 all members will be attached to one of these teams so that it allows more team work within the club and a further sharing of duties amongst a wider number of members.

A lot going on at the moment and I hope everyone will continue to contribute to the success of the club.

### (Later communiqué)

Further to the release of the 2013 rota I know there have been some initial concerns about frequency and fairness.

The new weekend rota has been

planned to allow more support and cover at the weekend. The duty pilot's names have been drawn from those pilots who have carried out these duties in the past and those who volunteered for 2013.

At the moment, this list is not inclusive of all SGC pilots.

Team leaders (lead Instructors) have been appointed for each team and will be contacting you shortly to discuss the calendar arrangement for 2013 for each of the eight teams. It is not proposed that each duty pilot is on every month for every duty but to improve the opportunity to share the work among more members and not be left as the only duty pilot for the day more duty pilots have been allocated to specific days.

Ideally, we would have two duty pilots for every day.

All pilots were rostered as available until the teams have met to discuss the finer detail and agree their internal calendar cover.

From 2014, it is hoped to attach the balance of the club members to one of the eight teams and that the principle of more members being involved more often be expanded.

Please feel free to discuss the matter with your Lead Instructor or me at the club at any time.

**Gerry Marshall**  
CFI

## Club News

The Board has approved a revised membership tariff for 2013, together with increases in flying fees and other charges. The new tariff and charges will take effect from April 2013. The Board has taken into account comments made at the information meeting and will not be seeking to alter agreements with owners of hangar space regarding the facilities fee. We hope that the increased income will secure the Club's finances and aircraft fleet for the foreseeable future, but the best way in which all members could ensure that the Club's finances remain strong is to FLY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN 2013.

The new tariff and charges have been posted on the club web



site and on the notice board.

The Board would like to wish all members a merry Christmas and happy soaring in the New Year!

**Alan Boyle**  
Chairman

### Club Bar – New Name

It is 'Stick and Rudder' and Vic Leitch came up with it. For those of you who haven't heard of it, it's also the name of a famous and well-regarded book on flying. The full title is "Stick and Rudder: An Explanation of the Art of Flying" and it's by Wolfgang Langewiesche.

Congrats to Vic, and in due course we should have the name on the door or over it.

**Sally Woolrich**

### Cadet News

Just an update on news from the SGU cadet scheme. We have such a lively bunch in the scheme at the moment that I thought you would like to hear what's been going on.

You'll know, I'm sure, about Connor McIver. We now have another under-16 solo pilot: Ewan Scougall went solo on 10th Nov, having been ready for a while but needing to get his medical sorted out. Calum Bryden went solo in early September, just after his 16th birthday, shortly before the law changed, having also been ready for a while. And we have a fourth lad, aged 15, who is likely to be solo soon.

We recently said farewell to three 18 year-old solo pilots who had come through the scheme and went off to university in the autumn. With luck we'll see them again at the inter-uni comp next summer. (I'm involved in that too, through Edinburgh University.) And of course we have several other youngsters at an earlier stage of training, with one recent joiner mentioning that seeing reports about Connor in the paper had encouraged him to come along. (We do have some girls in the scheme too, though not as many as I'd like.)

**Kate Byrne**

### Club Expedition to Hus Bos, Summer 2012

A wee story about what, for me, was a new experience – a club expedition to somewhere completely different, namely Husbands Bosworth. The airfield is about 15 miles south of Leicester and 20 miles east of Coventry, and is commonly known as “Hus Bos.”. It is home to the Coventry Gliding Club which styles itself as “The Gliding Centre.” (That'll be the English gliding centre, then?) I have only flown a glider P1 at one other site (Nympsfield, and that was just a circuit) so the relative lack of experience was a bit of a disincentive. How would I cope without the familiar landmarks in Scotland – and without the comfort blanket of a ridge? What persuaded me to sign up was a Portmoak Instant message from Alastair Mutch promising “big fat English thermals”. That, and being nagged increasingly about getting a 50km flight under my belt to complete my Silver!

