

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BHGA

# Wings!

OCTOBER 1980





# Vulcan

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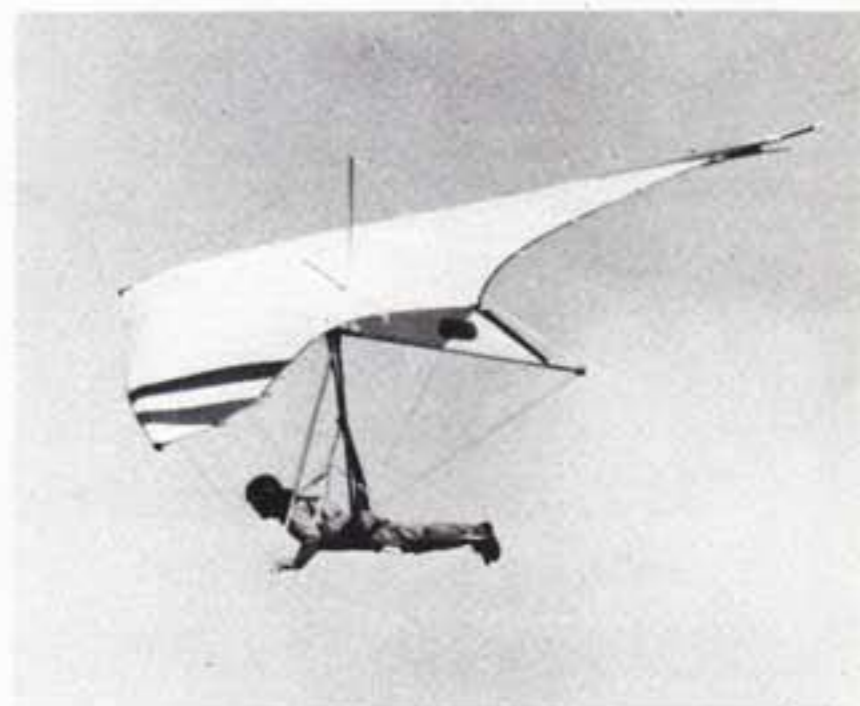
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The same thing goes with motorcycles. Once, the British made the best machines in the world, like Norton, Triumph, Villiers, BSA, Ariel. Again, these are on the sidelines, if they exist at all, while the mainstream belongs to Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, and the classier end of the market goes to BMWs and Laverdas.

Again, in aircraft, we had AVROS, de Havillands, Handley Page, Hawkers, Sopwith, a dozen small manufacturers that could, given luck, the right break, the right people, have grown enough to survive today. But they didn't.

Whatever the business reasons why, the situation that once existed in cars, motorcycles and conventional aircraft now exists in hang gliding. There was news from the USA at the beginning of August that a famous manufacturers name, Seagull Aircraft, could disappear because the company has moved to new ownership. In this country, McBroom Aircraft no longer exists, nor does Waspair, and others are having problems. Hiway is our biggest manufacturer, diversifying into Trikes and willing to employ freelance designers like Bob England. But after Hiway, the other manufacturers are still at the cottage industry level... Skyhook, Southdown Sailwings, Solar Wings, Flexiform, Chargus. As the competition gets tighter for home markets, there's a big push to export, especially to Europe. Up to now, British gliders have sold well there. But in France, one manufacturer — La Mouette — seems to have emerged supreme over all others, with a brilliant best-selling design, the Atlas. Germany has the Guggenmos Wing, which Lester Cruse is flying. These are our main rivals in European business.

The point about going all these rounds is to show that hang gliding is truly international. Those who were flying four years ago will remember the tremendous effect that just two American gliders — the Phoenix 6B, and the Wills SST — had over here. If you were flying a British glider at the time, you couldn't live in the same air.

There's been another big jump of hang glider design, and British manufacturers can't be left behind. Once the kite to copy was the SST. Then it was, possibly, the Moyes Maxi, finely tuned as the Superscorpion. Then it was the Atlas, and more than 15 months after it first appeared, the Atlas is as competitive as ever at the highest level. Now design is moving on. Where will it go to?

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The debate is always going to be a live one, but it perhaps needs more participants than we've had up to now. The vote on competitions teams will — and should — rest with the relevant committee, but as one member, I'd like to know what arguments the members are mustering. See, if we get it wrong, we'll not help our manufacturers. And if we destroy many of them, then ultimately we'll condemn ourselves to being also-rans in hang gliding in a few years time.

Brian Milton

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Brian Milton

## BHGA OFFICER PAY RISES

BHGA Council agreed a pay rise of approximately 25% for its three officers at the Council meeting of August 31st. Part of the salary and fee rises were to cope with inflation, and part to bring the officers into line with current pay — recommended by the Sports Council — for the officers of sporting organisations. **Barry Blore**, BHGA Development Officer, currently on £6,000 plus a pension, will get £7,500 from October. **Chris Corston**, BHGA Secretary, currently being paid £5,000, will get £6,500, plus £500 a year in lieu of pension. The post of Training Officer, last held by Keith Cockroft, who was paid £4,750 a year, will now pay £6,000 a year, plus either a pension or £500 a year in lieu.

During the debate on the rises, councillors set out to define various targets which the officers should aim at in the growth of BHGA. The net cost of the increases, outside of Sports Council support, will be £4,475 a year to the association, about the equivalent of £1.50 p.a. on membership fees.

The selection boards for the post of BHGA Training Officer will sit during October.

## PHILIP PENFORD FOURTH FATALITY

A baffling manoeuvre appears to have caused the death of a newly-qualified pilot in "perfect" conditions.

**Philip Penford**, 22, suffered a bruised heart when he struck the hillside in a spiral dive at the Hole of Horcum, near Pickering, one of the North's major training sites.

Mr Penford came from Mansfield and was also a free fall parachutist.

He had apparently gained his Pilot One with **Richard Ware's** Northern Hang Gliding Centre earlier this year and had returned after a break from flying at the Centre's suggestion.

Rick described him as an "above average student" and had watched him competently fly a training glider on the day he died.

He was given the use of a Chargus Vortex for the rest of the day under the supervision of other instructors.

Rick described conditions on the 350ft. hill as perfect for top-to-bottoms with a light southerly breeze blowing a steady 10 mph.

Mr. Penfold was apparently wired off by an instructor and flew straight out for a few seconds before beginning a left turn.

He went on to do one and a half 360s before impacting near the foot of the hill.

"His injuries indicated he was still over to the left when he hit the ground", said Rick.

He was given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation but was dead on arrival at hospital in Scarborough. The accident happened on July 24.

Rick could offer no explanation for Mr. Penfold's sustained turn. The glider did not stall and there was no turbulence. B.H.G.A. accident investigation officer John Hunter will make a full report.

The George Cailey Sailwing Club is currently engaged in a continuing wrangle with the North York Moors National Park Committee over fees for the use of Horcum by hang gliders.

**Stan Abbott**

## JOHN LAMB FIFTH FATALITY

North Yorkshire Sailwing Club member **John Lamb** has died in hospital a month after crashing a borrowed hang-glider in the Cleveland Hills.

Mr. Lamb, 43 — a pilot with six years experience — never fully recovered consciousness after hitting a dry stone wall in a downwind landing.

The accident happened on August 16 at Captain Cook's Monument, a South Westerly site not far from Mr. Lamb's home in Guisborough, Cleveland.

He was with other club members who reported mild thermal turbulence with the wind blowing 15-18mph, slightly crossed from the south.

Conditions were soarable on the hill which is nearly 700ft. top-to-bottom, dropping most steeply the first 300ft. below the ridge.

It is understood Mr. Lamb had not originally intended flying and had left his own Skyhook Silhouette on his car at the bottom of the hill.

He had made one earlier flight on a borrowed Sunspot, but club secretary **Gerry Stapleton**, a witness, said he had appeared unhappy in the air.

At about 5.30p.m. he borrowed a Moonraker 77 from **Andrew Buchan** who had flown the glider earlier without incident.

The Monument is a convex-shaped hill and the accident happened as Mr. Lamb made a beat towards the right hand end of the ridge where the wind was becoming increasingly crossed.

He was seen to turn out from the ridge for the return beat 15-20 feet above the hill.

"That turn never really stopped and he turned back over the hill", said Mr. Stapleton.

"He dropped out of prone when he saw what was happening and landed on the left hand leading edge on top of the wall".

Mr. Lamb's injuries included dislocated shoulders and a broken jaw and his crash helmet had been shattered by the impact.

His pulse was weak and he was having trouble breathing and colleagues used a length of plastic sheath from a stirrup cord to maintain an air passage while the ambulance was awaited. Those on the hill included a trained nurse.

Although critical when admitted to hospital in Middlesbrough and suffering suspected brain damage, Mr. Lamb appeared to make some gradual improvement.

But evidence of internal bleeding prompted an emergency operation and he eventually died in the intensive care unit on September 14.

John was a hospital engineer, married with two children, aged 12 and 15.

The accident is particularly tragic in that it did not at first seem a particularly bad crash to witnesses.

The glider appeared to stall in wind shadow as the fatal turn was begun. John hit the only obstruction on the hill for some distance.

B.H.G.A. accident investigator John Hunter will be producing a full report.

**Stan Abbott**

## LOST PROPERTY

A wrist compass was handed in at Clubman's Mere and has not yet been claimed by its owner.

Will the person who lost it please write to the Secretary giving a description and the maker's name so that it can be returned.

## POWER CRAZY

Are British hang-glider manufacturers becoming too obsessed with the power scene? Are they spending too much time on research and development in this field, to the neglect of the advancement of the free flying hang-glider?

All the British manufacturers, with the possible exception of one or two, seem to be jumping in on the trike craze. Many schools are now teaching, or about to teach, people in the art of powered hang-glider flight. Numerous top pilots are experiencing the sensation of flying a motorized glider, and becoming so hooked that they choose to pass up a potentially good soaring day in favour of a 'motorbike-ride' along an old airfield.

OK. So it's great fun! But let's not forget the magic, the challenge, the pure freedom of foot-launched flight. Let's not forget the advancements in performance and safety of hang-gliders over the last six or seven years in this country. I'm sure I am not alone in saying that I want to see that progress continue. But, I have fears that further advances in hang-glider design will be slowed down if not brought to a sudden stop by all but a few diehard, purist manufacturers.

How many really new designs have we seen this year?

There are only two of the seven big manufacturers in this country that have brought out a ship that doesn't resemble or isn't a straight copy of the French Atlas! Whatever happened to good British inventiveness, flair and design? Let's see hang-gliders improve towards the kind of futuristic foot-launch wings we dream of, without their advance being stifled by too much attention to re-inventing the aeroplane.

**Mike Hibbit**

*September Editorial Volplane — TVHGC*

## XC LEAGUE TABLE All distances are in miles

Name	Club	1st	2nd	3rd	Average
1 Pete Hargreaves	N. Yorks	18.0	43.2	68.4	43.2
2 Rob Bailey	Dales	59.3	35.8	26.7	40.6
3 Sandy Fairgrieve	Northampton	24.9	20.4	25.6	23.6
4 Bob Harrison	Dales	8.0	16.0	40.3	21.4
5 Dave Harrison	Dales	8.0	50.8	—	19.6
6 John North	Pennine	15.9	10.5	29.5	18.6
7 Ian Ferguson	Lancaster	17.0	9.3	26.4	17.6
8 Jim Brown	Dales	11.0	26.0	15.4	17.5
9 John Stirk	Dales	20.9	14.2	15.3	16.8
10 Andrew Wilson	Sky Surfing Club Hampshire	10.0	17.5	7.0	11.5
11 Rod Lees	Mid Wales	14.6	18.5	—	11.0
12 Gordon Holmes	G. Cayley	14.0	6.2	—	6.7
13 Pete Anstley	Dales	7.6	11.7	—	6.4
=14 John Hudson	Pennine	15.9	—	—	5.3
=14 Len Hull	Sheffield & District	8.6	7.1	—	5.3
15 Pete Kavanagh	Pennine	12.0	—	—	4.0
16 Dick Brown	Pennine	9.8	—	—	3.3

## LEAGUE ENTRY, 1981

Altogether 12 people have qualified so far, according to **Dave Harrison**, to apply for entry into the 1981 League. BHGA Competitions Committee decided at the League Final that the closing date for applications, accompanied by details of three flights of 10km or longer outside ridge lift, is **October 15, 1980**. If there are 13 names (and **John Duncker** is missing from Dave's list), then there won't need to be a competition. At the moment it looks like there will be 14 vacancies next year.



## BRITISH AMERICAN CUP TEAM

Despite the League Final blow-out, the Competitions Committee had more than enough information to choose this year's team to defend the American Cup in Tennessee, October 18/26. The team members are: **Robert Bailey** (Captain), **Bob Calvert**, **Graham Slater**, **Bob England**, **Graham Hobson**, **Mark Silvester**, **Geoff Ball** (Reserve). Two managers will be going out, **Derek Evans** and **Brian Milton**. This year, **Joan Lane**, who does so much of the League's scoring, is also going out privately to help the British team, and we'll have the aid of Derek's wife, **Audrey**. The team leaves Gatwick by B'Cal at 11 a.m. on Saturday, October 11.



Audrey Evans. Photo Mark Junak

## MERTHYR NEWS

The SE Wales HGC are under some pressure over two of their main sites. At Merthyr, a thousand foot WSW site, which attracts a lot of visiting pilots, you can't go down to the bottom, no matter how safe and inviting it is. The local Council is worried that motorists will look up at the hang gliders and crash their cars. And at Tredegar, there have been problems on the road where pilots normally park their cars. If you do fly there, please get out and ask where you can park before taking your glider off.



Robert Bailey. Photo Mark Junak

## US MASTERS 1980

**Robert Bailey** was invited to this year's *US Masters* competition, on Grandfather Mountain, September 2/7, which included 27 top pilots, 19 American and 8 foreigners. After 18 competition flights, **Steve Moyes**, the reigning champion, won again on a *Moyes Mega 2*, followed by **Peter Brown** ("The Black Death"), **Rich Grigsby**, and **Tom Haddon**. Our Robert not only made the final 9, but going into the last flight he was actually leading the competition... and it was raining. He barely had time to savour the taste of "Robert Bailey, US Masters Champion" before hitting a bubble on the way into the landing area and dinking his control bar. He ended in 5th place, out of the prize money. Still, as he himself argued ferociously, it was worth him being there. While commiserating with him on not winning, making the final was superb.

## UPSETTING EXPERIENCES

If there is one thing that is calculated to upset a hang glider pilot or, as they prefer to be called, a "flyer" in more ways than one it is turbulence. And as every reader of the *Flight Safety Bulletin* will know, the wake behind any aeroplane or helicopters can be very turbulent for quite a long time. The problem with hang gliders is that most of them are controlled by weight shift, the pilot's weight, and a good way to shift this in an unscheduled manner is to encounter turbulence. Therefore, it is not always the possibility of a mid-air collision that causes the pilot of one of these aircraft to believe his aircraft (and, of course, himself) to have been endangered "by the proximity of another aircraft" as the UK Air Pilot describes an "airmiss."

The trouble is that, for many powered aircraft pilots, the sight of a hang glider in the air is still a novel experience and curiosity may tempt him to go and have a look. Then, because he is not very familiar with the beast, he may get too close, at least for the comfort of the intrepid hang glider "flyer." Perhaps he not only does not appreciate how susceptible these machines are to the effects of turbulence but he also may

not appreciate how slowly they fly. Maybe a hang glider can "turn on a sixpence" but this is largely because they fly at only 20-25 knots and unlike the conventional glider, sadly lack "penetration" or the ability to pick up speed rapidly while maintaining a reasonably flat angle of glide.

A similar problem concerns balloonists. Their vehicles, too, are very susceptible to the effects of the sort of turbulence produced by powered aircraft and their pilots really do dislike helicopter pilots who go into the hover near them while enjoying the sight of a really far more attractive flying machine than theirs also defying gravity. Hot air balloons are particularly vulnerable to this sort of turbulence and, even more so than hang glider pilots, their pilots have difficulty in getting out of the way of determined sightseers as the only directional control they have is in the vertical plane.

So, if you are fortunate enough to see a hang glider or a balloon while you are about your aeronautical business, do please give it a wide berth and don't go over to have a look at it. You won't be welcome!

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## AMERICAN CUP AMERICAN TEAM

Following the US Nationals in Ellenville, New York, **Bettina Gray** telephoned the following 9 names for the American Team squad, 6 of whom will fly in the American Cup in Tennessee later this month. They are **Jeff Scott** (Harrier), **Rich Grigsby** (UP Comet), **Dave Ledford** (Mega 2), **Malcolm Jones** (Mega 2), **Jeff Burnett** (Sensor), **Tom Haddon** (US Champ, Comet), **Jo Greblo** (Mega 2), **Rich Pfeiffer** (Comet) and **Dave Rodriguez** (now prone on Mega 2). All start from scratch for team selection. No manager or coach has yet been appointed, and the squad will get to Tennessee around October 11 - the same time as the British and French - to go to trials to choose the final 6.



"There! I told you it wasn't an eagle!"

## CLUB DELEGATES CONFERENCE

The AGM in March this year made the following resolution:

"That a delegates conference be held in October (attended by one delegate per club plus one additional delegate for each additional 50 members over the initial 50)"

As a result the Conference has been arranged for Saturday, November 8, and will be hosted by the Northampton Club. All clubs have been sent full details and invitations to send delegates.

Topics for discussion so far scheduled are:

**The Position of the Club in the BHGA.**

**Preferential Treatment for Club Members** and how best to encourage BHGA members to join clubs.

**Council Structure** and number of Council members.

**Regional Representation.**

**Sites Guides.** Barrie Annette's guide has been on sale now for over 18 months. A club contacts list has recently been published. How useful are they?

*Wings!*

Council hope that all clubs will be represented. If you feel that other topics should be discussed please tell your club committee.

## AIRSPACE CO-ORDINATOR

As a result of the recent appeal in *Wings!* for a member to handle the Association's Airspace affairs several volunteers came forward. Our thanks to them all. **Ted Frater** of the Wessex Club is the member who will handle the job. More information will follow from Ted when he has had a chance to settle in.

## HANLON FACTOR

BHGA Council's resident lovely, **Diane Hanlon**, gave birth to a 7lb.11oz. boy on July 30th; both are doing well. It's the 7th Hanlon sprog, and the word is Diane is going in for a family hang gliding team... Junior hasn't got a name yet; Diane favours Raymond, but the rest of the family are still rolling names - like Chargus, Vulcan, Storm - around to see which has the best flavour!

# NEWS EXTRA

*Wings!* went to bed with Tony Fuell's editorial last month before Mike Collis, who actually won the Bognor Birdman Competition, sent in his spirited defence of such events. Had I known there was a defence being prepared, or that Mike felt he was bound to leap to the competition's defence, maybe I would have handled it differently. Anyway, apologies to Mike for the month's delay in his reply. Here it is:-

## THE BOGNOR BIRDMAN COMPETITION A reply to Tony Fuell's Guest Editorial

Although I do not know him well, Tony Fuell has hitherto had a reputation as a devoted supporter of Hang Gliding; a man with a large amount of moral courage and a person possessing a sound judgement. The tone and content of his letter to Roy is so different to that of his calm and courteous covering letter to me that I can only conclude that he wrote the former under stress of anxiety and overwork in the silly season, but had recovered his cool when he composed the latter! However, I will give you a serious reply to his letter, since he does make one or two good points.

I will deal with the good points first:

1. The event is trivialised by mixing a large number of 'comic' entries with a small number of 'serious' ones. Comment: This is true, and I would much prefer a totally 'serious' event such as the one run in Japan. Perhaps the Council would organise such an affair? No? Ah well, we all have to put up with an imperfect world.

2. The safety organisation leaves something to be desired. Comment: Agree, in that the generally sensible rules about quick-release devices and life-jackets are not enforced by rigorous inspection. I would like to see buoyancy devices on the 'serious' entries and have urged this and other improvements in my annual feed-back reports to the organisers. On the other hand nobody has to take part and nobody has yet been hurt. I take every precaution that I can think of. Tony's other safety criticisms are greatly exaggerated. A 30 foot drop into the sea is rarely fatal! From the safety point of view the airworthiness of the machines is irrelevant. The whole point of running it over water is that this avoids the rigorous proof of airworthiness which would severely discourage entries were the contest to be over land. It does not follow that the machines are necessarily NOT airworthy!

Now for the bad points:-

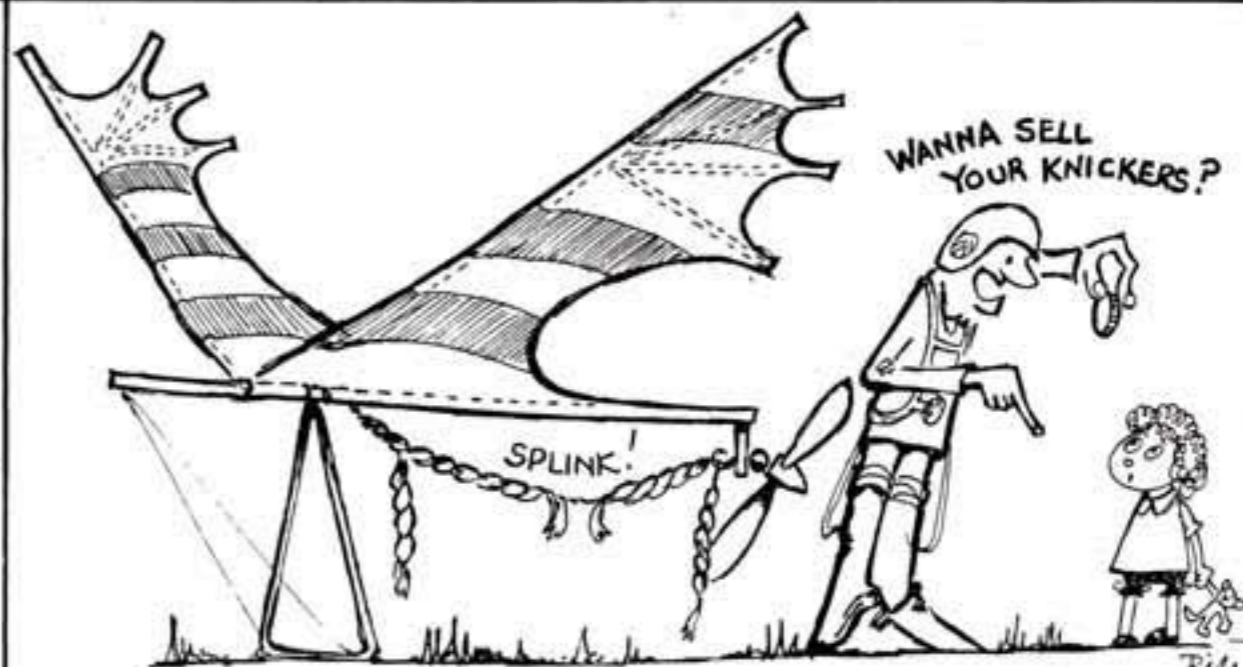
1. I regret to say that plain, old-fashioned envy shows through over media coverage and money. This childish resentment that the Great British Public prefer to watch the Bognor Birdmen rather than the superb flying of League Pilots is unworthy of an adult. As the Sailplane world discovered long ago, gliding competitions are not good public displays and it is unlikely that they ever will be. I may say that I have always tried to put over a sensible message in any media interviews that I have given, and look upon them as an opportunity to spread the idea that there are a few serious contenders who are actually trying to achieve something.

2. To say that a one-day event in the silly season is "steadily rubbishing the rest of the sport in the UK" is surely another wild exaggeration. There will always be some people who will draw the wrong conclusions, but I believe that they are in a minority. My friends think that I am slightly mad to take part — but they think that I am slightly mad to hang glide.

3. The complaint that the event is a spectacle of "hang-glider like craft splashing into the sea in a million fragments" is a half-truth at best. Most of the 'serious' entries do NOT resemble hang gliders. In any case, the absence of hang gliders would not stop the disintegration complained of, since most of them are not the work (I hope) of BHGA Members.

For my part, the Selsey event certainly caused me to buy my first hang glider, and I have also been led to invent, design, build and test in flight two arrangements of man-powered propulsion. I have learnt a great deal about lightweight foam-sandwich construction of propellers, etc. I have learnt how to make and mount floats, and how to waterproof the framework. I know how to fly at high speed in the ground cushion. You may think that none of this knowledge will be of advantage to our sport, but some of it may be of use for man-powered flight. Hang gliding would be unwise to follow the parochial example of the Sailplane world and turn inwards into itself. We have demanded and won the freedom to practice our preferred type of flying. Can we deny an equal freedom to other, harmless, silent, charitable forms of aviation?

Suppose, just suppose, that I or another BHGA Member actually performed the feat of winning the Bognor £3,000 prize in, say, his 30ft. wingspan canard tandem man-



powered hang glider. What a superb publicity opportunity for giving all the credit to his experience and knowledge, *acquired through our sport*. Think positive, or at least think neutral — and give Tony a holiday.  
**Mike Collis**

## NEW WINGS! EDITOR

**Tony Fuell**, former chairman of the SHGC, and editor of *Wings!* during 1976/77, will be guest editor of the November *Wings!* while **Brian Milton** is in the USA coaching the 3rd British American Cup team. Tony will take over for one issue only. Deadlines remain the same; 3rd of the month for early features and news; 16th for remaining features and news; 20th for essential late items, as long as they're short (and not delayed pieces by people too lazy to submit until the last possible moment). **Stanley Pottinger** — a real person — remains letters editor in Bristol.

## AMERICAN CUP — IT'S ON!

Some of you will have read elsewhere, specifically in *Glider Rider*, the September issue, that there were doubts about this year's American Cup. The competition promoter, **Tracy Knauss**, also owns the American magazine, and at the depths of his hassles with sponsors he wrote an editorial putting the chance of this year's American Cup coming off at around 10%. The root of his problems, apparently, was the failure of an understood contract for television coverage, which meant the sponsors he'd lined up also lost interest. He was faced with the prospect of finding more than \$20,000 of private money on his own sayso — including money from the Murchison family, whose son David had died from self-inflicted gunshot wounds earlier this year — and no-one sharing the risk.

If it didn't come off he'd be badly burnt. The latest news is that Tracy is close to signing with a tobacco sponsor, but whatever the result, the American Cup will go ahead.

This year, as a compromise between pressure from Australia and some American sources (*hell, why not say it? — from Bill Bennett*) for teams of four pilots, and British pressure to leave the teams at eight, the eventual team size will be six. Six nations will take part — USA, France, Brazil, Australia, Canada and Great Britain.

It is generally conceded that, because of advances in glider design, among other factors, this year's American Cup will be the hardest of all to win. Which will, of course, make it the most interesting.

## FRENCH TEAM FOR AMERICAN CUP

Following the French Nationals at Lachens in early September, which included the shock defeat of multiple champion **Gerard Thevenot** by **Mike de Glanville**, the French Association has chosen its team to represent France in the American Cup Team Championships in Tennessee from October 18-26. The Lachens competition was total XC, and as a result, those chosen are almost the same team that beat Britain in the Bleriot Cup in August. The French see the American Cup as the third Anglo-French contest this year — the decider, after Britain won at Kossen, and they won at Lachens.

The French team is **Mike de Glanville**, **Gerard Thevenot**, **Yvon Bernard**, **Renaud Guy**, **Jean Roussot**, **Jean Pierre Collot** and **Joel Belin**. They are all expected to fly Atlas hang gliders, unless Thevenot comes up with a new one in the intervening weeks. Team coach — and the French have chosen only one to go — is expected to be **David Logan**, the American ex-patriate who lives in France and who organised the Bleriot Cup.



## RECORDS

by Rick Wilson

A serviceable barograph or other suitable controlling system must be used for record and Delta Silver and Gold flights. The system must prove that no intermediate landing was made, and must generally substantiate the flight. A barograph is mandatory for altitude records. One system that can be used is an Instamatic-type camera to be mounted on the opposite side of the control frame to your altimeter. Your altimeter has to be calibrated and sealed. While this system may be used for national records, for world records I would be reluctant to use it. If any of you would like to experiment with this system send me S.A.E. and I will let you have a paper by Ann Welch *Photography of Altimeter Readings for Recording Height Gain*. In the mean time use a barograph, particularly if you have the following world records in mind. (1) **Absolute Altitude**; (2) **Gain of Height**; (3) **Distance**.

Just to wet your appetite, in answer to a letter about World, National, and European records, the FAI sent me a copy of the present World Records. It would seem that over in Europe the locals are not very enthusiastic. They don't figure on the register at all. The ratified World Records are all American. What is even more surprising is the very small number of American pilots who have established World Records. Anyway I'll start with the type of records that you can go for:

1. Distance in a straight line.
2. Straight distance to declared goal.
3. Out and Return distance to a goal.
4. Absolute Altitude
5. Gain of Height.

The records are divided into two classes:

(a) Rigid Wing; (b) Flexible Wing.

## RECORDS

### Distance

**Rigid Wing:** G.D. Worthington, USA Mitchell Wing. 153.61km. 2-6-77

### Flexible Wing

A. Reeter, USA\*  
UP Mosquito. 104.25km. 7-7-79

### Goal Flight

**Rigid Wing:** G.D. Worthington, USA Mitchell Wing. 53.15km. 3-8-79

**Flexible Wing:** G.D. Worthington USA ASG 21. 153.61km. 21-6-77

### Out and Return

**Rigid Wing:** G.D. Worthington, USA Mitchell Wing. 76.38km. 27-6-77

**Flexible Wing:** G.D. Worthington, USA Seagull. 79.06km. 17-7-79

### Absolute Altitude

**Rigid Wing:** No Claims.

**Flexible Wing:** No Claims.

### Gain of Height

**Rigid Wing:** G.D. Worthington, USA Mitchell Wing. 2234.2m. 5-8-79

**Flexible Wing:** G.D. Worthington, USA Seagull. 3566m. 22-7-78

\* A new George Worthington record is awaiting ratification.

### Multiples or Dual

No established records at all.

### FOR WOMEN

#### Out and Return

**Flexible Wing:** Page Peiffer, USA UP Mosquito. 37.18km

#### Gain of Height

**Flexible Wing:** Page Peiffer, USA UP Mosquito. 3291.84m



Page Peiffer "Superbird"

## BHGA COUNCIL VICE-CHAIRMAN

**John Hunter**, one of the 8-man **BHGA Council**, was elected vice-chairman of that Council on Sunday, August 31st, as the result of a recommendation from the short-lived Ways and Means Committee, which had met earlier in the month. John, who's been the Association's Chief Accident Investigation Officer for four years, received a Tissandier from HRH Prince Charles at the last Royal Aero Club awards ceremony in 1979. The job of vice-chairman, not written into BHGA's constitution, is to chair Council meetings when the elected chairman, **Roy Hill**, is unable to attend, or when Roy wants to take a partisan position on an issue and steps down from the chair to do so.

The Ways and Means Committee was a sort of executive, supposed to meet every other month and make recommendations for ratification at full Council meetings, following a wish from some councillors to have less meetings in a year. But Council decided to go back to the normal ten meetings a year that had been the custom since the Association's founding.



Bettina Gray. Photo Dave Goepel

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LEAGUE

**Bettina Gray** reports that the Southern California League has ended, with the top ten pilots going to the US Nationals at Ellenville, N.Y. in September, and a chance in the US American Cup Team. Meet Director was Chris Price. These are the results:-

1st	Rich Grigsby	
	16 rounds, lost only 1	Comet (UP)
2nd	Rich Pfeiffer	Comet
	Gene Blyth	Comet
3rd	Sterling Stoll	Comet
	Roy Haggard	Comet
	Steve Pearson	Harrier (Wills)
4th	Mike Meier	Harrier
	Bob Trampeneau	Sensor
	(Seedwings)	
	Kim Dunlap	Harrier
	Tom Peghiny	Sensor
	Tom Haddon	Comet
	Jo Grenlo	Mega 2 (Moyes)

The only pilot who isn't a "name" in the above list is Kim Dunlap. Rich Pfeiffer is the two-time winner of the Bishop XC. Sterling Stoll was one of the Gossamer Albatross back-up team. Mike Meier is the extremely tough coach of last year's US American Cup Team, responsible for the US come-back, and a great friend of the late Bob Wills. Tom Peghiny is a blue-eyed boy. Jo, Rich and Sterling were in last year's US American Cup team in Tennessee.

There's talk on the West Coast that Bob Trampeneau's company, Seedwings, will merge with Seagull Aircraft, which Icarus reported in September had been bought by a Canadian. Any guess on names for the new company? Seedgull? Seawings?

## FRENCH DEATHS

There have been two recent deaths in France on a beginner's kite, the **La Mouette F**, a copy of the Seahawk. Both deaths, one in July, the other in August, occurred for the same reason, a luffing dive. The French Federation has contacted **Gerard Thevenot**, the company's proprietor, about the problem, and Thevenot has written to every pilot

who has bought the F, grounding the glider while tests are carried out to find out what's wrong. A luffing dive must not be confused with the problems affecting an earlier glider called the **Jet**, a number of which tugged. More news as it comes in.

## INSTRUCTORS' COURSE REPORT

At last we are going to have an Instructors' Course. Thanks to the efforts of Ann Welch and Roy Hill, the Geoffrey DeHavilland Flying Foundation have donated £1,000 to the BHGA. This money will go towards the cost of running Instructors' Courses.

The first course will be held at the WHGC on the 14th October, 1980 for up to 10 pilots, lasting 5 days. Ann has very generously afforded her services for the whole course. In the meantime, it would be of great help if Club Members could discuss with their own Club the advantages and disadvantages (if any) of having their own qualified instructor.

For example: having a Club BHGA instructor does not mean a Club has the right to carry out abinitio training. They would first have to meet all registration requirements (at present this is hardly likely). The main reason for a Club Instructor, as I see it, is for the safe and proper continuation of student training, and to ensure they receive the correct instruction by a qualified person and not have to rely on the unqualified.

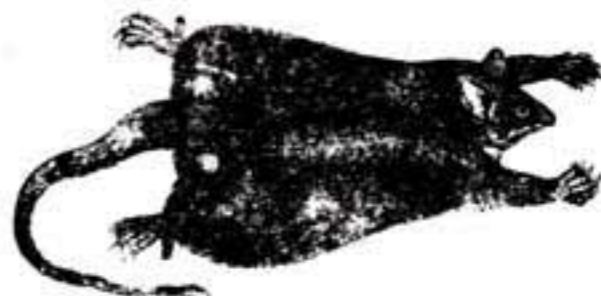
It is my belief that all clubs should have a qualified instructor and make it one of the first basic requirements of a club's constitution. This would, or should, insure safe flying progress, and be on par to the BGA clubs.

If clubs are enrolling less than P1 flyers it is their duty to club members to have a qualified instructor. These points must be driven home if our sport is going to safely grow and develop.

We must all look and plan for the future needs of hang gliding — the Instructors' courses are a long awaited step in the right direction.

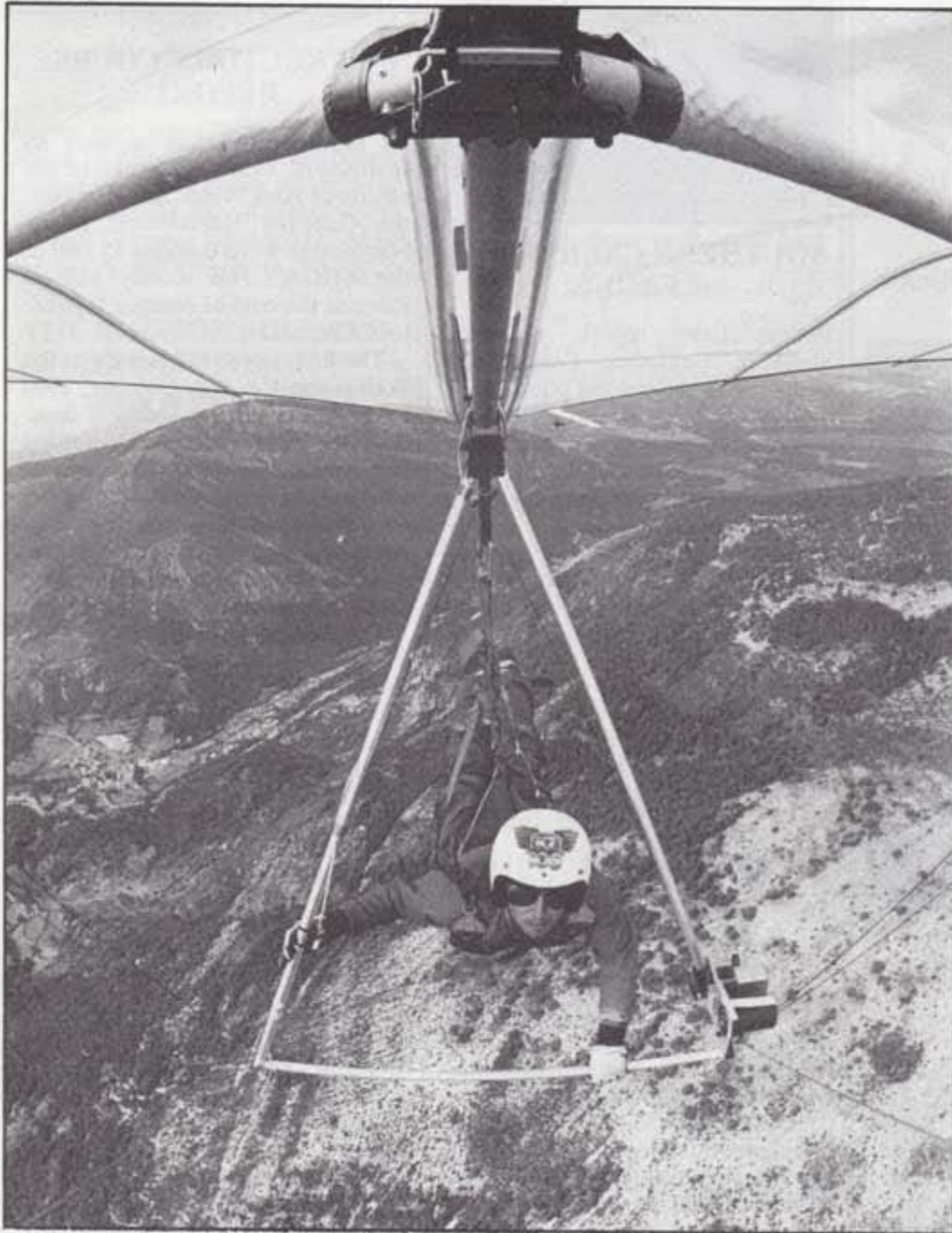
To be eligible for these courses your club Secretary and Coach have details of requirements. Please write direct to me for inclusion for the first course.

**Colin Lark**  
Training Committee Chairman



The Flying Opossum of New South Wales

# BLERIOT CUP



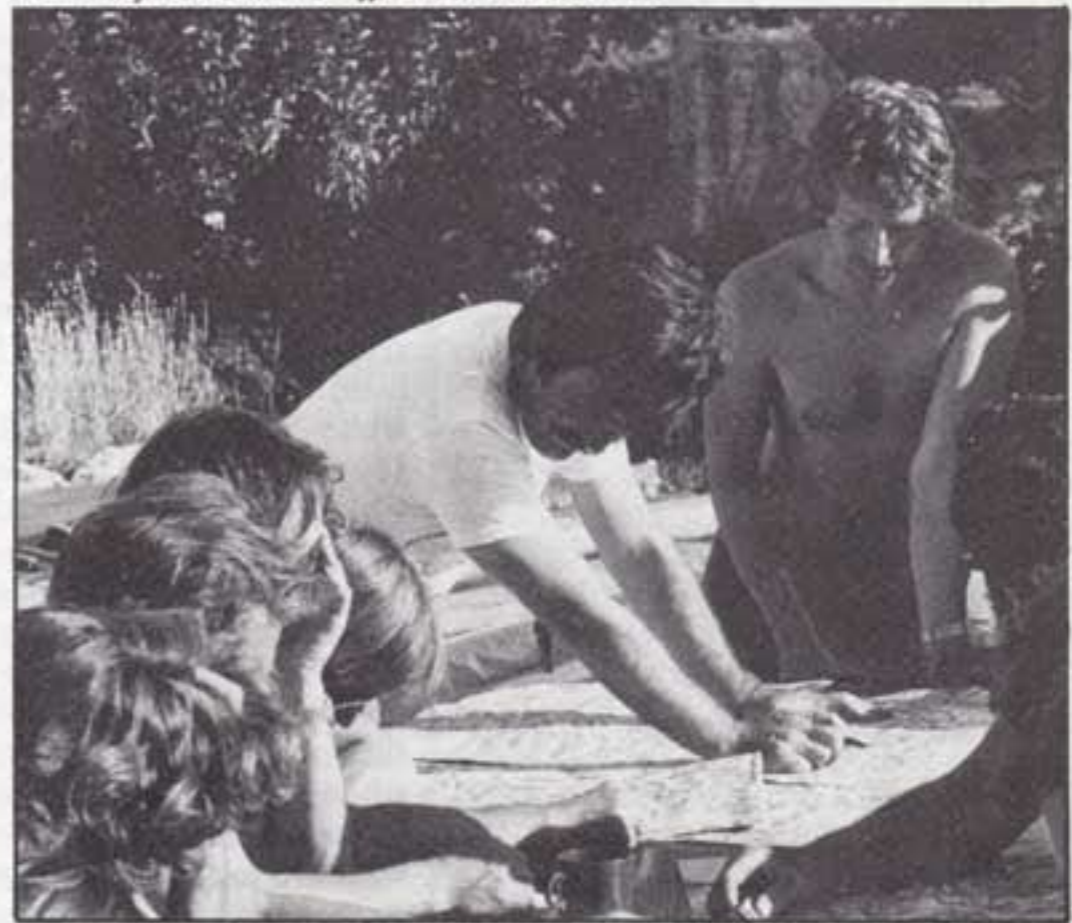
Keith Reynolds over Lachens. Photo Mark Junak



Keith Reynolds on take-off. Photo Mark Junak



Wings! Photographers Mark Junak and Mike de Glanville go hunting for shots. Photo Brian Milton



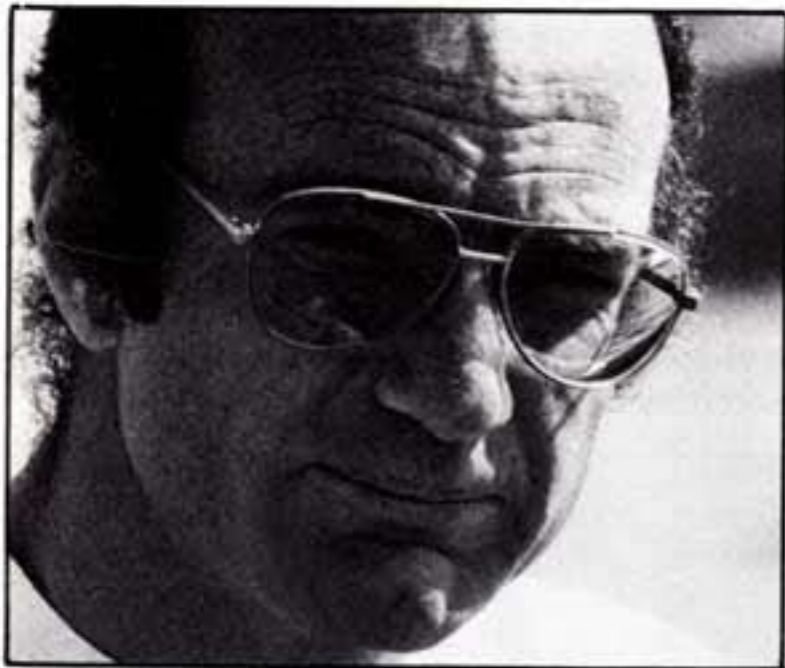
Nine o'clock briefing. Photo Mark Junak

by Brian Milton

The standard plot of a fairy story is that the heroes get into trouble at the beginning of the story, and after long adventures and numerous tests of courage, they win in the end and all live happily ever after. This year's Bleriot Cup had all the elements of a fairy tale, right up to the final day. But it turned out that the author was a Frenchman.

Those who have been to Lachens Mountain before Bleriot said it was an experience like no other. The two earlier British teams, in 1978 and 1979, came back with stories of brilliant flying. They said Lachens was different, that you had to be there for days to begin to know how to fly it, that we should never send a team with people who hadn't already been there to learn. Maybe they weren't forceful enough with their case. They were certainly right. Some of our best cross-country pilots, people like Robert Bailey and Johnny Carr and Keith Reynolds, with experience of flying all over the world, were only beginning to discover Lachens by the time the competition was over.

The French were good, even though they were a scratch team. Mike de Glanville, in particular, was magic, able to recover from seemingly impossible situations a thousand feet below Johnny Carr, apparently lost in the wonderfully-named Chez Dracula, yet when we went out to find the contestants 20 kms away, Mike had flown further than anyone else. The French knew far more about our pilots than we knew about theirs. Jean-Pierre Collot, and Yvon Bernard, aside from Mike de Glanville, flew better and further than our best XC pilots. One lesson we will have to learn is to get more regular reports on progress and ace pilots abroad. Otherwise, we'll continue to get beaten.



Mike de Glanville, "The Champion".  
Photo Mark Junak

### British Team

The British team all flew British kites. There were three Hilanders, two Cyclones, a Storm, a Vulcan and a Sigma. Johnny Carr was sent out on his American Fledgling 2 to try and nullify Mike de Glanville on a similar glider. When we arrived, late in the afternoon on Saturday, August 17th, half of us stranded 100 kms away with Geoff Ball's broken down van, we found the French had two Fledges flying in their team, not one. Otherwise they had five Atlases, one Super Scorpion, and one Sigma, the last flown by Hubert Aupetit who was in the middle of writing Vol Libre's monthly kite report; Hubert is the magazine's editor. It has to be said that there was no real difference between the gliders, except on glide and speed between the Fledges and the Flexwings. Nevertheless, on at least one day the Flexwings — two Hilanders — completely whopped everything else on the 20 km speed run.

We went for a mixture on the British team, those with a lot of competition experience, along with those who knew about Lachens. Sandy Fairgrieve, Geoff Ball, John Bridge, Chris Johnson, Bob Harrison and Jo Binns had been to the Lachens Open earlier in the year. Sandy, flying a Cyclone then, had done a 28 km flight, ending in a valley called Jaws and almost breaking his elbow. Jaws was aptly named. There'd been rave reports about Geoff Ball and John Bridge in

their first International, which turned out to be fully justified at the Bleriot. Bob Harrison was team captain at the earlier Open, and while Jo Binns hadn't been an official team member, he had done well in the competition . . . so much so that I still owe Johnny Carr some beers for a misplaced bet I had made on how Jo would rate against the official British team.