(The best I had managed so far was 41km to a field north of Dundee, a couple of years ago.) So in late August I set off for Hus Bos to share Discus HZE with Bruce Marshall. FUS and WA1 were there, along with 6 other syndicate gliders. For those that wanted, it two weeks of flying was on offer – some pilots stayed for the two weeks and others came for either the first or second week. The first week was “do your own thing”, and the second was a Task Week. (On reflection, maybe it was the thought of the competitive element of a Task Week that was a disincentive .....) But I shouldn't have worried. After a motor glider flight with the local CFI for familiarisation with the area and satisfying him that I could plan and execute approaches for field landings, I was cleared to fly solo cross country.

Ah, but what about those “big, fat English thermals”? They were posted missing for the first week so a few winch launches and local soaring were the order of the day. Not all bad, really, as this gave me an opportunity to orient myself with some of the local landmarks and get used to the local way of doing things on the airfield.

Then came week two - the Task Week. In fact, it proved to be much less serious than I had imagined it would be.



There was a briefing each morning on the expected weather conditions, and the task setter was a star. He set mostly triangular tasks with intermediate turning points along each leg so that the bold could go for the maximum distance and the wimps could try tiny tasks. He even resorted to allowing the turning points to be rounded in any order, such was the inconsistency of the soaring conditions. Some of the Portmoak pundits were among the daily prizewinners (congrats to Alastair Mutch and David Hyde), while others among us concentrated on tasks for our Silver Distance. It helped a great deal that one of the Hus Bos participants turned out to be none other than Basil Fairstone, the BGA Badges Officer, and he kept us right on the badge requirements. David Dodds did well to reach Buckminster Gliding Club at Saltby for his Silver Distance, but the rest of us were still looking for the “big, fat English thermals”.

There seemed to be a window between about 11:30 and 14:30 when thermals were likely to be best but, like Portmoak, there was often a blue hole above the airfield and it wasn't easy to time one's launch to coincide with good prospects of getting away from the site. It was interesting to watch the local hot shots, and they tended to be very choosy about when to launch. Of course, when they decided to join the launch queue this stirred others into action and suddenly you could find yourself seventh or eighth in the queue. Even with three tugs flying, getting a launch could take a while.

So we reached THE LAST DAY of the expedition, with several of us still to bag the elusive 50km. It started off much like others with convective-looking clouds, but cloudbase was only 2000ft or so.

Gradually the cloudbase rose to about 3,000ft so off I went at Bruce's insistence, despite it being “his” day for the glider. I planned to fly from Hus Bos to Bicester Airfield (Windrushers GC), about 60km more or less due south. In an attempt to cover all the possibilities, I declared an Out & Return task HUS-BIC-HUS which would still count for my 50km even if I landed out trying to get back from Bicester.

Full marks to the tuggie. A 2000ft tow took me to a good thermal and the vario made all the right noises after I came off tow. After

climbing to 3000ft I decided to set off – great excitement! Too much excitement, in fact, and the inexperience showed. The thermals always seemed too far off track, there were bits of airspace to be avoided, and often (it seemed) I despaired of reaching a thermal before getting too low. There was also a lot of General Aviation traffic, so keeping a good lookout was vital. To crown it all, I realised only much later that I had forgotten to reset the altimeter to QNH after leaving Hus Bos despite having made a note of it on my chart. On the plus side, I had the relevant radio frequencies and was able to listen to some of the Hus Bos pundits landing out. After an hour or so Silverstone race track came into view, with Bicester Airfield just beyond. Having rounded the turn point higher than my start height, it seemed pointless to land. The alternative of returning to Hus Bos (with a shorter retrieve) seemed more sensible, so off I went.

Against a slight headwind this time progress was slower, but the thermals seemed better placed in relation to my track, and more consistent. Feeling a bit more settled now, other things began to dawn on me – including altimeter setting and the fact that I needed to operate the in-flight plumbing system. This worked fine, as it should have following several practices over Loch Leven (ahem!), and I couldn't quite how soon Hus Bos came into view. The circuit and landing were uneventful, and I had barely unfastened the straps when Bruce appeared – he must be keen to fly while it's still good, I thought, but no – all available help was needed for retrieves as many people had landed out, including Portmoak pilots Steve Derwin, Sally Woolrich, William Lane, and Tom Berriman!