Chris Johnson had been a team manager in Kossen, twice in fact, but this was his first international. If you want to know what it's like to be subject to the peculiar pressures of flying for your country, ask Chris. In the event, as we had expected, he flew better than he had ever done in his life.

The most sophisticated members of the British team, with experience of every major competition in the World, were Robert Bailey, Keith Reynolds and Johnny Carr. They were able to get only one days practice before the competition began, as were Steve Goad and I as managers . . . this, on reflection, was what brought our defeat.

### Brilliant Weather

Throughout the whole competition, all five days, the one practice day and the wind-down day afterwards, the weather was brilliant. On one day, the inversion layer was such that thermals were weak if there at all, but each day was flown, which must be without precedent. The practice run was over the standard 37 km dog-leg distance (can you believe it?), including a 20 km stretch over the back from Lachens covering three valleys, known as "The Milk Run". Bob Harrison made the furthest in practice, to the goal, Soleilhas, but everyone easily — perhaps too easily, considering next day's flying — made the turn point at Greolieres that marked the end of the Milk run. The flying was over valleys that were alternately wide and open, and deep and forested. There were only a number of designated landing areas, outside of which penalty points were scored, if you survived.

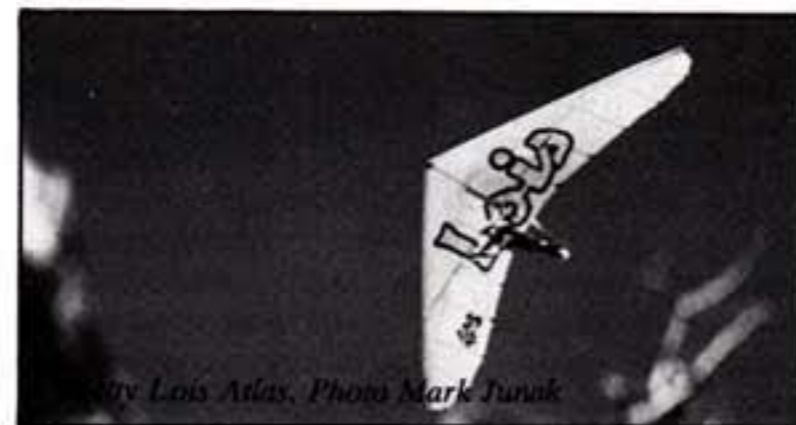
We were pretty confident on the first day, waiting for the sea-breeze front to come in from Cannes on the coast, marked by sailplanes from a club to the south who came back to Lachens for height. The mountain itself was 5,000ft. above sea level, with a top-to-bottom drop of about 1,900 feet. It created its own unique weather conditions, which Mike de Glanville was familiar with. The task was the Soleilhas dog-leg distance, with a speed run to Greolieres. The speed was our undoing, more particularly, my undoing as coach. Five more minutes thought would have convinced us all to ignore the speed element. In fact, we went for everything, and failed.



Steve Goad "I'm in charge of GBH".  
Photo Mark Junak

### Tactical Mistake

Chris's wife, Alison, and I, tearing along in the team van, got behind Lachens as the first kite came over, Bob Bailey's really trucking. We could only just stay up with him as he moved along the Bauroux, the first jump point, a jagged inhospitable ridge, behind Lachens. As we reached the end, Bob went around the corner, and to our horror we saw him struggling along a ridge losing height over a landing field called Caille, worth just 7 points. Maybe he'd scratch his way out, we thought, rushing to get to the turn-point which was where we were needed. Bob didn't make it. At the turn point, we counted John Bridge through, and Geoff Ball, and Sandy Fairgrieve. Then we saw Johnny, could it really be him dodging in and out of the ridge, so close to the bottom? It was. Despite an almost suicidal effort, he couldn't get over the telephone lines to make the turn point, and landed out. Mike de Glanville sailed over him ten minutes later with about 2,000 feet on (Johnny said later he'd had 1,000 feet on Mike at La Ferriere, the jump on to the Milk Run ridge, and he'd yelled down "You Punter, Mike, I've got you now" and pulled on to make more speed marks . . . and lost it). Mike made it to Soleilhas, for max points, with the fastest time as well as the greatest distance. But worse was to come. We watched seven other Frenchmen make it past the turn point, and couldn't find Bob Harrison or Jo Binns. Bob hadn't made it on to the Milk Run ridge, in the company of a Frenchman, while Jo — tragedy — had been drilled on the face of Lachens and scored a zero. Chris Johnson made it around the point and back to Hi Thorenc, while Keith Reynolds and Hubert Aupetit — both on Sigmas — came down together after getting to the turn-point. The wind had switched as they went through. At the end of the day, Sandy Fairgrieve had also made Soleilhas, almost to match Mike de Glanville, and Geoff and John Bridge had made it to the fourth valley, in the company of a number of French fliers, including Mike de Glanville's wife, Caroline. But the scores were a disaster.



Lois Atlas. Photo Mark Junak

The French made 374 points. We made 247 points. There were ahead of us by more than half our own score. The only way we could go on to win was by beating the French on every day of the rest of the competition, four whole days, providing those four days were flyable, and by a big enough margin each day, an average of 35 points, to cut into their massive lead.

Talking to Werner Pfaendler, the editor of the German Drachenfleiger magazine a couple of months ago, he said that one quality everyone noticed about British hang gliding teams was that they never gave up, winning or losing. My own experience had been with winning teams, and I hadn't experience of how a team would react staring defeat in the face on the first day. It wasn't just losing that day; the whole competition changed. The French could play the percentages. We had to go for it and win every time. I said I didn't think we could do it. That it wasn't physically possible. "Nonsense", said everyone, "it can be done", and they set out to have a go. It really was a test of character.

## Pulling Back

The task the following day was roughly the same, Lachens to Greolieres at speed, then on to Soleilhas, and complete the triangle — if possible — back to Lachens again. This time our team was told just to make it, forgetting about the time. On the distance event, the French won, but including the bonus marks, we did, by just 5 points. It was a narrow squeak, but it was a win, Sandy, who had done so brilliantly the first day, was bottom of the British scores on the second, a position he felt pretty bad about.

Johnny Carr was tightly briefed at the hour long session we held that morning — and every morning — to stick with Mike de Glanville, no matter where he went. Even if he was a punter. "If he leads you into Chez Dracula", I said, "then follow him, and make sure you come out again." Mike led Johnny all over the place, trying to do him down, even though Johnny had the height on him. This time Johnny made it up the Milk Run, back over the fourth valley and into the fifth, in St Auban. The run up to Soleilhas cannot even be imagined, unless you've been there. Mike went upwind with a hundred feet on Johnny, both sinking fast, trying to get around to a windward face. Mike just made it, and Johnny didn't. With any other briefing, Johnny wouldn't have tried, but he was told to stick with Mike and he did. He landed out in a small field, frightened for his life, shouting help. Mike made Soleilhas. Johnny got a penalty score. We were happy, though, that Johnny was coming to some sort of terms with Mike.

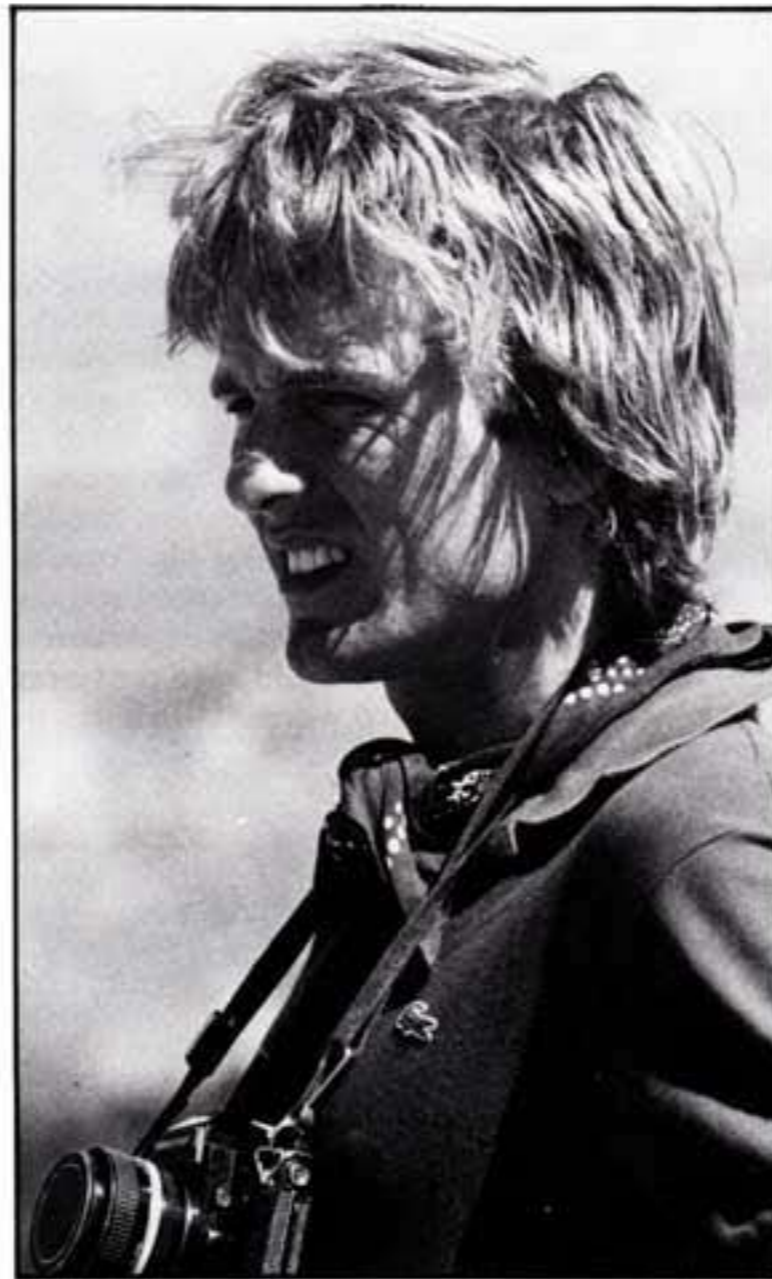
The third day was open distance, which we thought would be our best event, and so it proved. Dave Logan, the quiet French-American expatriate who ran the competition, took his heart in his teeth in agreeing the task, because full permissions hadn't quite been agreed. The window closed at 4 p.m. and our briefing was, take care, keep high, don't push it. There was a wonderful quality about picking up that day, dropping in at cafes for a beer with Mike Macmillan, driving the French truck, phoning in to find out where people had gone down, going beyond St Auban to pick up our first customer — a French girl pilot called Odile, tiny and diminutive — finding Bob Harrison who'd plonked in on the side of a hall next to a run-down chateau in the middle of nowhere. Gradually the picture emerged. It looked like our discovery, Sandy Fairgrieve, had maxed out again, even though he was matched by a Frenchman. Mike de Glanville hadn't done the biggest distance, though again, he had beaten Johnny. Watched Chris Johnson and John Bridge make the intelligent decision and fly 2 kms off the end of the Milk Run, while a Frenchman, one at least, went over the back and lost it much nearer take-off. All the British team made 20 kms or better. We were able to establish better "margins", the key to winning (and losing) in team competition, with a gain of 43 points. That was better. The French lead was reduced to two figures now, just 79 points. If we could fly the last two days, and have the weather to make good tasks we could win.

Morale in the team was very high. Every morning, after breakfast at the Gite, a 12-bunk church building at the bottom of Lachens that accommodated 15 of us, we cleared the tables, took out maps, and went over the previous day's flying. It was an invaluable hour, and everyone learned something. With pilots of that calibre, there was so much each could say to the other, and it was noticeable that they learned quickly. The briefings were attended by our wind-

dummies, John Duncker, former BHGA chairman Pat King, Alan Nuttall, as well as Steve Goad. They all had the flying of their life, and their standard was very high. *So high, in fact, that it's worth considering an XC competition once a year in Britain between a League and a non-League team. While the British distance record is back, once more, with a League pilot, Peter Hargreaves isn't in the League, nor were any of our wind dummies, and nor are a great many top XC pilots. It's easy to see how to pick a League team of, say, 6, but how could a non-League team be arrived at? I digress...*



Sandy Fairgrieve, Top Brit. Photo Mark Junak



Editor, Vol Libre, French team member, Hubert Aupetit. Photo Mark Junak

## Johnny Gets There

The fourth day, conditions were light westerly, and despite the fervent wishes of all the pilots on top of Lachens, the sea breeze front was losing its battle inland. That meant the inversion layer stayed below the level of the mountain, and

thermals could not get up over the top. The task was a go-for-it XC again, 2 points per km, and by 3 p.m. it didn't look as if anyone was going anywhere. We had to go if we wanted any chance of winning. In the end, working weak thermals, both teams went from the West face, many going around the corner for a sled run to the bottom, 2.5 kms from take-off. Four British pilots made 4.5 kms, Bailey, Bridge, Ball and Fairgrieve. I vividly remember Chris Johnson's flight, after working for an hour in almost nothing, landing right in front of us and ground-looping, just looking totally... knackered. News came through that two French pilots had made Malamere, 5.5 kms from take-off. Then rumours began flying around that Johnny Carr had made a big one. Where was Mike de Glanville? Jubilation! Johnny had made Les Lattes, 11.5 kms from Lachens, after choosing to forget Mike and go on his own. Mike had made the bottom of the mountain. There was a brief dispute later that one couldn't score unless one had flown 5 km minimum, but that hadn't been written into the rules we had seen, and we hadn't known about it anyway, so the scores stood. We gained another 24 points, and with a deficit of 55 going into the last day, for the first time the French were catchable.

There was a certain amount of drinking and celebrating done that evening, over which a discreet curtain could be drawn. Five pilots — and Johnny only had 4 — faced a bill for 57 bottles of beer before they left the Pizza Palace we ended up eating at. Geoff Ball and John Bridge took an extraordinary interest in the French game of Boule at 12.30 a.m. and thought they would serenade us at 1.30 a.m. . . . which wasn't, I'm afraid to say, much appreciated. I've found that most British team flyers do better with hangovers anyway . . . that was especially true in the first American Cup.



Geoff Ball, before 57 beers. Photo Mark Junak

## Moving Experience

During the night, a really big wind blew up, and it looked so bad the following morning we began to make arrangements to leave, early and sadly. It was Robert Bailey more than anyone who kept urging us up the hill, despite a constant stream of reports that we were blown out. Robert turned out to be right. It was blowing strongly in the valley, and mellow at the top. We would fly the last day, with a chance, if the margins were right, to catch the French.

This time the task was a triangle, Lachens, Thorenc, Soleilhas, Lachens. No one flew until the early afternoon when gradually, it became apparent there was wave about. Watching the two

teams leave, while at the bottom of the hill, and they 5,000 feet above us, was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had in hang gliding. Caroline de Glanville, a diminutive little figure, blonde hair, quiet, long shorts well past her knees, butter wouldn't — you'd think — melt in her mouth, well, she left first, the rest trailing behind her.

Two kites gambolled behind Caroline, John Bridge and Geoff Ball. Johnny went on his own again after the previous days flight. The whole British team made it across two valleys, upwind but in wave, to fly behind the milk run ridge down to Thorenc. Some, like Keith Reynolds, made it with 2,000 feet to spare, turned around and lost the lot making a hundred yards upwind. Johnny didn't have the height to go over the back when he finally decided that was the way he wanted to go. The best distances went to the French, Mike de Glanville and Jean Pierre Collot. Mike, in fact, scored the top score in three of the five days, and whenever we come up against the French in Lachens, it will be a major part of our task to try at least and nullify his flying.

### The Winning French Team

It was obvious by the end of the afternoon that the margins weren't big enough at all to give us a win. We won the task, for the fourth day in a row, by a miniscule 1 point, to leave the French clear Bleriot Cup holders by 54 points. So who were the French team that beat us? Mike de Glanville I've written about, and Caroline, his wife. Jean-Pierre Collot is a part-time pilot, a chemist, flies an Atlas. M. Munsuy is described as a typical weekend flier, the Bleriot his 2nd competition, though he won the Lachens XC on his Super Scorpion, which he moved to after frightening himself on a Gryphon and a Mariah. Jean Roussot, flying an Atlas sponsored by "Lois", is a professional instructor, who makes the rest of his living outside his sponsor by teaching and selling dual flights to punters, which I understand is a common French passtime. Renaud Guy, another Atlas pilot, is a sales rep, weekend pilot, this is his first year of competition, though he was in the French Kossen team, and placed 15th there . . . a coming man. Jean-Michel Dufreney, who flew the 2nd French Fledge, comes from the Alps, and placed 4th in the Lachens XC in his first competition appearance. Yvon Bernard, another Atlas pilot, is described as very talented, despite only 2 years experience. He won a French League competition in his first year, and was reserve at Kossen. Hubert Aupetit, who happened to come last, is editor of Vol Libre, has been flying 4 years, dotes on Scotland where he's spent his annual holiday for the past 15 years. He flew in the last Bleriot Cup, and at Bishop and the Lachens XCs. He came 2nd in the one-task Irish Open.

We wouldn't have done as well, nor been able to use the resources we did, if it hadn't been for Alison Johnson, and Paulette Harrison ne Moyes. Steve Goad, on his first managerial job, handling the budget and two dozen problems including a broken-down van, was quite superb. We had a lovely party at Mike and Carolines place when it was all over, laid on by a heavily-pregnant Terry Macmillan, who baked a fantastic cake for Jo Binn's birthday, including facsimiles of all the kites\* in the Bleriot, and an exotic windsock that left Jo glassy-eyed. In all, it was an amazing competition, totally beyond the experience of anything I or any of the others have had, and that includes a lot of competition background. However, what can be learnt, and how can we win?

\*Johnny Carr actually ate the facsimile of Mike de Glanville's kite, and kept it down.



Chris Johnson's personal French parrot (he doesn't look happy with it). Photo Mark Junak



Bit a glary, eh? Caroline de Glanville. Photo Mark Junak

### Summary

Next year, the Bleriot Cup is highly likely to be held in Britain. Whenever it is flown at Lachens, we should never send anyone who hasn't been before, either in a national team, or under their own steam.

There must be a week's practise for any British team going out there before the competition begins. We need to use our wind-dummies very intelligently.

The host country always has a margin in setting tasks in team competition. For a variety of reasons, not least the weather, the first day was like playing in a £100 poker game, while the last two days, for example, were playing in a game worth £20. Winning in the first game was worth more than winning in, say, the fourth. These margins we have to live with, but we should be aware of them.

In purely flying terms, the Bleriot is far and away the most difficult team competition in the world to win.

The British manufacturers who sponsored the team out there — Hiway, Solar Wings, Flexiform, Southdown Sailwings and Chargus — should be pleased with the knowledge that their machines were not outclassed by the Atlases. It had been one subject of the Bleriot to break the Atlas myth. Despite our overall loss, four wins out of five days largely substantiates my assertion.

The tactical blunder on the first day I blame on myself.

The French are World Team Champions. They should never be under-estimated, ever. All their polite and modest talk about wishing they had a better selection system is gentle eyewash.

What distinguishes great XC pilots from very good ones, and will do so more more in the future, is an understanding of the weather. Given a standard blob, many pilots these days can work it. Mike de Glanville's superiority at Lachens came from knowing the weather. Okay, it's his local site, but Robert Bailey got better as his weather knowledge came into play at the end. Bob Calvert studies weather. Really studies it. If you want to be a great pilot you are going to have to become an expert on micro-meteorology. That's the next great area of advance, rather than a leap in kite design. That's what will win next year's Bleriot Cup.

Date	11 Ball	12 Harrison	13 Binns	14 Bailey	15 Carr	16 Bridges	17 Johnson	18 Reynolds	19 Fairgrieve	Total
18th	53	12	0	7	20	48	26	20	61	247
19th	54	40	39	50	35	55	47	49	25	394
20th	38	44	51	54	49	41	40	49	61	427
27th	9	8	5	9	23	9	5	7	9	84
22nd	25	25	15	25	15	25	25	25	25	205
Total	179	129	110	145	142	178	143	150	181	1357
Total	Guy	Bernard	Aupetit	Mansuy	Caroline de Glanville	Mike de Glanville	Collot	Dufreney	Roussot	Total
18th	51	45	21	12	44	65	49	45	42	374
19th	46	53	20	40	20	55	52	52	51	389
20th	61	46	17	50	24	54	59	27	46	384
21st	6	12	6	5	5	5	12	4	5	60
22nd	12	35	15	7	25	42	25	25	18	204
Total	176	191	79	114	118	221	197	153	162	1411

# League 80

The final of the National League, at Newtown in Central Wales, September 12/14, was blown out by three days of high winds and occasional rain. It was an anti-climax to a year's competition that saw Bob Calvert emerge as champion again, with very little chance of being caught, but there was a fascinating competition over the next five places. There were only 66 points between Robert Bailey, in 2nd place, and Bob England in 6th, and at 100 points a task, some good flying could have changed everything.

This was the first year of 1-on-5, the first of task scoring, rather than the old scoring by competitions. As expected, the new system tended to penalise some pilots. Chris Johnson, in particular, missing one competition and dropping from 18th to 39th place, pin-pointed one of the weaknesses of the new scoring system. On the other hand, with the changing weather we've had this year, many of the tasks would have been grossly unfair using the old system. This winter, there's going to be more changes made.

## GLAMOUR

About half the League pilots feature regularly in *Wings!* Some, like Calvert, Bailey, Carr and Slater, feature almost every month. That's because they're doing things. But the League has a large number of pilots who have made only one overseas team this year, or none at all. That's not to say they aren't good, but in some cases competitions committee thought they needed more competition experience, and in others, maybe the competition that really suits their skills didn't come along... or if it did, there weren't enough places in the team and better pilots in front of them. The first object of overseas teams is to win. I'd like to look at this year's scores, compared with last years, and tell you about the pilots you don't hear about normally...

**1st Bob Calvert**, 25, Blackburn, Lancs. Last year's champion, runner-up in 1978 to Keith Reynolds, 3rd in 1977 to Brian Wood and Johnny Carr. Bob has won more League competitions than anyone else, but he's having problems with his job as an engineer for BAC, getting competition time off. Anyone got a spare job for a year with lots of time off, paying at least £6,000, so Bob can win some foreign titles? Bob has flown in every major competition in the world in the past 3 years, and will be in Tennessee later this month on the defending American Cup team. Flew at Kossen (11th), and Grouse (5th), this year.

**2nd, Robert Bailey**, 31, Leeds in Yorkshire. Robert was 2nd to Calvert last year, and 2nd again. He lost touch with the top at the 5th League, a disaster for him, and could hear the heavy breathing of Johnny Carr behind him before the blow-out. He has flown in the European Championships (13th), Grouse Mountain (10th), Bleriot XC, US Masters (5th). American Cup team 1980.

**3rd, Johnny Carr**, 31, Burgess Hill, Sussex. Johnny nearly won the 1977 League, with three competition 2nd places, but was just pipped by Brian Wood. Then he went into the wilderness in the League, whilst being the most consistent pilot we've ever sent abroad. Placed 2nd in last year's

World Championships, in the major class 1, Johnny changed to a Fledge 2 this year and made his comeback. Won the 5th competition. Placed 2nd in Kossen in class 2, and flew in Bleriot. Placed 20th last year's League.

**4th, Graham Hobson**, 25, Brooklands, Manchester. Graham was 4th this year, 4th last year on his beloved Atlas. Made more of the finite tasks this year than the XCs, which are normally his great strength. Highest placed Briton in class 1 in 1980 Kossen, 3rd place. American Cup team 1980.

**5th, Graham Slater**, 26, Brighton, Sussex. Again, 5th last year, 5th this year. Graham is the best in the League at finite site tasks. He does well at XCs, but this year couldn't bear to leave a blob on a dog-leg XC and went off the course to score 0. Otherwise he could have placed 3rd. Top pilot in 1978 and 1979 American Cup. Flew this year in European Championships (8th). American Cup team, 1980.

**6th, Bob England**, 26, Clifton, Bristol. Bob has jumped two places on last year, from 8th position, having changed from his own design of a Gannet to an Atlas. Now moved to Hiway and their Demon. One feature of this year's score is the 144 points he made in the Lake District League. Bob went to European Championships (18th), and Grouse, (finalist, 18th). American Cup, 1980.

**7th, Geoff Ball**, 32, Bolton, Lancs. One of 3 newcomers to this year's League to make it into the top 10. Geoff did two superb XCs, one at Wolf Crag, the other from Weatherfell in the Dales. Went to Lachens XC (8th?), selected but unable to go to Bishop, Bleriot XC (5th). Reserve, American Cup team 1980.

**8th, Mark Silvester**, 18, Huddersfield, Yorks. Second newcomer into top 10, Mark is the youngest pilot to be selected for Britain in a major international competition. Showed first in Lachens XC, where he excited comment. Went to Grouse (finalist, 8th). American Cup team, 1980.



Peter Harvey — photo Mark Junak

**9th, Peter Harvey**, 22 this month, Milton Keynes, Bucks. Third of newcomers in 1980 top 10; Peter has, in general, improved his scores throughout the year. Made the biggest position jump, after Lake District League, from relegated 39th place to starry-eyed 10th, partially because of a superb XC in which he beat everyone but Bailey. Flew Lachens XC this year. Promising.

**10th, Lester Cruse**, 29, Coulsdon, Surrey. Lester was 3rd in the 1979 League, so he's dropped 7 places, but he was 10th in the 1978 League. Superb finite site competition pilot, his weakness is XC flying. Lester was reserve in Kossen this year, and is believed to have gone to Germany for the winter. Now flying a German G-Wings glider. Some doubt about being in next year's League.

**11th, Bob Martin**, Harlow, Essex. Another newcomer, this year's most hard-done-by pilot. Highly placed through the first few League competitions, he missed Kossen because teams were down to 6, instead of 8. Went to Lachens and Bishop, both XC competitions, under his own steam, without making a significant mark. Second reserve, and therefore not taken, to 1980 American Cup team. Sponsored by Gilbey's Gin.

**12th, Keith Reynolds**, 28, Worthing, Sussex. Keith placed 6th in 1979, so he's dropped 6 places. Was the 1978 National League Champion in his first year of League flying. Reserve in Kossen, Keith was in the Bleriot Cup team. Another short-listed for the American Cup, but because of this year's smaller team sizes, didn't make the final cut.

**13th, Tony Hughes**, 25, Church Stretton, Shropshire. Tony has fought his way grimly up the League as a newcomer this year, and as with Bob Martin, hasn't made a national team yet. Can be very competitive in the air. Longest XC flight was from Coombe Gibbet this March, 24 miles.

**14th, John Bridge**, 33, Preston, Lancs. John placed 17th last year, so he's up 3 places. Highest placed of Lancashire's Roses XC pilots, John was sent to Lachens XC, where his flying was admired, and the Bleriot team, (6th). Brilliant wind-up merchant, catch-phrase "It doesn't matter". Says his ambition is to be a train driver.

**15th, Trevor Birkbeck**, 37, Ripon, Yorks. Trevor was 24th last year, so he's jumped 9 places. Personal problems have kept him out of consideration for this year's national teams. Said to have one of the strongest corks in the League, when Trevor says it's a bit rough to fly no one even tries. Organised the Lake District League.

**16th, Jo Binns**, 25, Princes Risborough, Bucks. This is Jo's first League, and possibly his last. Britain's first Silver C, Jo missed selection for the Lachens XC, but made the Bishop team, where he placed 29th. Later he went on to fly 103 miles in Owens Valley, and submitted papers claiming a new British national record. Jo also made the Bleriot Cup team. It's thought that, after his extended stay in Lachens, Jo may want to fly exclusively in France next year. Sponsored by Rizla.

**17th, Richard Brown**, 32, Chorley, Lancs. One of the *Joiners* (the other is John North), Richard has lost 3 places on last year's position. His XCs are improving this year, following selection for the British team at the Lariano Triangle competition in Italy. He scored big at Colin Lark's League. It looks like he needs only a small jump to make more regular selection.

**18th, Graeme Baird**, 32, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire. Graeme is another newcomer to this year's League, obviously Scottish, placing well in his first year. He hasn't yet sorted out his known "speciality", like spot landings, or sink rate, or speed, or XC. Another newcomer to watch in the crucial 2nd year of competition to see if he improves.

**19th, Sandy Fairgrieve**, 24, Northampton. Yet one more newcomer, Sandy is halfway to being a blue-eyed boy. His speciality appears to be XC — he was highest placed of the British pilots in the Bleriot Cup — but he's still raw. Flew 28 kms into Jaws in Lachens XC earlier this year, nearly breaking his

elbow. Could be placed much higher in the League, well into top ten, if he improved his spot landings, indeed all his landings, and some of his take-offs. Man to watch.

**20th, Bob Harrison**, 28, Rochdale, Lancs. (origin, Yorkshire!). Down 11 places on his 1979 position, Bob appears to be caught between kites. Sent to Lachens XC, as British Team captain, and Bleriot Cup. A real goer, still hasn't fulfilled his potential.

**21st, John Fennell**, 34, Milton Keynes, Bucks. Newcomer, having made P2 in February this year, and started flying in March 1978. Solid capable first year, learning how competition is judged. Went to Grouse Mountain, sponsored by Milton Keynes Development Corp, hosted British team, won some good heats, lost others. Very hungry flier.

**22nd, John Hudson**, 35, Rochdale, Lancs. Alladin himself, John has improved 8 places on 1979. Spreads himself so thin at times his flying suffers. Did Silver C distance that magic Roses weekend in the same air as Bob Calvert. Selected for Bishop, flew his heart out and nearly killed himself, but down in the ratings, 57th. First team selection in 4 League years.

**23rd, Tony Beresford**, 34 this month, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. Almost automatic team selection until 1978, Tony went out into the wilds and just survived last year's League in 40th place. Now jumped 17 places and obviously coming back. Providing this progress continues, which may depend on the next kite Tony buys, one to watch.



Roy Richards — photo Mark Junak

**24th, Roy Richards**, 24, Workington, Cumbria. Quietest and least known League pilot, another newcomer this year. He's beaten some good pilots with more glamour than he's gathered at the moment. He was doing regular XCs two years ago, when they were rarer. Started flying 7 years ago. Must watch.

**25th, Jeremy Fack**, 29, Clifton, Bristol. The big drop, 18 places, from last year's 7th position, can partly be explained by Jeremy's trip to Japan for a race for the 1981 World Championships. Partly not. Sent to Lachens this year, top British pilot (3rd) with Keith Cockroft.

**26th= John North**, 31, Preston, Lancs. The other Joiner, John has been in the League two years. Dropped 4 places from last year, not significant. Good rough-thermal pilot, sent to Bishop XC, placed 33rd, just under halfway. Like about 5 others from the North, doesn't mind it "rough".

**26th=, Mark Southall**, 30, Marlborough, Wilts. Mark is up 12 places this year over last year's result, when he was in danger of relegation. Once held British distance record, 1977, 12 miles, Hay Bluff to Abergavenney. First team selection, this year, to Lariano Triangle Competition in Italy. Placed 16th of 23.

**28th, Andrew Hill**, 18, Abingdon, Oxon. Youngest League pilot, disappointing year (see Icarus, September, 1980). Has taken "an interest" in hang gliders since the age of 10. Newcomer this year. Once his act is together, one to watch.

**29th, Mick Maher**, 29, Sydenham, London. Formerly regular in the national team, Mick has dropped 17 places this year, with no apparent reason. Couple of 1st places in his group, more 2nd places. Unusual year. Sent to Lariano Triangle Competition, highest-placed Brit at 12th, ahead of Richard Brown, Mark Southall, and Richard Iddon.



Roger Black — photo Mark Junak

**30th, Roger Black**, Plymouth, Devon. In this year's ding-dong with close friend Mike Atkinson, Roger has, at last, beaten him. Three 1st places in his groups. Likes tough thermals, but gets little chance outside the League to practise XC. Came close to selection — as try out — for Lariano. Down 9 places on last year.

**31st, Mike Atkinson**, Plymouth, Devon. League character, Mike has dropped 15 places this year and had unprintable things to say about 1-on-5. Now mellowed. Three first places early in the year. Like some others, but not new entry, has problems with XC. Spot lands like a tree-trunk from 100 feet, seen to be believed.

**32nd, Graham Leason**, 28, Wokingham, Berks. Member 1976 British National team, Graham has dropped a not significant 3 places on last year. Sometimes totally blossoms, as in last dog-leg XC when he made a big distance. Flying nearly 8 years. Wants to make an XC from Milk Hill.

**33rd, Peter Day**, 36, Reading, Berks. Peter is down 18 places on last year, though this is partly because he missed two early tasks and couldn't catch up. Has won 5 of his individual group tasks, and is much more competitive than he looks. Flying since Spring, 1974.

**34th, Chris Johnson**, 33, Crickhowell, Wales. Same position as last year. Flies best when he's angry, and looked like a good score this year until he missed one (high scoring) competition and dropped into relegation zone. Clawed out. Sponsored by Windmaster. Sent to Bleriot Cup after good placing as a private entry in Lachens XC. Flew better at Bleriot than ever before. Interesting to watch next year.

**35th, Geoff Snape**, 29, Blackburn, Lancs. One place up on last year, Geoff has had a mixed year. Was reserve at last year's World Championships, but not sent abroad this year. Looks like he's settled into his glider and sorted out poverty-stricken youth.

**36th, Colin Lark**, 33, Dursley, Glos. Newcomer this year, Colin has had a mixed bag of results. Won 1980 Scottish Open with two superb XCs, and he's made lots of others, but only one of any real length in League. BHGA Council member, organised a competition, Club Chairman. Great potential as XC pilot. Flew Lachens as private entry. Watch next year.



Ron Freeman — photo Mark Junak

**37th, Ron Freeman**, 24, Ashington, Northumberland. Newcomer this year, known as "The Animal", because at Wolf Crag he climbed from bottom 5 times, from halfway 6 times, going for it in still-air thermal XC. Flew outdated Wills XC glider, and also missed 5th League, so he may have been 7 or 8 places higher. Very hungry. One to watch.

**38th, Brian Edmeades**, Rochester, Kent. Down 3 places on last year, squeaks in by 28 points from Ashley Doubtfire. Brian has done a balancing act, successfully, in last 3 League years. Plagued by a few truly bad results.

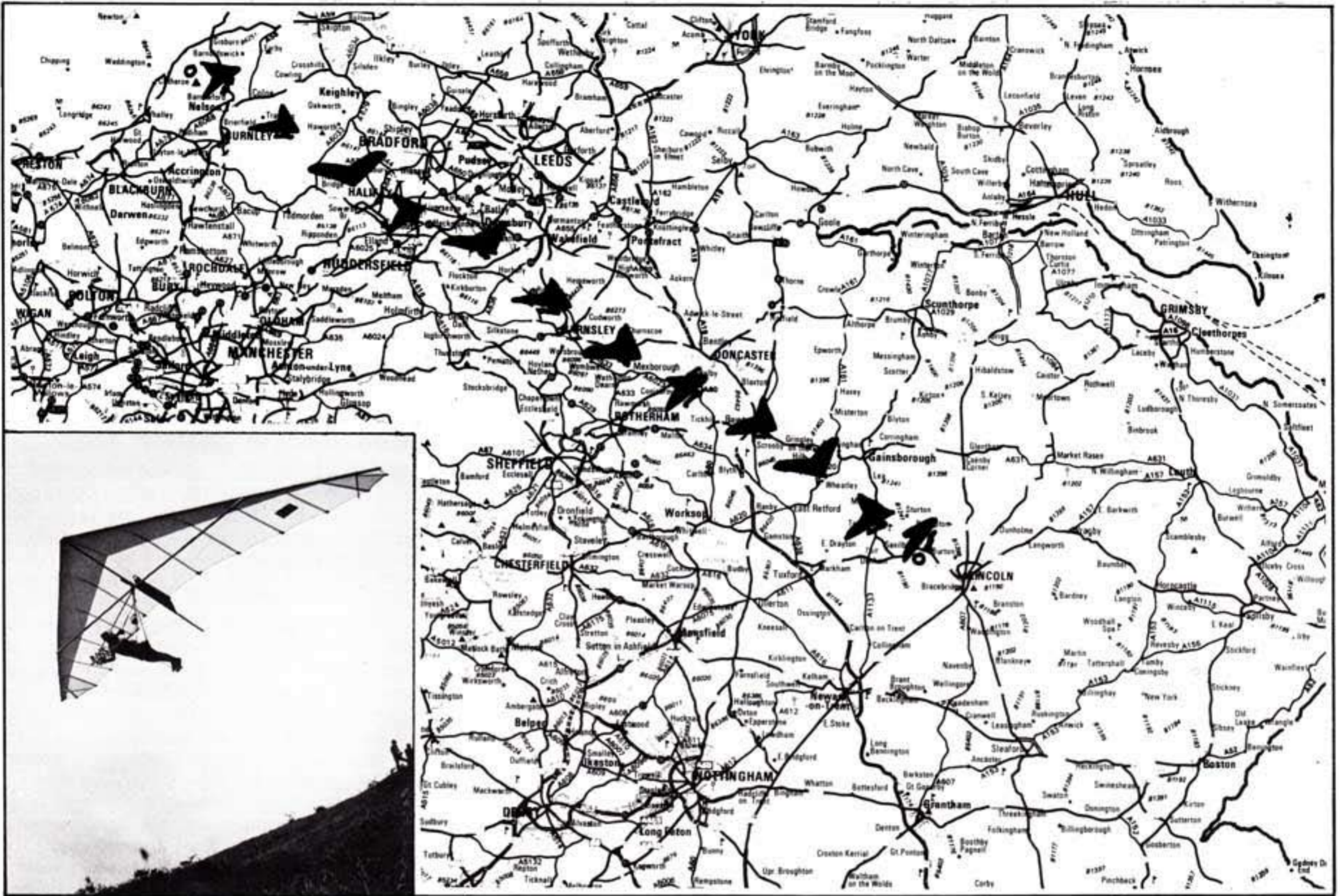
## DROPOUTS

Twelve people are dropped from the League this year, 7 of whom were in the original 1977 competition. **Ashley Doubtfire**, now concentrating on power, will be missed, as will **Richard Ware**, who survived two years longer than he expected, and was doing very well at the beginning of the year. He did say, at the fourth competition, that he wondered what he was doing there. **Alan Weeks** is another who's been seduced away by power, missing Colin Lark's competition. Alan has gone into a Pterodactyl in a big way. **Keith Cockroft** came back from Owens Valley for the final, which wasn't flown, and in which he might have turned on and caught up above the 38 drop line. It's always been his ambition just to stay in the League, for the company. He has done enough XCs to ask for League entry competition next year, if he cares. **David Jones**, who just squeaked in this year's entry, drops out at the end, dazzled by his trike. **Dave Garrison**, who flew in last year's **American Cup** team, and at the World Championships, is now concentrating on selling and flying pterodactyls with **Paul Baker** — another former League pilot — at the High School in Wellesbourne. **Richard Iddon**, who broke his foot before the League started, and when he did fly was on his way back in, successfully appealed for a place in next year's League entry, and is one of the 12 so far applying. **Roger Wates**, another original, went to the first two competitions, and scored a first place in his six results, but then faded away quietly. **Dave Thomas**, who placed so highly last year, ran into serious personal problems, and is now in Canada. **John Sharp** flew two competitions and then dropped. He went on to score at Clubman's Mere with that great 30.5 mile flight. **John Fack** broke his arm, watched it mend, flew too early and dinked in, broke the same arm again, and is now recovering a second time. He's into overseas marketing at the moment.

That just leaves me. Last year's League, on my birthday, threw me on the ground 37 times and then made me an honorary member. It was hoped I'd stay in this year on my own. I didn't. I have to go back to Committee this winter and ask if the privilege is still offered.

*Alan Wates*

# CALVERT'S RECORD FLIGHT



As reported in last month's *Wings!* the 1979, and now 1980 League Champion, Bob Calvert, has at last flown further than anyone else in Britain and Europe, 79.3 miles, a distance of 125kms, beating the mark set by Steve Moyes at the Lariano Triangle competition by 12kms. Only twice since real XC distances were possible has the "European Record" — not recognised by FAI, but we all know what it is — been outside Britain, and it's fitting that Bob Calvert should be the flyer to bring it back again. Bob made the flight on August 25th, as the bulk of the Bleriot Cup team, returning from France, was gazing wistfully at the beautiful cumulus clouds that marched steadily across northern France, and speculated that a big distance could be done that day. As we left our last French restaurant, Bob took off, and when we had finished packing our gear and split our separate ways, Bob was coming in to land, near Lincoln. Here's his account:-

## Pendle Hill, 2.15pm

The sky was perfect but the soaring conditions were extremely marginal, so **Hughie McGovern** (who makes the Flexiform Hilander) confidently offered to pick me up if I went for it. I as equally confidently said I was going 69 miles — just pipping **Peter Hargreaves'** mark — and by 2.20pm I was circling away from Pendle, thinking what a great nickname "Cloddy" is.

The first ten miles took over 30 minutes, due to the light tailwind. Staying up was no longer good enough. I needed to stay up and fly at a higher groundspeed.

My original plan was to fly north around the Leeds/Bradford air space, but the developing cloudstreets were lined up NW/SE so I changed course 90° and soon I was south of Leeds and making good progress.

The wind seemed to be getting lighter and I seriously thought about going back to Pendle. I briefly set off back towards take-off, but after only minutes the headwind was up to 5mph so I decided to continue SE again. Constant major course changes to stay below the cloudstreets meant that I had to leave gentle lift and look for big ups, in order to spend less time climbing and more time gliding. The trick was in guessing if there was stronger lift near by!

The highlight of the flight occurred after jumping a "blue hole". I was down to 1,700ft. ASL and struggling. Meanwhile a sleek glassfibre sailplane cruised effortlessly 2,000ft. above. I suddenly picked up an 800ft./min core and climbed rapidly up to the sailplane, waved, and then continued to cloudbase leaving him circling below.

The conditions now seemed perfect for soaring, and by careful planning and timing I could glide for 15-20 minutes along the streets without turning at all!

As the hours passed the cloudbase rose to 5,000ft. and the scenery became less and less familiar. My compass and watch were becoming as useful as the vario.

Down below I could see a water-skier going over a jump. Suddenly I realised that I had been there tow-kiting about six years ago. The trouble was, I

couldn't remember where "there" was.

As the light became weaker my technique became more conservative, but I remained keen to keep my heading South East wherever possible. I could not believe that I was still up, as the sun continued to set in the wind, and it was eventually 7pm when I landed near Lincoln in flat calm conditions.

After chicken sandwiches and coffee we got the map out and I could not believe that I had flown so far. I wish you could have heard the phone call to Hughie, taking him up on his promise. Thanks a lot Hughie.

The flight was unique, not for the distance covered, but more for the speed at which I travelled. I averaged 17mph groundspeed, and the average windspeed was less than 5mph. Perhaps the day of crosswind and upwind out-and-return XCs in light winds is a lot nearer to reality than we think.

## Flight Details

Glider: La Mouette Atlas 16  
 Equipment: Colver Vario, Thommen Altimeter, Sunto Compass.  
 Take-off: 2.20pm  
 Landing: 7.00pm  
 Maximum Altitude: 4,700ft. ASL  
 Average Speed: 17mph  
 Wind details: 270°-333°, 0-10mph.

## Weather Pattern

High pressure centred West of Ireland, with a predominantly light north-west flow over the North of England.



# Clubman's Mere 80



*Cyclone on take-off. Photo Alan James*

by Brian Milton

The Clubman's Competition at Mere began in 1978, following a strong difference of opinion earlier in the year on BHGA Council between Garth Thomas, later editor of Wings, and myself, as BHGA competitions chairman. I had been closely involved in organizing the previous year's Long John International, which had 180 competing pilots, far too many for a quality competition. Garth felt that I was too interested in the 'elite' of the National League, and wasn't doing enough for the ordinary club pilot. He saw Mere as a meet, in which competition took second place to the overall flying going on there. I didn't. Garth went ahead with the Clubman's meeting, and I concentrated on the National League. Both thrived. But it's worth having another discussion this winter, between parties who know the Clubman's and the League, and are sympathetic to the aims of both, to put on a public event that sells hang gliding to the public.

I've been to all three Clubman's competitions, and enjoyed them all. For one thing, they seem to have an unbroken hot line to The Man upstairs, because they've all had superb weather. Maybe it wasn't record-breaking weather, but it was at least flyable. This year, after violent weather preceding the Clubman's weekend, there were two days of southwesterlies and some brilliant flying. At times, all three bowls were flyable, Spencers, Cowards and the Rifle Range, and if they became crowded, the main competition went on with few hitches.

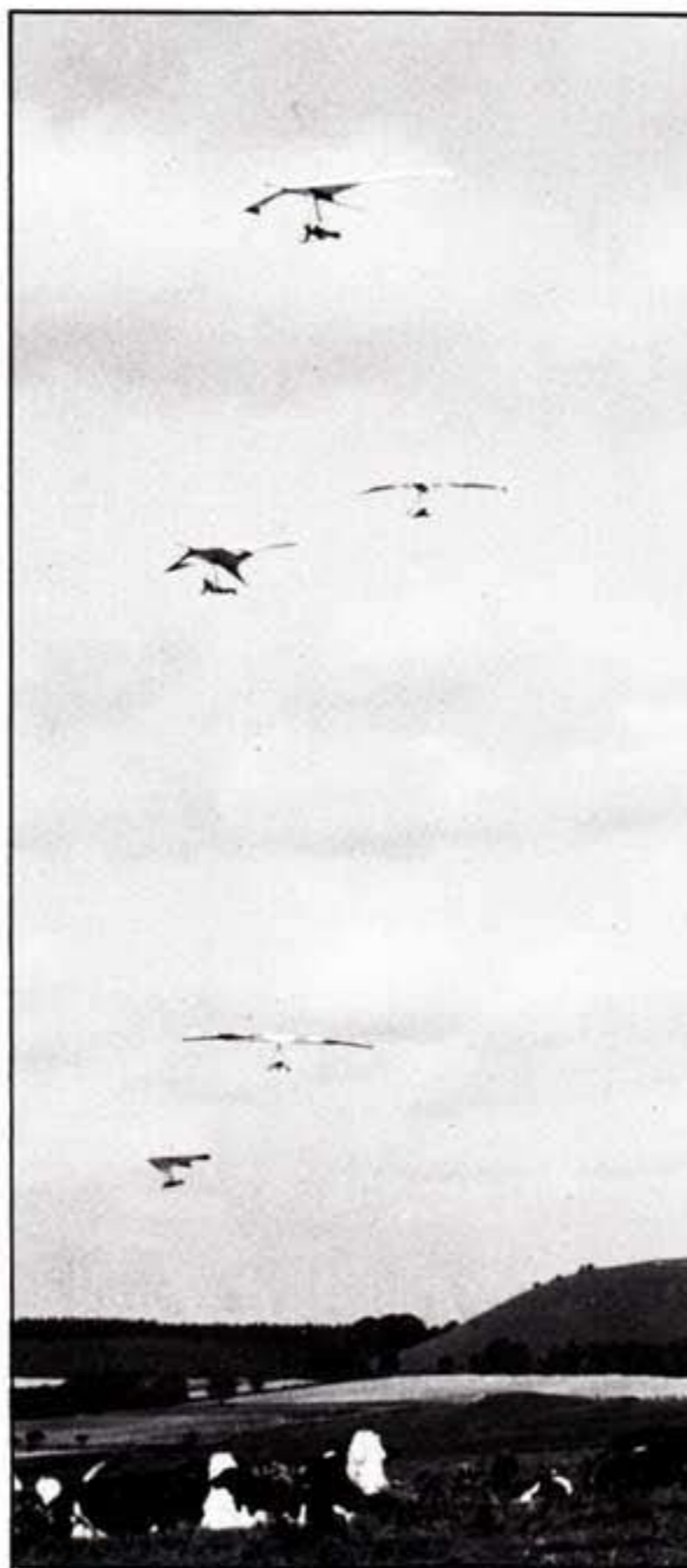
I think the decision to have the main camp at the bottom of the hill, rather than the top — as we had with 1977 and previous comps — is a good one. It leaves the top of the hill to the pilots. With a good tannoy system — which they didn't have this year — there's an enclosed feeling about the flying. It's more of a show. The triangle timed precision/manoeuvre/spot landing task is also extremely well thought out, and could be used at international level.