So, 50km achieved, Silver Badge completed and, as a bonus, Part 1 of the 100km Diploma as well. Not fast enough for Part 2 of the Diploma which stipulates a minimum handicapped speed of 65kph, but that could be the next challenge. Also completing Silver Distance on this expedition were David Dodds, William Lane and Scott Kennedy. Well done to all, especially to Scott who also managed Out & Return to Bicester in the SGU

Junior.

Would I go on another expedition? Yes, definitely. If you have



Bronze plus X/C Endorsement there's no reason to hang back. SGU gliders can be taken, subject to approval by the CFI and Board, so you don't have to be in a syndicate. And what did I learn? Having reviewed the flight log, I found that my operating height band had actually been between 2200ft and 4500ft AMSL, over ground that was mostly below 500ft, so apart from a bit of uncertainty over the high ground just south of Hus Bos, I was probably too pessimistic about the conditions. The log showed that I had 5 good climbs on the outward leg, and 7 on the return leg – but had I understood better the final glide information that I had available, I would have realised that the last one wasn't needed. Another lesson related to navigation. In an unfamiliar area, position fixing by map reading is important. On the outward leg I was concentrating more on the PDA than the map, whereas I should have been using the PDA more for confirmation. That, and the fact that the PDA was difficult to read due to the backlight on the display not being properly set up, gave me more stress than it need have.

Although I've just used the word "stress", don't get me wrong – the expedition was GREAT FUN. Besides the flying there were some very "interesting" retrieves (you know who you are!), sociable evenings in the club bar, pub grub when the club kitchen was closed, a "how to thermal better" seminar by the CFI when it rained, and opportunities to visit an air museum and the national motorcycle museum. Best of all was the company of fellow pilots from Portmoak and the chance to make friends with like-minded souls at the host club, who couldn't have been more welcoming. Oh, and I re-read Alastair's email. Seems he didn't actually promise "big fat English thermals", only the opportunity to try them out. Next time, maybe?

**Alec Stevenson**  
**Discus HZE**

it was a very muddy field, really soggy clay. The glider had "settled" into it after stopping, and we broke several ropes trying to tow it up a slight gradient towards the trailer. Ended up towing the trailer down the hill to the glider with only small optimism about being able to tow the lot back up the hill. Did so eventually but, judging by the smell, suspect there's not a lot left of the clutch! The ground was so soft the glider had ploughed a neat furrow with the main wheel as we tried to pull it. (De-rigging and carrying the bits wasn't an option as two of us had bad backs, and the glider in question was an Astir .....!) Even getting the fuselage onto the cradle and then into the trailer was a major logistical challenge, given the softness of the ground. End result - three muddy, sweaty, swearing blokes, one very muddy glider and a trailer full of mud - and the Subaru Forester in need of a good wash. Took a different route home (sat nav had taken us a circuitous route to the glider), encountered a locked railway crossing on the single track road, visions of having to reverse the trailer for a mile or so, until a lady appeared from a portacabin on the other side and said it was her job to unlock and lock the gates! Finally, came upon a wrecked car at a roundabout. Stopped to give assistance (one of our guys is a doctor) but found it empty and locked. Had to give our names and phone numbers to the cops, but I don't think they'll be in touch. Got back to the club to discover the clubhouse in darkness (ie no bar or food) so had to make do in the caravan with whatever we could find. That's gliding for you! Oh, and by the way, I didn't manage to get away from the local area - but neither did most of the local pundits. Very wet today, and not likely to be much better tomorrow. Friday could be OK, but we may even be home early at this rate.

### Letter to Mrs Stevenson...

Got back late from the "retrieve from hell" - c. 10pm, hadn't eaten, v. thirsty etc. One of the Portmoak guys had landed in a stubble field about an hour's drive away - so far, so good. Set off about 3pm and when we got there, discovered