## STARS

The stars of the show, that's as a show, were undoubtedly the trikes. All the manufacturers of this hang glider power conversion — Hiway, Solar, Skyhook and Chargus — had examples at Mere. The Hiways, as in previous shows, put in the most airtime. The most aerobatic were undoubtedly, though, the Storm Buggies and Trikes; Les Ward must have gone to 140° wingovers, which left us all silent down below, and Dave Jones, on a Storm with a Hiway Trike, likewise threw it all over the sky. (Frank Taryjani sidled up and asked, cunningly, if I wanted a go. Mere is where I became an instant television star, trying out a bit of power a couple of years back, so I wasn't that keen. But I must have a crack at the trikes soon . . .)

The knockout distance competition was pretty laid back. What happened was you climbed to the top on Saturday and waited around for a suitable opponent. Then it was take off within 30 seconds of each other, and register your win for the next heat the following day. Over 30 pairs went off, and what a nice surprise for Murray Rose; an 'ancient' Midas E won it from the Flexiform Atlas clone, the Hilander.

All through the weekend, the XC pilots prowled up and down. Every time a halfway decent thermal (and that's all they were, halfway decent) came through, it got a bit like Oxford Circus in the Rush Hour. I kept seeing Sandy Fairgrieve floating, trying for a big distance like last year's 24 miler — which first made his name — but though he had hours in the air he couldn't get the big one. That went to this year's League drop-out, the inimitable John Sharp, from Northampton, on his big yellow Cyclone, who got to cloudbase and created a new Mere record of more than 30 miles. That's a



"Stacked up over cows" — still life by Alan James

cracker of a flight from a 250 foot hill, with no real ridges behind. It can be really measured by comparing it to his nearest opponent, Dave Cheesman, who went 6.5 miles. It wasn't for want of trying.

## KING NORTHUMBRIA

The Clubman's competition really came down to the finite task, as Johnny Carr described. There was a bit of needle between Johnny and some of the Northumbrians. Only one of the northern boys is a National League pilot, so they were understandably pleased to have soundly beaten allcomers, including a Southern HGC team. That's twice they've won, and if last year they had little publicity, this year they are getting a great deal. Maybe next year other clubs will pull their fingers out and reply to Paul Quinn, from Northumbria, who said it was no use just talking about winning . . . "We've done so, twice now, and that's no fluke." It isn't, either.

*The Clubman's competition at Mere is a really good talking shop, but it falls somewhere between a nationally recognised competition and a pilot get-together, Hang gliding itself needs a public event, as a showpiece, once a year, both to recruit new members, and to dictate publicity on its own terms. There are some conflicting arguments that need to be thrown out for discussion this winter if we want to turn Mere into that event. There need be no clash in 1981 between a Club event, and an Open competition, but take note of the following points, which we've put together from bitter experience.*

## PUBLIC EVENTS?

1. In any public event, BHGA has to provide toilet facilities, water, electricity, a reasonable road, car parking for the public, a PA system, tight air traffic control, and amongst other things, a show worth paying money to look at. The initial outlay — three years ago was about £5,000. It's probably £3,000 more than that now. If BHGA takes the risk with that outlay, purely from its own reserves, it runs the risk of going bankrupt. In 1976, we took all the risk, and it was said to be a great competition. But for the £5,000 outlay, we made just under £300. What if the weather had been even worse, and we'd failed? The answer, BHGA Council has decided a number of times, is not to run a public event without a sponsor. It's too risky.

2. Sponsors want to get their name in front of the public, as often as possible, in a favourable context. The easiest way is television. The state hang gliding is in, we don't have a natural 'constituency'. We have sell ourselves. In practice the only way to do so is to guarantee TV. Then you have a fighting chance of getting a sponsor. You can fail, as the National League did in 1979. But without TV, there is nothing to sell a sponsor to raise anything like the money to risk a public event.

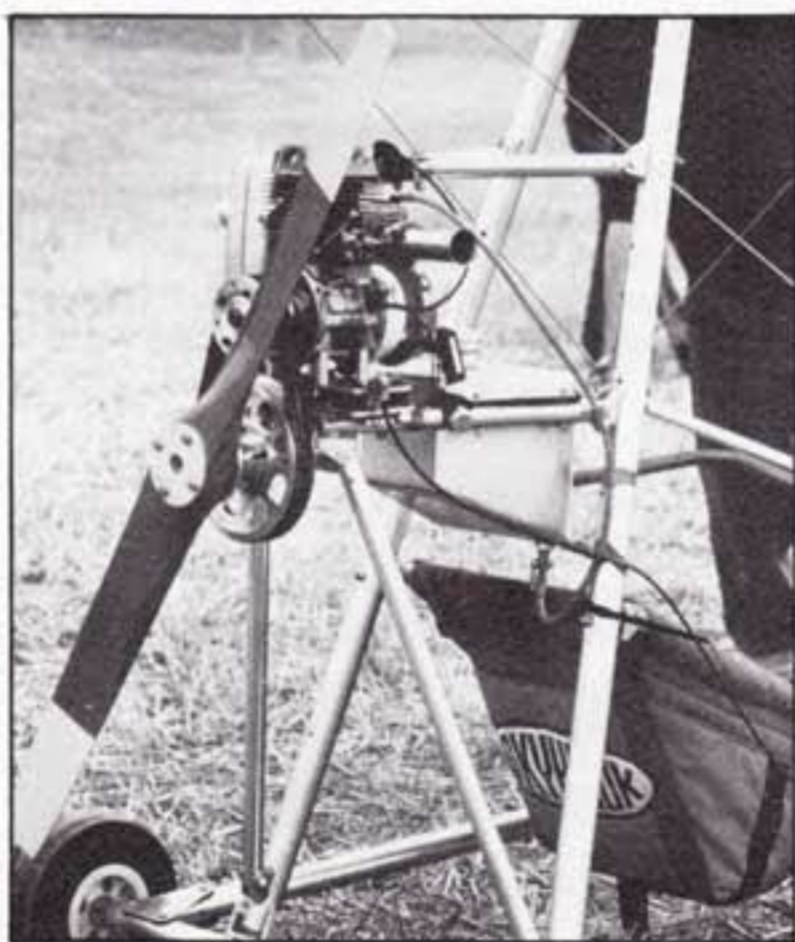
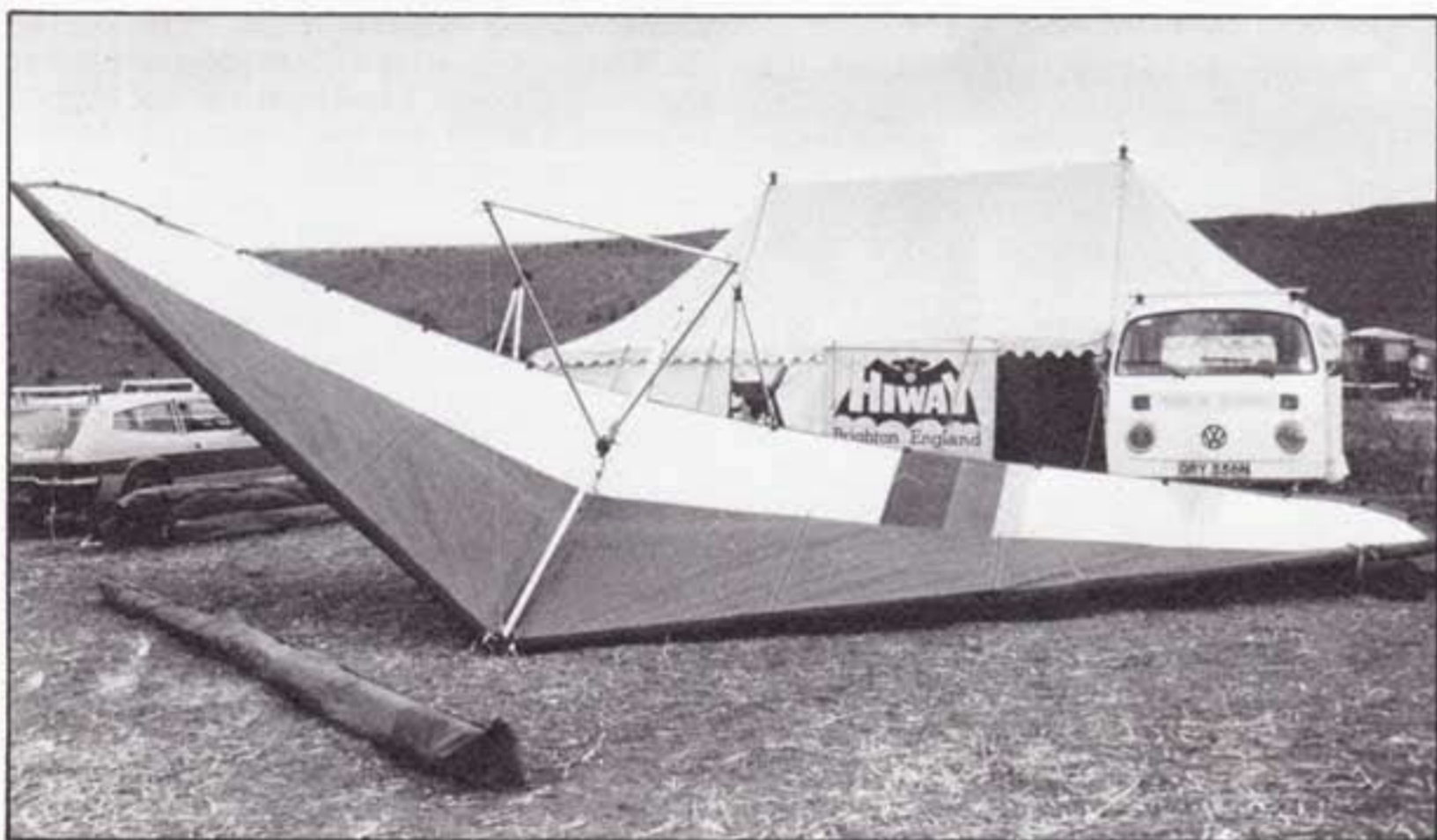
3. Let's assume you get television and a sponsor, then you have to have a site. Mere is, in one way, ideal, but in another way it isn't. Speaking from the hot seat, there are four different ways a competitions organiser is pulled during an event. Television wants one thing, say, tasks 15 seconds long, within a confined airspace, with a camera top and bottom. A sponsor wants whatever the television wants, especially a clear-cut result. If one can go to the producer and say, before a flight, this guy is important so film him, he's like Jimmy Connors, and this other guy isn't, he's an also-ran, that helps a lot. That's one pressure. The public want a second thing, a bit of excitement, to understand what's going on, to get enough information to evaluate the competition, and . . . to see a few tumbles and maybe an injury or two. A real bonus would be a fatality. Hang gliding competition has, bluntly, some of the same charm as a public hanging. Third and not least, there are the pilots, who let you know pretty quickly what they think about Mickey Mouse tasks. They want a test of skill, which means XC, which means going over the back out of range of the cameras, and the public, and the sponsors start threatening, and choices become extremely limited. Fourth pressure is the BHGA, which in this case is all those people who work for months to make the event go, and we can't afford to lose money on the event, or lose them. So the event has to be a financial success. Along the way there are wild cards like the weather, individually sponsored gliders, duff PA equipment, food concessionaires looking for a quick profit. Strung out in the middle, pulled by TV, public, pilots and the BHGA, it doesn't look worth the candle.

The problem is, you have to go a long way towards providing a satisfactory answer to everyone. Otherwise, we could lose a sponsor, as we did with Long John, Embassy, Atlas Express and maybe others. Or we could lose the BHGA, and be accused of catering just for an 'elite'. Or we could lose the best pilots, who want the relative purity of League competition. Bad weather will drive the public away.

You can begin to see why Garth Thomas and I fell out over how the 1978 Mere should be organised.

## DEVALUED CHAMP

I've used this year's Clubman's as a vehicle for opening a discussion on how we might run a public event next year. There is one more argument. The



Top: Hiway Tricke on Finals. Photo Brian Milton  
 Middle: Demon on display. Photo Alan James  
 Bottom Left: Chargus 3-blade power unit. Photo Brian Milton  
 Bottom Right: Skyhook Power. Photo Alan James

National League was formed in 1977 to stop the arguments over who was the best competition pilot in the country, who was 'The Champion'. It followed events where winning and losing a national title came down to as little as 5 flights. Phil Matthewson won the 1977 British Open title at Mere on just 3 flights. Putting up a national title next year at Mere, calling it, say, the British Open, when it could be settled in two or three flights, devalues titles, and ultimately, sporting hang gliding. There is no comparison between the sustained and brilliant effort Brian Wood, Keith Reynolds and Bob Calvert made to win the National League, and even a 6-task British Open. If British competition hang gliding has got any reputation, and internationally it's never been higher, that reputation came from pursuing excellence, in the best traditions of British sport. Choosing a title at stake in next year's public event will be a delicate task.

I hope the debate will be an informed one. Meanwhile, thanks to all those people who made this year's Clubmans at Mere an enjoyable event.

## Johnny Carr's View

Clubman's Mere started for me this year with a letter from the BHGA asking if I could do a little commentating on the event. I know Mere had been a good event in the past, and had been a lot of fun for the fliers, so I decided to go. I have unfortunately missed the Mere comps in the past because of other competitions I have had to go to abroad. I got up at 5.15 a.m. had a bite to eat and drove over to Brighton to meet Graham Slater, his girlfriend Sue and Bruce Hudson (Big H). We left at 6.15. We arrived at Mere three hours later in time for breakfast.

The sky looked good. The sun was shining, and although the wind seemed strong, we could see people soaring as we drove along the main road. When we got to the top I had to talk Graham into flying his Moyes Mega II. He really wanted to fly, but he had to organise his tent, and the items he had for sale. But after a little persuasion he agreed 10 to 15 minutes wouldn't hurt.

I promptly rigged my Fledge and took off. After about 10 minutes I was beginning to feel crowded out. I could see a Gryphon circling in a blob in the other bowl and went over to join him (just in time to miss the blob. How many times has that been the story in this sport?) I went down and had to land in a little piece of land with trees in it.

I struggled up to the top with the glider rigged, a few friendly guys helping up the last bit. When I got there Mike Atkinson was shouting, "here he is" to this girl, "tell him to his face what you told me". She promptly told me I was a nonk and didn't know how to fly. I apologised and said I would try harder next time.

Everyone was enjoying themselves. Some people were having a go at the XC task, but on both days it was difficult to get away. Some were doing the knockout distance. Others, like me, went into the time/precision landing task, which was cleverly thought out.

The idea was to take off and cross the lines as many times as possible in three minutes. The further you were from the hill, the closer the lines were, but you were out of lift. The shorter the beat, the more you got in, at 10 points a crossing, but if you went out of ridge lift you sank quite quickly. If you stayed with the security of the ridge you were guaranteed line crossing, but it took a lot of time making them, and 3 minutes was perfect score. There were 30 points for landing in the zone, a penalty of 1 point for every 6 second deviation, no line crossings counted after three minutes, and you



"Supernonk!" Robin (12 miles on 25th flight) Mills  
Photo Alan James



Le Franglais! Michel Carnet. Photo Alan James

scored zero if you landed outside the triangle. There was an automatic 5 point penalty for a 2nd attempt, 10 points for a third, and so on.

At the end of the first day, Mike Atkinson was in the lead with 90 points. I placed 5th on my first attempt, and went up for a second try later in the day, when conditions were much smoother. I managed, on the second go, to place 3rd. The whole atmosphere was tremendous. If you can imagine people soaring all day long, sky trikes flying around, parascending and parachuting all going on, and walking around meeting manufacturers and having a chat. Hiway had their next hot ship on display. It looks a little bit like one of those American . . . what's it called? . . . I can't think . . . rhymes with vomit. Most of us ended up in the Talbot or The Ship that night. I was told the SHGC were in 2nd place in the club event. I couldn't believe it as we hadn't thought to name our team until after the first flight, which didn't count for us. So we had to count our second flight, with all four of us having a 5pt penalty each. As we didn't really want to take the Club Shield away from the Northumbrians when we saw how serious they all were to hang on to it, we just wound them up a bit (*would the Northumbrians please address any violent replies to T. Fuell in Brighton? — Ed.*)

I had hoped the second day of competition was separate from the first, and your best flight from each day was added together, which would have been more interesting. Instead, it was a continuation of Saturday's task, with penalty points carried over. As I had had two attempts on the first day it wasn't worth taking part. Despite that, there was a lot of flying to be had, and lots to do. Last year's Mere XC Champ, Sandy Fairgrieve, was, it seemed, in the air all day, but he did fly away to get third place this year. Congratulations to John Sharp on a cracker of an XC — 30.5 miles.

## Percy Moss's View

The Northumbria Club won the Club Shield last year, and many said it was a fluke as only small clubs took part. So with the same determination as the British team with the American Cup, they came back and did it again. It looks like it will be quite a battle next year, but where were the other 30 British HGCs? I was very disappointed that my own club, the Mercian, would not enter a team.

Ninety-nine percent of the time all pilots were very co-operative, which made the whole thing

work and kept the free and easy atmosphere that was the aim of the last three Meres.

The heavy rain on Thursday night and Friday morning made the site a complete sea of mud, and with 45-50 mph winds on top we all thought it would be a disaster. As it happened, it all turned out well.

There were 22 helpers which only just proved to be adequate. Special thanks to Barry Blore and family who did all the backroom jobs, Ann Austin and Joy Rayne with the other girls who did the scoring, taking the money, filling in the forms, etc.

### Results

#### Cross Country

1st John Sharp (Northampton HGC)	30.5 miles
2nd D. Cheeseman	6.5 miles
3rd Sandy Fairgrieve (Northampton)	4.7 miles

#### Distance K.O.

1st M. West	Midas E
2nd J. Bevan	Hilander
3rd B. Woolerton	Vector

#### Timed Precision Flight

1st P. Murdoch	91 points
2nd M. Atkinson	90 points
Equal 3rd	
J. Dixon	88 points
Pete Anstey	88 points

#### Clubman Shield

1st Northumbria HGC	82.25 points
2nd Southern HGC	70.00 points
3rd Dover & Folkestone	62.00 points

#### Best Bog Rog

B. Smith

(He also won last year. Come on, the rest of you, bring out your old standards).

There were 13 teams from 9 clubs.

Dover and Folkestone, and Northumbria entered 3 teams. Newcastle University, and the Dales, entered 2 teams.

There were 108 competitors, plus over 50 free fliers.

## Accident

I've been asked by John Hunter, the BHGA Accident Investigation Officer, to give an account of my accidental parachute deployment during Clubman's Mere on September 6th. It happened during the first leg of the L/D competition. I had drawn as my opponent a lovely young lady called Jenny. I was ordered to go first — never a gentle-

man — and I was flying a Birdman Cherokee and wearing a Skyhook harness with an advanced 26ft. parachute. The bridle was connected through a carabiner. As I took off I couldn't find my stirrup, even though I do have a nonk rubber. While thrashing about in a half standing, half prone position, I didn't notice my parachute container was rubbing on my A-frame.

After a few seconds I found my stirrup and headed out towards the L/D course. When I was about 200 yards out from the hill, and about 80 feet up — an estimation by a few observers — there was a loud whoosh. I first thought I had lost my sail, and looked up to be relieved that it was still there. Then I looked down to see my parachute hanging below me, fully extended, but still in the deployment bag. At first I thought it would never open as I had not re-packed it since February. I thought I would pull on speed and land as quickly as possible (I have since been told that this accelerates the deployment). All of a sudden there was a terrific bang. The glider felt as if it was attached to a very strong bungee. It must have been flying at around 20mph, and then suddenly I was being pulled backwards. At the same time the nose dropped very quickly. As it went down I let go the bottom bar and walked my hands up the sides of the A-frame. I ended up with the glider nose down, and my feet down. I looked at my legs hanging below the A-frame, and having been in the Marine Commandos, and completed a parachute course, the training knocked into me was to protect your feet and roll on landing. So I climbed into the A-frame, watching the ground coming up very fast. It was hard to judge, but the glider nose hit first, then the A-frame bar. I bent my knees and pushed away.

At first I couldn't believe that I was okay. I soon stood up, after Tony Hughes another Cherokee pilot, had delated the chute. It had started to drag me across the field. Thanks, Tony!

Since the incident, I have taken advice from all sources, and noted a few points which may have contributed to the accident.

My chute is in an Advanced container, sewn on to the harness, with the handle set to pull upwards, the position I was told to put it in when I bought it in this country. I now have a manual from Jim Handbury (USA Free-for-all champion), the designer and manufacturer of Advanced chutes, and this shows the handle should be pulled downwards.

The bag sewn on to my harness is for a 22ft. chute, but mine was bought as a 26ft.

The velcro around the bag's tear-off cover is only one inch wide, so with a large chute in a small bag, it's always bulging to get out. Any lifting of the velcro and the chute will help it peel back.

My flying weight is 15 stone (210lbs), so with a glider weighing 62lbs that's around 270lbs, too much for a 26ft. chute. One persons reckons I hit the ground at nearly 40mph. Whatever, it was bloody fast, and I hit with a hell of a jolt. The only damage to me was a few bruised ribs, and to the glider there was one broken A-frame side and a bent knuckle at the top of the A-frame.

Very lucky. But the one thing that stands out is that my parachute works at around 80 to 100 feet. Mind you, there was no thinking distance involved, but I think it reassured a lot of people who have chutes, that it will work at low altitudes. For those who have not got one I hope they'll seriously think about buying one.

I fly very low coastal sites (*Terry wrote the piece on flying a 45ft. hill in July Wings — Ed*) and tend not to wear my chute, thinking it wouldn't operate at very low altitudes. From now on I will always wear one (but in a new container).

**Terry Aspinall,**  
Suffolk Coastal Floaters

# ICARUS ALL SORTS

... more news on **Steve Hunt**, after breaking his 7 year partnership with **John Ievers** and **Hiway**. Steve is said to have been unhappy that **Bob England** was taken on as a designer, though not for any disrespect of Bob's abilities, but that there wasn't adequate consultation. With his wife **Joan**, Steve hadn't been happy in South Wales, and plans to return to his beloved Brighton. Meanwhile, Bob has been busy designing the new **Demon**, which — ironically, considering Steve well-publicised hatred of the things — has pre-formed battens. Steve had launched into **Skyhook's Len Gabriels** a couple of years back over the subject of pre-formed battens. Must be galling for one, and gratifying for the other, to see them now on the new **Hiway** machine...

— all the makings of a real ding-dong in the British Minimum Aircraft Association (am I the only one who thinks that's a daft name?) The association has a magazine called *Flight Line*, edited by **Dave Thomas**, and he recently said a few unjudicious words about the first man to fly across the English Channel, **Dave Cook**, and the glider he flies, a **VJ-23**. Dave Cook has one of the finest lines in anger I've ever seen, and the wrath that has descended on Dave Thomas's head has to be seen to be believed. Dave Cook is to appear on **Blue Peter** soon, and his **VJ-23**, which is sponsored by **Duckhams Oil** and made the channel crossing in 1978, was at **Farnborough**. It's now on permanent loan to the **Shuttleworth Collection**...

... there's very strong feeling against the strictness of the **FAI** in judging record flights, following the decision that **Peter Hargreaves** 110.2km flight couldn't be recognised internationally, though it stood as a British record until **Bob Calvert's** August 23rd flight of 127km gets acknowledged. **Robert Bailey** says that he and **Mark Silvester** were in the best position of all to witness Peter's flight, without any interest in lying about it, and there's not a shred of doubt Peter flew over 68 miles. But bringing in the sophistication of the sailplane world, with its insistence on completing paperwork before a flight is made, and the two dozen things that need to be done on the day of the flight, seems totally unsuitable for hang gliding. Bob Calvert, for example, thought August 23rd was totally unsuitable for a record flight, and therefore didn't have his barograph on. There's no doubt he did his flight too. Sympathies to **Rick Wilson** in his struggle to get recognition for these flights, but are we really going to be left choosing record-holders on the quality of their paperwork...?



*Demon England battens. Photo Brian Milton*

... nice to see that **Peter Hargreaves** (with an s) has grabbed the lead in the **XC League**, run by **Dave Harrison**, after it's been dominated all season by **Robert Bailey**. That big second flight of Peter's—43 miles — tipped him into the top. But what we all want to know is, where's **Bob Calvert**? It looks like the North has a stranglehold on the **XC's** of this country that only a few elsewhere are going to challenge. Maybe the best idea is to decide the teams, **League** and **non-League**, for next year's team **XC** between the two, by taking them straight off the top of the **XC League** table?...

... The **Demon** is one new kite that may get an outing at the 1980 **American Cup**, to meet the challenge of this year's confident American team, all really happy about the new **UP Comet**. There have been a number of letters from the States saying the Brits would be blown away this year. **Robert Bailey** tried to buy a **Comet**, for cash, at the **US Masters Competition** (and congratulations, Robert, on making the final), but no one would sell him one. The word is that the sale of **Comets** is banned to Englishman until after this year's **AMDUCK**, so we can't copy one. **Solar Wings**, though, have a new machine already built, with a lot a double surface, that was immediately dubbed the **Stealth** by **Derek Evans** after it was rigged at the blown-out **League Final** and towed around with interested pilots on it. It's said that **Southdown Sailwings** is proceeding apace with their new double surface machine, and **Skyhook** are working on a faster **Cutlass** for 18 year old **Mark Silvester** to fly in Tennessee. Mark's dad **Terry** will be out there with him, incidently, to cheer him on...

... not a subject I've heard debated elsewhere, but **Bob Calvert**, **Robert Bailey** and **Graham Hobson** were locked in discussion at the **League Final**, with a thoughtful exchange of view on how their respective mothers view their hang-gliding activities. There are whole areas of hang-gliding that you only catch by listening carefully...

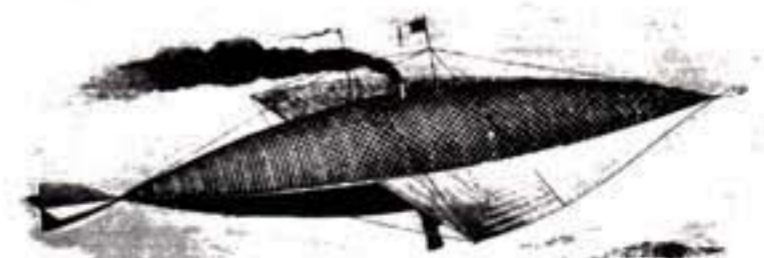
... WW1 fighter pilot **Mick Mannock**, a hero to **Icarus** as a callow youth, shot down 73 enemy aircraft before copping it himself from ground fire. Mannock's speciality was the deflection shot from close-up, which was extremely difficult for ordinary pilots, and nothing short of astonishing for himself, because he was blind in one eye. **Icarus** has painful memories of trying to teach a one-eyed friend to fly, who had all the guts in the world, but gave up when he found he hadn't the vision in-depth to see the ground on landing. He was always stalling out at 20 feet, or crashing in. The point of the story is that French ace **Gerard Thevenot** swears blind (groan) that world champion **Joseph Guggenmos** is blind in his right eye. If this is so, 40 year old **Guggenmos** is even better than we all say he is. How, though, can he measure his way on to a target, never mind avoiding all the mid-air collisions?...

... lovely French pun in **Vol Libre** about **Johnny Carr**. They refer to him in their magazine, which has a healthy international view of hang-gliding, and to whom top British and American pilots are as familiar as the home-grown variety, as **Jean Icare**

... about the silliest comment I've ever heard about **XC** flying came during a conversation with a nameless pilot at **Mere** over **Bob Calvert's** recent big flight. After confirming it was, in fact, 79.3 miles, the pilot then said, "I wish I was as light as he is"...



—one extraordinary incident at **Clubman's Mere**. Josting **Johnny Carr** on Saturday evening, asking why the **Southern HGC** hadn't got **Graham Slater** in its team, when the conversation was interrupted by a furious voice bellowing that "Slater was an 'effing professional, seen his 'effing picture in an 'effing magazine and it wouldn't be fair for him to fly at **Mere**". Turned out the gentleman was serious!



*Mannock's 'Brine' air ship (1920)*

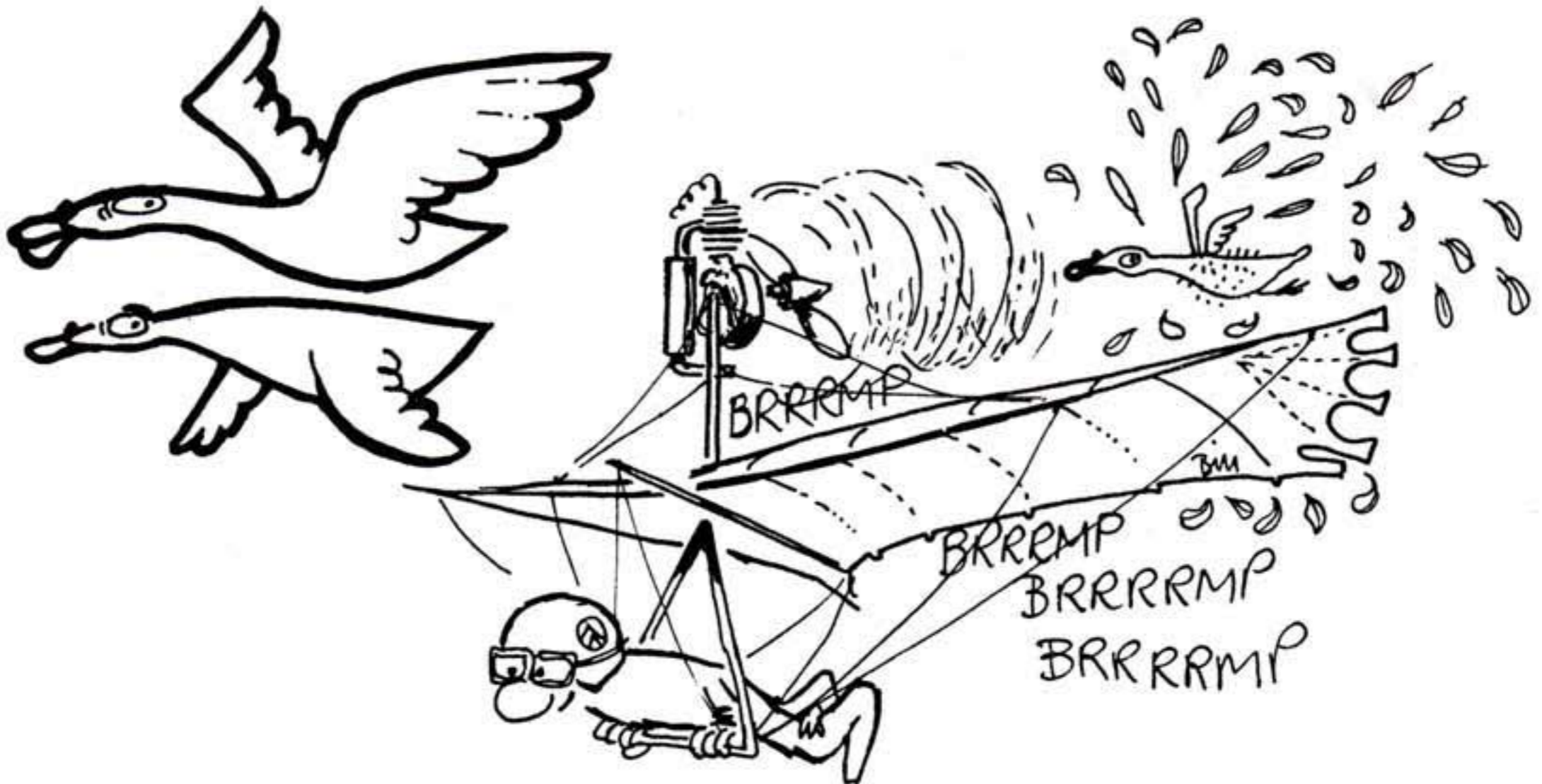
This glider has no British C of A.

# CHARGUS T250

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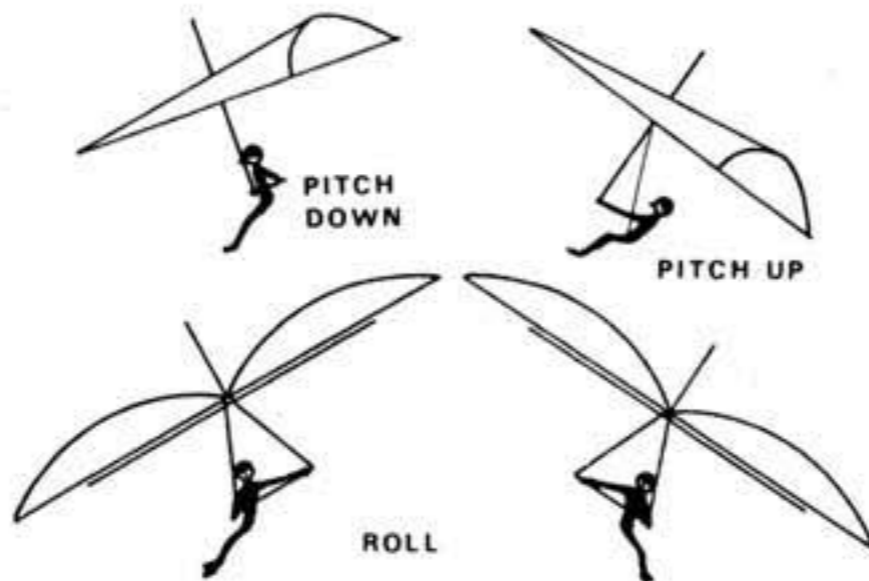
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## BEGGING THE QUESTION

Dear Sir,  
I believe you have carried an editor's journalistic license too far. Whilst I may or may not agree with Mr. Richard Gibbs' sentiments (Kami-kaze League — Sept. *Wings!*) your reply has done nothing to dispel the Big Brother image that the BHGA has been accused of before in these pages.

You have merely changed the subject to indulge in a character slur and flying ability slur on somebody who is basically asking a question that still haven't answered. What is going to happen when the first league fatality occurs? Does the organiser simply have to wave the memo labelled "at pilot's own risk" in the Force 8 and say "his decision, not mine"? Do you guarantee that the League rules will remain unchanged after the first League fatality?

Supposing the League competition had been held at another hill that day and my buddy and I had been the ones to hit those particular power lines? What a couple of nonks — let that be a lesson to you all, etc., etc. Surely you can imagine the incredibly difficult decision that some pilots have to face when conditions look so rough and yet to take the better part of valour means losing one's place in the table.

Who is the "one" who wonders and the "one" who is not interested in what Mr. Gibbs (a newcomer to the sport) thinks of the League? If that is you, Mr. Milton, please say "I" not "one". There are fliers ten times better than I who have quit the League for the same reasons I have never entered it. I suggest your reply to Mr. Gibbs (whom I have never met) has done more to discourage new membership than the day you spoke to a breathless group of people on Selsey Common on the subject of ridge thermalling — and then sank straight to the bottom.

A.R. Johnson  
PURTON, Glos.

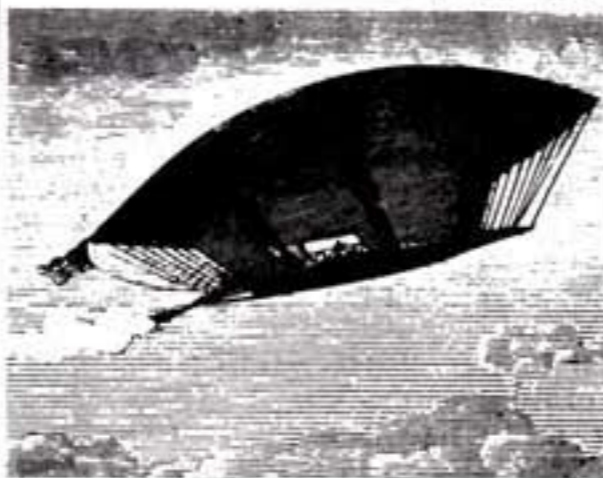
## ON THE OTHER HAND . . .

Dear Sir,  
I feel I have to reply to Mr. Gibbs' comments on the League which appeared in last month's *Wings!* Having been in the BHGA since it began, and in the NHGA before that, I've seen hang gliding go through every stage in its progression in this country. Mr. Gibbs overlooks a few facts in his criticism of the League. The facts are that before the League was formed Britain only had marginal success in foreign competition and

it's only since the League has been in operation that Great Britain has started to show the way in competition. Just look at the American Cup as the best example. A few years ago (before Mr. Gibbs started flying) the superiority of American pilots and machines seemed to be almost unbeatable, and yet in the two years that the American Cup has run, we have methodically walked over everyone both years. This is because the British teams sent over were accustomed to heavy competition pressure experienced in League competitions at home, and so had the necessary experience and attitude which made them the eventual winners.

Also Mr. Gibbs, the hang glider you fly probably owes much of its inherent safety features and stability to designers who were league pilots themselves and recognised the need for higher performance coupled with sweet handling characteristics. So, Mr. Gibbs, as you are a newcomer to our sport I hardly think you are in any position to criticise the League, which has done nothing but good for the sport in this country, as well as giving us a good socially acceptable image through TV coverage etc. I may add that I'm not a League pilot and I'm not into competitions personally but I still can see the value of having the League. Next time you write to *Wings!*, Mr. Gibbs, make sure you know what you're talking about.

John Davies  
LOCKERBIE, Dumfries



## MEMBERS ON VICIOUS ATTACKS

Dear Sir,  
Please may I express my very strong views concerning the letter sent in by John Lewis of Dyfed in the September 1980 *Wings!* issue, entitled *Vicious Attacks* on members! I take grave exception to the fact that a person who is level-headed enough to take up hang gliding should be so irresponsible as to shoot a protected bird, namely a buzzard. This sort of incident is all the fuel the anti-hang gliding fraternity need, at a time when hang glider pilots should be seen as a responsible body.

I can appreciate the damage that could be sustained by just such an attack but I am afraid that Mr. Lewis has gone about this in entirely the wrong way. Let us look closer at the damage such actions can cause to the hang gliding fraternity. First of all, it is illegal to kill or even disturb at its nest a Schedule One bird, such as the buzzard. Secondly, leaving out poisoned meat can cause all manner of damage to other animals, badgers and sheep dogs, for example. Thirdly, using limed twigs will probably catch every small songbird in the neighbourhood before the buzzard gets caught up in it. Fourthly, just think what could happen (and still might) if *Wings!* had gone public, as some wish it to do. Can you imagine the reaction of the bird-loving public if this got out? I have been a practising Falconer for more than twenty years and interested in hang gliding for four years. I got my P1 with the Peak School in 1978, so I can see both sides of the argument. You asked for a solution, Mr. Lewis. I can tell you from my experience as a Falconer that there is only one legal solution; during the months May, June and July, you have no alternative other than to cease flying the site and go elsewhere, otherwise you run the risk of being fined £500.00 for a first offence, almost the price of a new kite. Think about it!

If the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reads your letter, Mr. Lewis, I can only guess at the consequences. I also wonder if the site owner has knowledge of your actions because, if he has, he is as much to blame as you. Please, Mr. Lewis, let's have no more shooting of birds. Hang gliding cannot stand the adverse publicity. Besides, the birds have had the sky for a good deal longer than we have. It is we who are the interlopers, whichever way you look at it.

David Fox  
NOTTINGHAM

## SAME AGAIN

Dear Sir,  
I was shocked at the arrogance and ignorance shown by John Lewis in his letter to September *Wings!* in which he appeared to boast of having killed a buzzard with the audacity to encroach on airspace.

Not content — like most of us — simply to soar with the birds, he wants their use of the sky to be on his terms. That sort of attitude is no better than that of some glider pilots towards hang gliders and people who go around shooting buzzards can only tarnish the name of hang gliding.

I am told by the RSPB that a conviction for killing a buzzard will

bring a maximum £500.00 fine or a month's jail. Mr. Lewis asks readers for advice. *Mine is:* Put up with the problem or don't fly there.

Stan Abbot  
LEEDS

## AND AGAIN

Dear Sir,  
With reference to the letter in September's *Wings!* from John Lewis on attacks from buzzards. I would like to offer some advice to him requested at the end of his letter.

1. Go down to your local Police Station and look up the punishment for shooting or poisoning protected birds. The heavy fines or imprisonment should frighten you enough to see that your first error following your thoughtless act was to advertise the fact.

2. Go and crawl into a hole somewhere and think. Those magnificent flyers that you so casually destroyed have probably been soaring your local site unhindered for hundreds of years before you invaded their airspace. They were trying to protect their site the only way they know how. Read some back issues of *Wings!* and reflect on the problems some clubs are having with sailplane clubs on the sharing of airspace and ask yourself just how far negotiations would have reached had either side taken your attitude over sharing the air. Think about your stupidity when your local club are trying to negotiate flying rights near a nature reserve and local council officials start asking embarrassing questions about who shot the buzzards.

3. Read Tony Fuells guest editorial in September *Wings!* on the importance of the Hang Gliding image. This image rests in the hands of pilots. We can make or break it. Consider what your actions contributed to this image. Think about it.

No, Mr. Lewis, your actions were completely selfish, irresponsible, and unforgivable. You contributed a big fat zero to the general image of Hang Gliding. While thoughtless cowboys like you are roaming the countryside gunning down anything that threatens your airspace, the good image that some pilots are trying to cultivate has an uphill struggle.

Mike Lingard  
CATERHAM, Surrey

## POWERED HANG GLIDERS CAN'T DO IT WITH A BENT SHAFT

Bill Yates, PRESTON

## GIBBS v MILTON (round 2)

'Ello Bri,  
'Ow's it goin' me ol' friend? See you stuck me letter in *Wings!* last month. Felt quite chuffed 'till I saw it signed "Richard Gibbs". You see matey, when you asked me to expose meself in August *Wings!*, I sent a second letter (included here) with the request you may, or may not, have received, that you print *both* or *neither*. Well, you old devil, you printed the first and signed it using the second. Bit naughty that. Hoped you could be more dependable. That R.G. Anon business is a long-standing joke in the Thames Valley ever since a letter of mine was reprinted in *Wings!* (No. 7, 1979), and mis-signed as R.S. Now if I start signing Richard Gibbs me local crowd'll be sayin' "Who the hell is Richard Gibbs?". Anyway, what's in a name in a national mag? Nobody'll remember mine next month outside the T.V.

I ain't trying to tell you your job Bri, but most editors welcome letters from the readership to promote discussion, but Gawd 'elp us, you went and killed mine straight away. Hit a nerve-ending did I? Grain of truth in it somewhere was there Bri? Cor, you didn't 'alf go on at me. What you should 'ave done was leave it to our brothers and sisters to write in and pull it to bits for you. And, heavens above old mate, if you are always so subjective in your remarks, people will think you're **ABUSING YOUR POWER AS EDITOR** and will be afraid to write anything controversial, and you wouldn't want that, would you? Tell you what, if you find a letter worth printing, as mine must 'ave bin, reserve your own comments and give the valuable space over to another letter from someone else. O.K.?

About the Pilot 1 thing. Sorry, but no, I ain't gone one. (By the way, any foreign equivalents to P1 accepted in this country?). Never 'ad time really with all the letters I write. Got yours 'ave you? And another thing, 'ow many League pilots 'ave E.P.C. or Pilot 1? Nothing personal Bri. Just askin' that's all. And Bri, it's best not to assume that a chap's membership date is the day he discovered hang-gliding. Oh no! It's an odds-on bet that if you look around you'll find at least one fellow who's been flying longer than even you, and yet whose name doesn't appear in the official B.H.G.A. records. Could that be so? Don't see you need membership of anything really to hold opinions or raise questions. Right? Oh yeah, and that bit about not seeing me at the Leagues. If not, so what me old china? You can get all the information you want by talking and reading. After all we ain't all privileged enough to talk personally to M.P.'s, but we vote for them don't we, on the strength of the blurb regurgitated by the media.

That's right ain't it?

Wish you hadn't been so arrogant matey. I wasn't knocking you personally at all, even though you're the most important person in the League organisation. Can't see 'ol Len or Mick M. (for whom I have greatest respect and wish them every success and safe flying) being much bothered by the letter. They're too professional to be flummoxed. I 'spose it was a bit strong but mild-mannered stuff always gets trodden underfoot, so a chap's got to be punchy to make people sit up a bit. So don't take things to heart. Remember, you're the *editor*. you're above all that. And calling me Gibbs . . . Gibbs . . . Gibbs . . . ! That sliced me to the marrow! Gawd luv a duck, the odd "Mr" doesn't take up much space. **MADE ME FEEL LIKE A REPRIMANDED SCHOOLBOY.**

Another thing matey, you reckon it's up to the League pilots to make their own decisions to fly. It is most of the time, but it's thought by some that if the organiser unwittingly waves the green flag, and just *one* fringe lunatic takes off, how on earth can the other competitors stand by and let him win? They're sort of pressurised into flying against their wills. See what I mean? And actually Bri I did know when the League started. I was being a bit sarky. Couldn't you see that? Sorry, I can't stand sarcasm personally.

Now I don't for a minute rate meself important to hang-gliding like some people do. See ol' friend, I like to slot in and jog along, but I do do me bit when I can. Nothin' spectacular mind. Gawd 'elp us no. None of yer crashin' on "Nationwide", or swimming to Russian freighters, or public slanging matches with prominent hang-gliding manufacturers. Just the ol' mundane, genteel approach. Now don't laugh, promise, but "Woman's Realm" actually wrote to me and acknowledged a letter I sent to them. You see matey, they did a feature on women pilots, so I wrote in to mention that a woman was then editor of *Wings!* and that a woman is president of the B.H.G.A. Me actual letter's been filed away and may lead to somethin' they say! Oh yes, and Noel Edmond's told childrens' T.V. one Saturday how dangerous it is, so I put *him* straight and sent him the *Wings!* with you and Prince Charles in! "Nationwide" have been informed of possibly the world's youngest competitive flyer, and I'm eagerly awaiting Raymond Baxter's reply to the thing I sent him 'cos he's dead interested in aviation. I've also updated countless punters' views on hang-gliding. I dutifully pay me quid every month to the "500 Club", I've written such a stream of stuff to the Thames Valley "Volplane" that it's driven our poor old editor off to New Zealand and, nudge, nudge, wink, wink, take another look at one of your old Avon

mags. Now Milt, I don't want you to congratulate me on all that 'cos it ain't much really, but you see Bri, I've got a bit of concern for the present and future of the pastime even though it don't bear much fruit. Sort of an uphill struggle really ain't it. *Good* publicity I mean. (Incidentally your guest editorial last month was excellent. More where that came from please).

One last thing ol' son, if you're still with me. About going public. 'Ave a butchers a "Drachenflieger" for some refreshing new ideas, but above all Bri, remember to curb that

tongue of yours. otherwise (and I've 'eard it said) *Wings!* might degenerate into (and it ain't my term mind) "Miltons Mirror". Now you wouldn't want that any more than I would, would you?

Enough said. If you reply to *this* letter of mine don't expect me to write any more on the subject ol' son, 'cos I ain't got the time.

Anyway Bri, I don't want to make an enema of you 'cose I expect you're a nice chap really. See you then, Affectionately yours,

Richard Gibbs  
Oxford



An aerial cyclist [1888]

## ADDING FUELL TO THE FIRE

Dear Lord Gibbs,

1. *Loved* your letter, fell about laughing, glad you liked the Guest Editorial (at least, I *presume* you meant mine!), thought BM's response to your *Wings!* letter was a bit over the top, in general, good work.

2. I'm to be the Editor of *Wings!* for the November issue, while JR (Sorry, BM) is in the USA. If he hasn't printed your reply I will.

3. But . . .  
Having gone straight to my copy of the September issue to reread what it was all about, I couldn't say that I was in agreement with what you said — and yes, I admit I've written my fair share of polemic on the basis that it's a good way to get people wound-up (see Guest Editorial!) If you were trying to wind-up the League pilots, you sure succeeded. . .

Nevertheless, having been actually IN the League for the first two years, until a combination of laziness, incompetence and

cowardice caused me to get dropped, and having been a close follower of it ever since, I should say the I can't ever recall at time when you could describe its operations as *the good old days*. Ever since it began, it's been an awkward, stumbling organisation, wracked by doubt and dissent. Tasks have always been hard, dangerous and occasionally stupid, and pilots have always been bloody bolshy about the scoring, the flying and the general organisation. Don't forget that six pilots, including me, got disqualified from the first meet ever for arguing about the scoring (and other things) in a hotel miles away from the actual flying. (The Curse of Fuell has now struck down Ken Messenger, you will note. . .)

In my view, things have got better over the years, not worse. You're not seriously suggesting, I hope, that the organisers *intended* the accidents that have happened. ('Twould take organisation of a much higher order than has so far been displayed if it were so!)

No, the accidents that have

happened, have been just that, accidents. Whether they could have been *AVOIDED* by precautions on the part of the organisers, is another matter. Or whether it was just sheer bad flying on the part of the pilots concerned. . . under pressure in a task, flying a new site, etc., etc. Accidents *DO* happen outside the League, you know. If anything, the emphasis on XC tasks will increase the tendency for people to hit trees, power lines etc., and decrease the control that the organisers have over the landing areas used. And, don't forget, it's usually not JR (*WHY* do I keep calling him that?) who sets the tasks, its the organiser on the day, usually from the local club, who ought to be aware of the local hazards and incorporate them in his briefing.

4. And. . . however bad the League is, and had been, you can't deny it's enormous effect on British hang gliding, which I maintain has been wholly good.

—the League has pioneered many new sites for the sport (Llandinam, SW Pandy, the Skirrid and several others)

—the tasks set have increased our understanding of what is possible in hang gliding performance. In 1978, I set a two-mile task which had to be flown out of ridge (i.e. on thermals) expecting about three people to make the landing area, the rest to be spread along the road there, to be scored proportionately. Out of 60 pilots, 44 made it all the way. For most of them it was their first-ever XC and they would never have gone over the back unless they had the stimulus of a competition to make them do it. Now XC's are commonplace. Next year, I expect we'll be going for out-and-returns, or timed goal-declareds like the sailplane boys.

—before the League, British performance in international events was a joke. Now we're the blue-eyed boys of the Sports Council due to our competition successes, which you can trace entirely to the effect of League competition. Hard though it might be, the ruthless pressure of the League weeds out all those who can't cut it in the *big time*, before they've been selected to represent England. And don't tell me that there are many good pilots around who can fly as well as the League pilots. *Competing*, in any event is a very different bag of beans to free-flying, as I found out to my cost. I rate myself as a good average Club flyer, but I'm no good in competition at all. And there are many the same. The type of person who is a good competitor is one who wants to win so badly that he'll put up with hanging about on a wet hillside all day, and *then* take off in a cross-wind for a two-minute down hiller with all the dynamic effort and concentration he would have put in at 9 o'clock.

And if you can't do that, you won't win. If you're not prepared to put up with all the bullshit, bad decisions, and aggravation that are an integral part of competition in the League, then you'll never do it abroad, where everything is at least ten times worse.

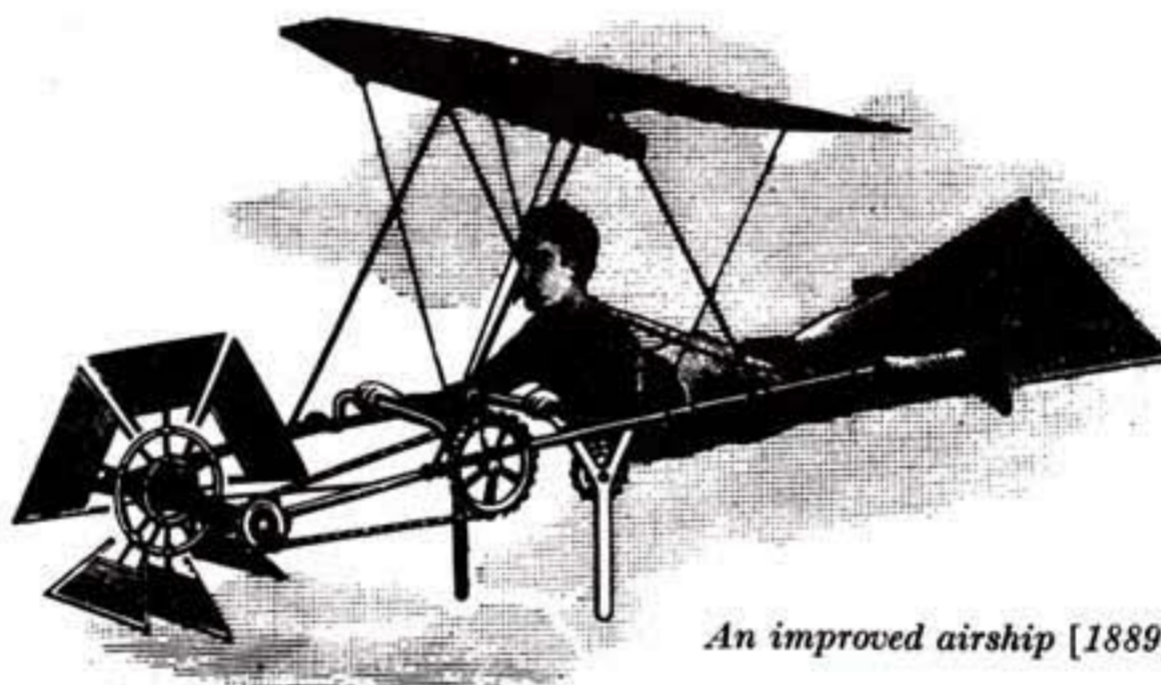
—and finally, the League has been damn good fun! I go to as many of them as I possibly can, even though I'm not in it any more, purely for the social side, the backchat, the joking, the drinking, the gossip, the news from abroad, to fly new sites, to see new people, and to make new friends. It's part of the sport — it has brought together the various regions of the hang gliding community in a way that no formal, stuffy Council procedures could in a million years. Sod the public, flyers love the League, it's for them alone, don't for God's sake spoil it by asking us to be responsible as well. . .

See you at the next one?

I beg sir to remain,

your humble and obedient servant,  
until the cows come home,

**Tony Fuell  
BRIGHTON**



*An improved airship [1889]*

### **THE IMPOSSIBLE WE ACHIEVE AT ONCE — MIRACLES TAKE A LITTLE LONGER**

Dear Sir,  
Coastal soaring usually turns a lot of people off, as they think it's either boring, too easy or even second rate. In fact, if you're into floating around aimlessly, it is all of these. However, some of us, i.e. John Evans and myself have found a way to ease the boredom by deliberately and always attempting the impossible, which often borders on the ridiculous.

Apart from slinging hell out of our gliders, we concentrate on getting as low as possible or as far as possible without going down. This applies inland as well. On two of our local

### **MILL HILL MALARKEY**

Dear Sir,

My work dictates where-I fly so I am a regular visitor to that "Hive" of controversy, *Mill Hill*, and last Sunday's "comedy of errors" on that site did nothing to help our cause.

I arrived at 1000a.m. just in time to see a radio-controlled model disintegrate in a "mid-air" with a Sigma and a school-owning instructor (SOI) apologising to the model owner. Next, a youth (16/17) set up a self-flying, para-commander type kite which, it seems, is tethered to a pole and, once started, scythes along the hill reversing itself at the end of each traverse. It is tied to heavy guage silk twine! Now the above mentioned SOI was testing a glider for someone and, coming in for a top-landing, swung suddenly down-wind and dived in from 60-70ft. It looked like a bad one but against all the odds the SOI got up and hobbled around (don't we all?)

Next event in chronological order was a student from Nottingham

University who tried his first top-landing and bushed it, badly bending kingpost and control frame. Myself and the SOI were soon on hand and, with remarkable resilience, the SOI was trying to flog the poor chap some new replacements.

After lunch, the SOI had a pupil on radio-instructed descent who dived into the hill, bending a heavy metal post in the process and loosening the barbed wire. This post was not re-straightened at the day's end. Throughout the afternoon, the aircraft on finals to Shoreham Airport were coming in low over the site and the red marker was on show on the control tower but there were three gliders ABOVE the landing aircraft. Several times the SOI was heard through the loud hailer urging the erring pilots to stay lower down. **AND STILL WE HAVE THE SITE!**

The last vision I had of that visit was the SOI picking up lots of batten pieces thoughtfully left by a repair addict. I am very sad.

P.S. I disentangled the silk thread from around the deflexor and the kite owner collected it, laughing heartily.

**Derrick Drexell  
COULSDEN, Surrey**

enough height on this wall to slide over it and the track onto a vertical 80ft. cliff. This requires a high degree of nerve and skill as there are wires at the cliff bottom, not to mention the rotor off the wall and the passing trains which approach from nowhere at 180mph. All is not over as we scratch our way up the cliff face, over a road, through another rotor then finally to the top. This feat was recently accomplished by John with a full tide which left no bottom landing as such. He flew to within inches of the wall for about 400 yards and eventually made it. We are both prepared for wet landings regardless of depth. We can normally stand in the A frame and unclip in 5 seconds. Recently at Rhossili we spent an hour on the raised beach trying to get back on top, not easy in 10-12mph WSW. Having successfully top landed, we dived down to the beach and did the same damn thing again to prove it was no fluke. Most flyers are reluctant to indulge in our antics because they can't handle being low. We both enjoy getting high in thermals when it warrants but prefer the challenge of coastal sites. In many cases, coastal flying requires more skill. After all, you can't really "blow" a cross country race because there are so many variables and you get more than one chance, i.e. thermal just when you need one at 100ft. On coasts you get no help. It's you versus you and you don't get second chances.

**Neil Edwards  
SWANSEA**

coastal sites, one being Rhossili, we soar anything but the hill. To give an example, on our favourite W-WSW site (220ft.) which we fly in all wind speeds when all others are sitting on Rhossili like sheep, we are to be found soaring the raised beach-cum-dunes which average 6-12ft., in parts zero. We have bottom landed on purpose having taken off the top just to soar the beach. This is when the fun starts. Turns have to be precise and immediate as have reflexes. We can expect to gain 20-30ft., sometimes a lot less. To gain the necessary height to top land we have to crab onto a 15ft. wall and railway embankment. The slightest shift of wind here makes the going tough. I forgot to mention that on take off from the wall, the keel is barely 8-10ft. from the trains.

Our next challenge lies in getting

It must be recognised at the outset that women and hang gliding are mutually incompatible. Women, with their inbuilt instinct for combating anything which conflicts with their interests, have evolved a series of anti-H.G. tactics which are divulged for the first time here. Obviously this can only be a brief resumé, it would require a second Pavlov to cover the entire subject. Remember though, an enemy even half recognised is close to being defeated.

It is important to be aware that the Hang Glider Pilot's Wife (HGPW) — "wife" here being used to include girlfriends — will move

# Sexist Battles

to meet the threat of the conflicting hobby or interest in a series of conditioned reflexes. Counter attack comes in two stages.

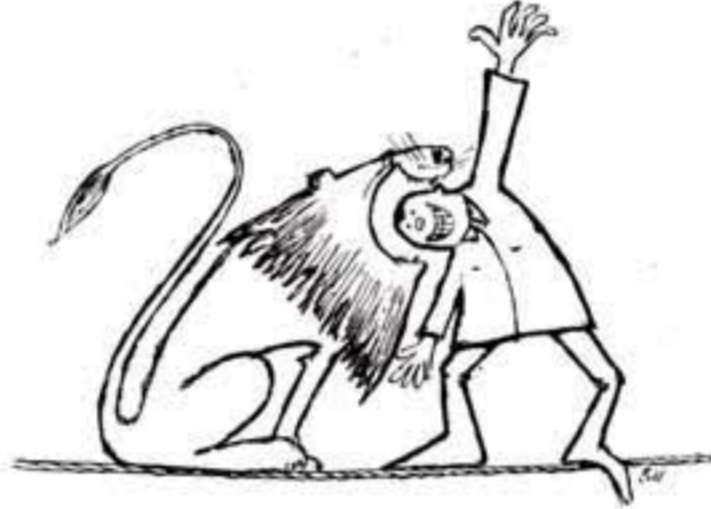
- (1) **Prior Perception and Awareness (PP&A).** Only by the earliest possible recognition of the impending danger can the correct counter be applied.
- (2) The selection of the proper **Controlled Nullifying Response (CNR)** is of paramount importance and early application will achieve the desirable end of peaceful coexistence.

Although the basic opposition tactics are itemised below you should be aware that sub-categories or multi-category attacks are possible.

## PP&A

### (1) Hang Gliding is Dangerous

1. HGPW is seen reading *Wings!* and tut-tutting over accident reports. Insurance policies are scrutinised especially small print. Grumbles about inflation eroding value of insurance cover.



## CNR

- 1a. Offer to take up more stimulating hobby e.g. Lion taming, High Wire Juggling, Pot Holing.
- 1b. Get *Wings!* sent to another address.
- 1c. Point out only idiots get hurt and I'm no idiot — proof — look who I married.  
N.B. Very effective but not to be used more than twice a year.

### (2) Hang Gliding is Silly and Childish

2. Derogatory terms used for important items of equipment — kite becomes "your 747" or "flying frame tent". Harness = "truss". Boots = "undercarriage. Preparation for day's flying greeted with "going to play aeroplanes again?"



2. Enter into spirit of joke — laugh uproariously, hold sides, fall about. Repeat phrases to friends, at same time pointing out good fortune to have wife with sense of humour. Make disparaging remarks about other poe-faced HGPWs.

### (3) Hang Gliding is just an excuse for swilling beer in the pub

- 3a. Keen interest shown in site and local geography of day's flying i.e. "Anywhere near the Red Lion dear?"
- 3b. Rigid check on money being taken.
- 3c. Casual requests for packets of crisps on return.
- 3d. References to physiological effects of drink e.g. "You needn't come back smelling like a brewery/behaving all sloppy/covered in lipstick again/with your flies open like last time".



- 3a. Make serious remarks about *other* pilots drinking and dangers resulting therefrom.
- 3b. Agree about after-effects but indicate "All that is in the past — turned over new leaf etc. etc."
- 3c. Promise crisps but never, never bring them. ". . . all the *shops* (heavy emphasis on shops) were closed."

### (4) You are always going off and leaving me

4. Sulks, tears, remarks about togetherness of other couples, threats of going home to mother, headaches at inconvenient times.



4. Enthuse about sturdiness of other HGPWs and ability to carry heavy loads of equipment up hills. Use word "we" frequently but with oblique references to privations — "You don't mind a few spiders do you?" — "What a shame we shall have to walk through all that mud." "The ladies loo is only 35 minutes' walk away". "I think we shall have some snow today."

(5) How can you spend all that money when. . .

- (a) We need a. . .
- (b) I haven't had a stitch of clothing since. . .

- 5a. (i) Items of domestic equipment develop alarmingly high casualty rate.
- (ii) Advertisements for expensive and desired items left in conspicuous places e.g. pasted on loo door.
- (iii) Coveted articles pointed out when seen in other people's houses, on television, in shops, accompanied by heavy sighs.
- 5b. (i) Appearance of items of out-moded clothing e.g. navy blue knickers, gym slips.
- (ii) References to nice appearance greeted with scornful laughter.
- (iii) Claims that "will need to visit Scout Jumble Sale soon".



5a. & b.

- (i) Counter attack with catalogues implying heavy expenditure under consideration — Porsche Turbo, power boat, etc.
- (ii) Bribe friends to say "New kite a good investment, bound to be worth double soon."
- (iii) Look thoughtful when discussing rich friends e.g. "He's got his own plane and a Range Rover."
- (iv) Suggest getting job on oil rig or in Saudi Arabia — "I can stand the loneliness if you want it that badly dear."

(6) Hang Gliding is just an excuse for mixing with vulgar, loudmouthed males

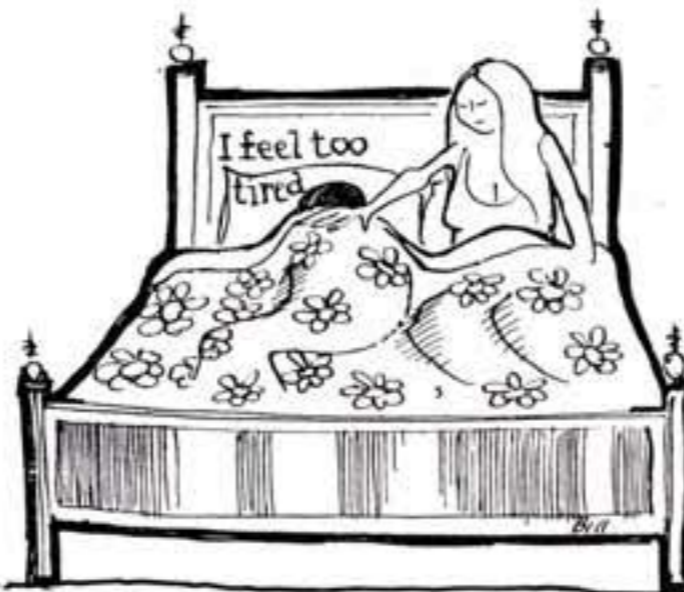
- 6a. Observations about lowering of moral tone increasing vulgarity, coarseness of behaviour. Gushing praise about dutiful, hen-pecked, polite, smarmy acquaintances (non-H.Ging of course).
- 6b. Invite home smooth, polished, courteous but very boring H.G. friend (every club has one). Appear to hang on his every word. After, comment effusively about his wit, erudition, stimulating conversation.



- 6a. Invite home smooth, polished, courteous but very boring H.G. friend (every club has one). Appear to hang on his every word. After, comment effusively about his wit, erudition, stimulating conversation.
- 6b. Refrain from even traces of grin when hearing slightly blue jokes, express ignorance of meaning, ask HGPW to explain.
- 6c. Rush to offer help in house, peeling potatoes, washing up and similar menial jobs. With skill offer can be timed to be just too late. If offer is accepted make a hopeless mess of job until ordered out.

(7) Hang Gliding is bad for you

- 7. Recurring use of phrase "But you're always too tired after you've been H.Ging." "You poor thing you look tired out." "You'll catch your death H.Ging this weather (in summer substitute sunstroke)". "Of course H.Ging is really sport for a *much* younger man."
- There are many variations of these but anything cooed in a solicitous tone is a firm indication of a type 7 attack.



- 7. Fiddle bathroom scales to show reduced weight. Buy sunray lamp and use when HGPW has gone to mother's. Leap out of bed on H.Ging days "accidentally" dragging bed-clothes off HGPW in the process.

Throw away sexy aftershave and buy 5 gallon drum of strong smelling embrocation. Borrow Bull Worker, exercise bicycle and barbells. Retire to bedroom, lock door and make strenuous exercise noises whilst reading *Mayfair* or *Playboy* (warning: complaints of tiredness likely to be replaced by complaints of excessive enthusiasm — you can never win!)

Rex Grogan  
Mercian Club

# Symbols for Hang Gliding Hi-Way Code



TURBULENCE



THERMALS  
HERE



SINK  
LIKELY



RESTRICTED  
LANDING AREA



CHECK LEADING  
EDGES



CHECK  
KARABINA



BOTTOM LANDING  
PROHIBITED



COLD  
FRONT



DE-RIG

THANKS TO MANWING MAG

## PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR CLUB MEMBERS?

Despite much encouragement, many BHGA members are not members of our Clubs. In my view they are economising unfairly, because Clubs are the backbone of our organisation. Clubs are responsible for negotiating sites and exercising such control as is necessary to retain them. They provide much of the guidance that is invaluable to those who have been through initial training at a school, but still have much to learn.

In August I asked Council to consider preferential treatment to persuade BHGA members to join and support our Clubs. Preliminary discussion with Chris Corston quickly established that Council should only be asked to consider the matter after members views had been sought. This is your chance to put your views. Individual members have a choice. They can write direct to Chris at Taunton, perhaps copying it to Stanley Pottinger, letters editor of *Wings!* if further publicity seems desirable. Alternatively they can join a Club and make their views known through the Club's response, which can be measured by sheer weight of membership. Whichever method you use I will see your views and will be influenced by them. I have no doubt that other Council members will feel the same.

I know Clubs are not perfect. Most Club Officers are quite aware of the many things they would attempt if there were more members to help. Additional subscriptions mean a Club can pay for some of the things that are vital if hang gliding is to advance. Every member of a Club can help to make it better.

What sort of preferential treatment? Well, I think the sort we are most influenced by — flying. If you

are a Club member and visiting another area you would have the same right to fly as members of the local Club. If you are a BHGA member but not a Club member, you would only be allowed to fly when Club members decide there is sufficient space available for you and them.

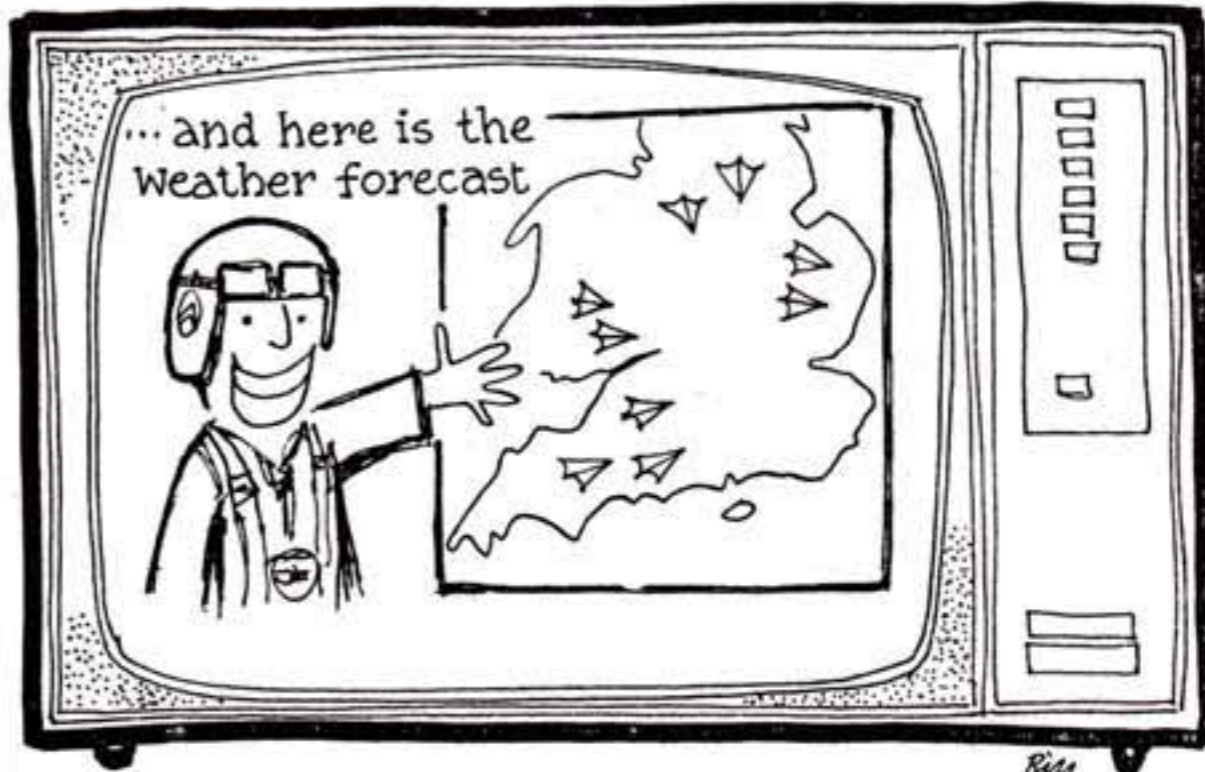
If you do not co-operate? Neither Council nor Clubs have any legal power of course, but Clubs can convene disciplinary committees when a BHGA member behaves like a pirate. If someone accused of being a pirate is unprepared to have the matter decided by a Club, a BHGA disciplinary Committee can be convened. The expense of such a hearing would be shared between a Club and a member accused of piracy, unless it became very clear that one or the other was 'decisively' to blame and should pay all the costs of a hearing. The ultimate sanction would be loss of pilot status, and suspension of BHGA membership and the many benefits that brings. Such an action would only be used as a last resort. We are not attempting to reduce BHGA Membership! We all want the maximum freedom to fly and the minimum control over it. Some self-control is necessary if we are to continue flying without control being imposed on us. Clubs are on the spot where problems can arise and should exercise such control as is necessary to overcome them. No more, and no less.

If everyone joins a Club as soon as he starts to visit sites as an individual rather than with a school we will be much more effective in controlling ourselves. It will rarely be necessary to discipline our members.

Your suggestions on how to introduce such a policy or adopt alternatives will be valued. Council really does try to exercise a democratic approach, but we are sometimes hampered by you not telling us what you want! **David Bedding**



David Bedding, BHGA COUNCIL MEMBER



## WEATHER TO HANG ABOUT IN

— this piece appeared in the *Financial Times* way back in May, and was sent in by Mark Ommaney. It's a fascinating thought —

Weather men and hang-gliding pilots share an intense interest in a thin skin of the atmosphere called the "friction layer", extending upwards for about a mile from the earth's surface. It can be likened to a lubricating film between the spinning orb and the upper atmosphere.

The solo flyers exploit the idiosyncrasies of airflow in this friction layer to enjoy their sport. The weather men want to explore in much greater detail just how this very turbulent layer of air is behaving. The solution may be for more of the weather men to learn hang-gliding and go and see for themselves.

Fitting scientific instruments to hang-gliders has tremendous potential for weather forecasting, suggests a meteorologist writing in *Weather*, the journal of the Royal Meteorological Society. Hang-gliding has already developed into a very sophisticated pastime, with altimeters, compasses and variometers (for vertical motion) commonly worn by the pilots today.

Hang-gliding took off as a sport with the introduction of Francis Rogallo's design of glider, once studied by NASA scientists as a way of steering their returning spacecraft after re-entry into the atmosphere. Skilled pilots can exploit the microclimate of the first mile of atmosphere to fly safely at speeds up to 35 knots, cover distances as great as 50

miles, and remain airborne for hours — 8 hours, 26 minutes in one case.

Pilots try to keep well clear of cloud, where the heat released from the air as water droplets are forming can produce very turbulent conditions. But they are still discovering new sources of lift, especially in mountainous regions, from local aberrations in the wind.

At the moment the weather men can provide only general indications of whether the weather will be suitable for hang-gliding. But local forecasting offices are receiving a growing number of calls from clubs. They can advise on such crucial questions as which way the wind will be blowing at a particular time and place, and — less critically important — what the wind speed will be. The forecaster may be able to advise grounded pilots of a "weather window" between a succession of depressions when they might get in a good flight.

But what the weather man needs for a more precise forecast, when flying conditions are doubtful at a favourite hang-gliding site, is a detailed picture of how the locality itself will respond to the arrival of the next piece of weather. He can build this up only by having a lot more feedback from experienced pilots studying the area and reporting their experiences to the local Met office.

The man who really knows what to look for, of course, is the meteorologist himself. Perhaps the first Bank Holiday TV report of the weather for Brighton from a heavily instrumented weather man hang-gliding off the South Downs is not far away.

## LITTLE BIG ONE

Frocester is a tasty-looking Westerly ridge just to the south of Stroud in the west country. Although it's only 670 feet asl, and 275 feet top to bottom, it's a hell of a good thermal producing site. It's main drawback is the amount of controlled air space down wind. This in itself makes it a real challenge for XCs.

I had been studying the air map for some time, in the hope of making a nice XC without going through controlled areas. The 21st August was a fabulous looking afternoon with a few clouds developing at 3,500ft. Taking off just before 2 o'clock I managed to find lumpy, punchy tiny and wing-uppy thermals, only reaching 400ft. ATO at best. I took half an hour of this before making off for the far end of the escarpment, some 2 miles south. Conditions here were evil, probably because Cam Long Down is only half a mile away up wind, and this caused the wind to funnel around and into the valley, giving some really odd wind directions at times.

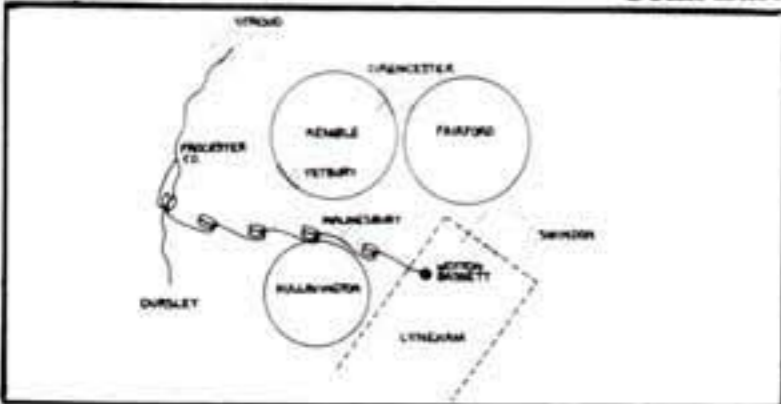
Wind shadow thermals seem to be the thing these days, and this was just the place for it. I got into a cracker, screaming up at 1,000ft. per minute with a flock of seagulls. I was soon at 2,700ft. ATO, with a spectacular view of the River Severn, the suspension bridge, the Brecons and the Malverns. The beauty of gaining good height on a small hill is that you really do feel high. The ridges look flat and you have the feeling of being able to fly anywhere.

It wasn't long before the thermal fizzled out so I headed off downwind and across the flat lands. I soon got that sinking feeling, flying across the A46 and going down fast. With little hope of finding lift I decided to follow the main road. About 600ft. AGL the vario made a couple of blips and I started circling. After a few minutes I was into a comfortable 3 to 4 up, doing big lazy circles, back up to 2,500 AGL. Visibility was excellent and I could see Malmsbury. The wind direction was NW, which meant I had to fly cross-wind to make Malmsbury. When I had 800ft. on, my one chance of extending the flight was to get over a burning field. Surprisingly, the lift was quite smooth with only a few woopsies. But it was a life saver which took me up again to 2,500ft. I was now concentrating so much on staying in lift and circling that I didn't realise I was going well off course. It was only the sound and sight of a helicopter that had come across for a look-see that made me look around. I had had my nose stuffed into my vario for the last 10-15 minutes. Malmsbury was now 2 miles to my left, and the chances of getting there were slim, as it would have meant flying into wind.

I decided to fly across and down-wind so as not to get any deeper into controlled air space. It was very frustrating, flying through good lift, and it wasn't long before I had to select a landing field. I touched down just after 3.30, close to Whotton Bassett, 21½ miles from take off.

...one extraordinary incident at Clubman's Mere. Joshing Johnny Carr on Saturday evening, asking why the Southern HGC hadn't got Graham Slater in its team, when the conversation was interrupted by a furious voice bellowing that "Slater was an 'effing professional, seen his 'effing picture in an 'effing magazine and it wouldn't be fair for him to fly at Mere". Turned out the gentleman was serious! . . .

Colin Lark



## First Soaring Flight

Bossington is a westerly site, 65 miles from my home, Bristol. Halfway there I was discouraged by the Met. Office forecast of the wind backing to Easterly. Today seemed doomed and I imagined standing of a 700ft. NW hill with a tail wind. This had happened to me dozens of times over the last four months since I got my P1.

On arrival everything seemed right, with a fresh NW wind and a couple of kites soaring easily over the ridge.

There were 7 kites already there, the two of us made it 9, and the site limit was 10 — lucky. I rigged as quickly as was safely possible and chatted with a few local pilots about the site. Brian Milton gave me a pre-flight chat then front-wired for me. I gave the okay, surged forward, and to my amazement, Up.

The ridge really was falling away below me and I turned right shakily to fly along the ridge. I was gaining height all the time in the beautifully smooth sea breeze. I soon got the method of doing ¼ mile beats along the ridge. My confidence and style grew enormously as I learnt how to handle my glider properly a 1977 Moonraker once owned by Derek Evans, and I felt on top of the world flying out 1,000ft. over the sea and coming back into ridge lift to maintain height. Hanging around at 400ft. above take-off is as different to a top-to-bottom as your first flight is to running down a hill!

I turned back to come in for a top landing carefully remembering all that had been told me. I hovered over the top of the hill and approached the landing area from behind. The landing was not the most elegant, but it was soft landing in a gorse bush. Brian greeted me saying "It's 4 p.m. on Saturday 5th July, 1980 and you've soared for 14 minutes — well done."

During the rest of that day I got in over two hours air time exploring the air above the hill. I learnt 360's, and flew over the sea into the sunset. I now feel I know something of what hang gliding is about, and this is just the beginning. Anyone who does not fly must be insane, and all nonks — *don't give up*. That first soaring flight makes any amount of time and money well worth it.

Bruce Goldsmith

## GLIDER APPROVAL

Dear Sir,  
Please would you clarify a point for me and I suspect a great many other *Wings!* readers.

*Item 1* of the BHGA Public Liability Insurance requirements says *that the hang glider being flown is acceptable or approved by the BHGA!*

I fly, alternately, a Gryphon III which never will have a CofA, and a 12m Sigma, which I confidently expect to eventually get a CofA, but at present does not have one. Now are these Gliders acceptable to the BHGA? Quite simply if they are not, I would like some money back! (*I'll leave the issue of rights and wrongs to someone else to sort out*)

Yours sincerely

Joe Anderson

## BHGA REPLIES

All hang gliders flown by BHGA Members if not *Approved* are considered acceptable and thus covered under the Association's Public Liability Policy unless specifically deemed unacceptable or un-airworthy by BHGA or Club Technical Officials.

The circumstances would have to be very unusual for Club officials to have to approach the BHGA to ask for a formal withdrawal of cover.

Chris Corston

## WINGS ADVERTISING RATES TO GO UP

Following big increases earlier on this year in the printing and distribution costs of *Wings!*, the magazine's management committee — Percy Moss, Tony Fuell, Barry Blore, Ian Butcher, Sylvia Howard and Brian Milton — are recommending to the next BHGA Council in early October that advertising rates should go up by 20 per cent. These new rates, if approved, will apply for the December issue of *Wings!* This means small ads will cost 12p per word for members, 15p per word for business. A full page ad will cost £120 for approved gliders. Even at these rates, *Wings!* will remain one of the cheapest forms of advertising in international hang gliding. But we had been getting back towards the situation we've been in before, when advertisements were actually being subsidised by the BHGA, in that they *cost* more than we were charging for them.

## UP COMET BAN

As Icarus Allsorts mentions in passing, there appears to be a ban on the sale to Englishmen (Britons) of the new American hot ship, the UP Comet, until after this year's *American Cup*. While at the US Masters, Robert Bailey tried to buy one for cash to bring back here, but found no one would sell, even when there were two on a van. And John Hudson, who was willing to pay for *ten* to import them here, found within the space of 24 hours there were so many orders that a previous assurance he'd get them quickly changed to "maybe at the end of October". The same ban, incidently, doesn't apply to the French, because Mike de Glanville's Comet arrived well in time for Jo Binns to put 7 hours on it before the middle of September. The Americans see the UP Comet as the way they are going to win this year's *American Cup*. By all accounts, it is extremely fast, and keeps it's glide angle with speed. It was used competitively in both the Bishop XC, and the US Masters (Won Bishop, 3rd at Masters), the opposite ends of the competition spectrum.



UP Comet, not for Luney's

## PILOT ONE

Several experienced flyers have written to Head Office asking how they get P1 issued through their club.

*Answer:* Approach their Club Secretary/Coach or Committee members. Clubs were sent details of what to do and how to obtain Test Papers, Student Task Forms, etc in a circular TRAINING/CLUBS 1 that was sent out to Clubs in May this year. Several Clubs are operating the system and quite a few members have used it to enter the Pilot Rating System.

# To Pull the Chute or Not

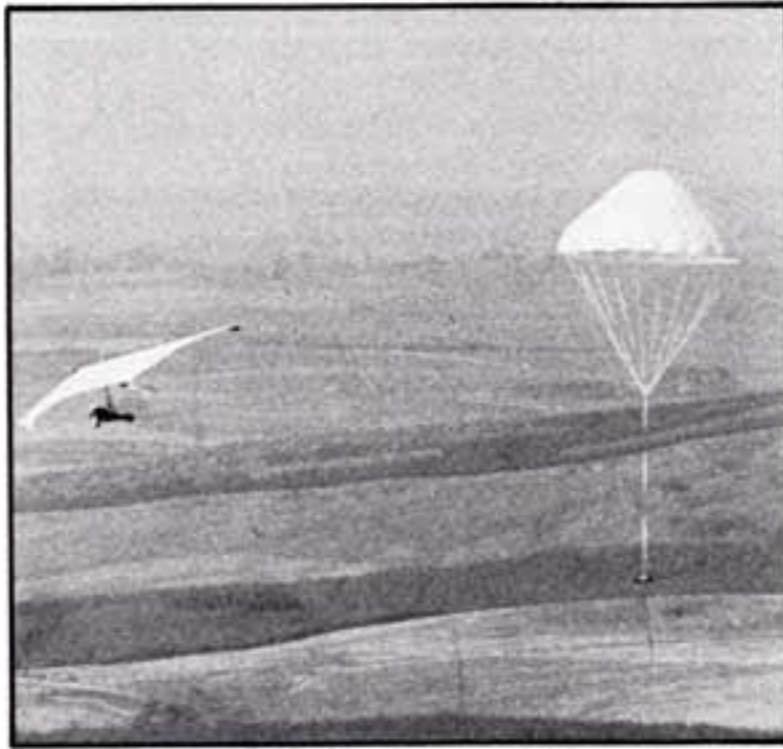
Saturday, 16th August, 1980  
Site: Jenkin Hill, Lake District  
Wind: 7mph. South.

I rang Tony Rathbone at 5.30 p.m., after just finishing work. "Are we going to turn out for the last hour?" I inquired. It was agreed we would meet at Latrigg car park to fly Jenkin Hill (Skiddaw to non-Cumbrians).

The 1,000ft. walk leads to the take off point, 1,750 feet above the valley floor. Several visitors' cars were parked, but no other flyers were visible.

We arrived at the take off point at 7.15 p.m. It is a gradual south easterly slope. The wind was only 7 m.p.h. and was causing little to no lift, not enough to test fly my newly acquired kite. By the time I had untangled my harness, Tony was rigged and flying 600ft. ATO by turning right on to Little Man. Now the wind was slightly across and I blamed this for making my right wing hard to control. I ran for take off but the right wing stalled just 2 feet above the ground, forcing me to land cross wind and I ground looped. Tony's son (a non-flyer) was at hand to assist me. He held the kite while I walked round inspecting for damage. There were no visible signs, so I decided to walk further round into the wind. The take off point was now a lot steeper with the gully of Howgill on my right.

On take off the kite turned severely to the right, down into the gully, "Hell I'm going to pile in." I pulled hard left — no response. Still turning right I 360'd, narrowly missing the hill. Several severe turns followed and I was still not under control. By this time I was hanging on to the left hand rigging wire to try and keep going in a straight line, my body being wrapped round the A frame upright and my right hand in the corner of the



bottom bar, pulling in to try and descend as soon as possible. I was now moving away from the face of the hill, giving me time to pull my thoughts together. The question, "Do I pull the chute or not?" raced through my mind. Also the *Wings!* report, only pull the chute as a last resort.

I kept looking down. The ground below was totally unsuitable for landing by parachute or any other method. The kite was yawing in a most erratic way, but still heading away from the hill in the direction of Keswick. I was now clear of the obstructions which had previously prevented me from being able to use my chute. Still going through my mind was "Should I use the chute?" My better judgement kept me going, by which time I had noticed power lines in the fields straight ahead. I was still hanging on to the rigging wires in my effort to control the kite. I eased out on the

bottom bar and received a better response due to the slower flying speed. I gradually turned left away from the power lines. Yet another obstacle obstructed my flight path. I was heading straight for some trees. With my right hand I eased out on the control bar and I breathed a sigh of relief as I cleared them. I definitely would not have attempted that under different circumstances.

A large meadow loomed in front of me. "How do I land whilst still hanging on to the rigging wires?" I asked myself. I just kept on going, skimming the ground with only a few feet to spare. I flared out, one wing tip hit the ground.

Help had now arrived from Dave Weeks with his trusty V.W. He returned me to my car, also calling on the farmer to apologise for using the wrong landing area.

The only damage was one £2.50 deflector.

On reflection as to the cause, it was only my second time out on my '12 metre Sigma', which I had purchased second-hand. I was not used to ground handling it; had I been, I would have realised something was wrong.

I was eager to fly because it was the first decent day we had had in several weeks, and I had not realised how easy it was to rig my Sigma incorrectly.

I carry a Windhaven Chute which I would certainly have used if conditions had got any worse. In my case the reassurance that it gave me overcame my panic.

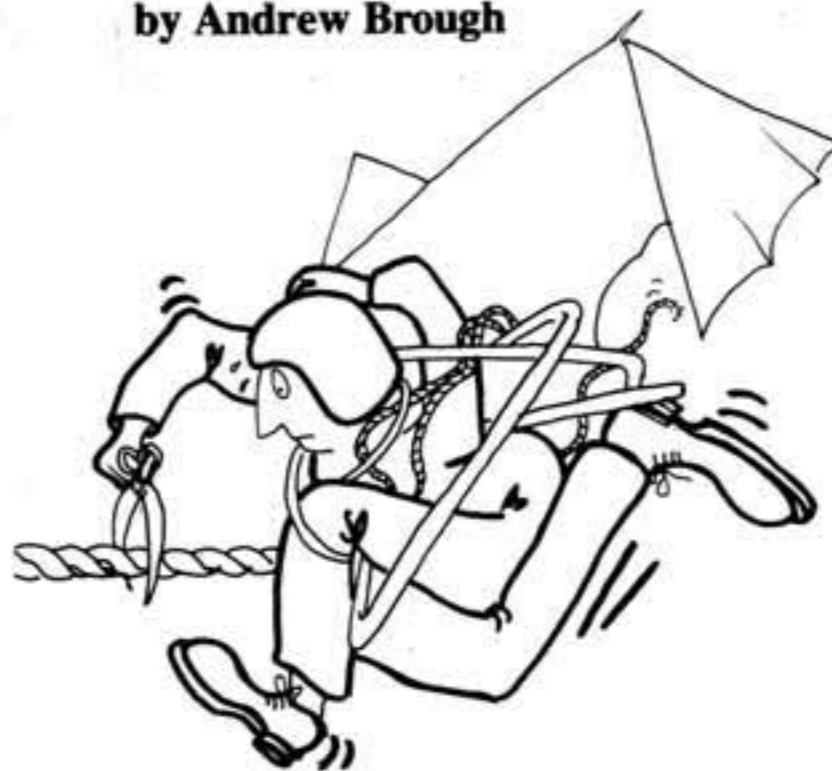
I have since flown the kite and it handles beautifully when rigged correctly.

I have been flying for four years, the past two on a 'Moonraker 78'.

Ian Grant  
Cumbria H.G.C.

## Thames Valley Tow Syndicate

by Andrew Brough



Pick-up winch accelerate away, Clive gave the signal and applied the winch brake.

Suddenly the line tightened, I took one step, was air-borne and into prone without hardly realising it. The climb rate was breathtaking and the ground rapidly dropped away as though I were in a glassy smooth thermal with the vario str. ring. Remembering Dave's words, I was particularly anxious about keeping on line with the tow rope. With Clive on the winch and Dave giving encouragement on the C.B., I was ready to drop the first bridle at 150ft. The second bridle took over and I began the climb proper and this second stage was far steeper than the first. The angle of attack incr-

eased dramatically and the glider rose smoothly and fast and the tow vehicle rapidly became smaller, near the top of the launch the glider began to porpoise a little and I prepared to release the line. When it went slack I released and the nose dropped slightly as I watched the rope fall away. From this easily gained altitude I was able to do height-losing manoeuvres without worrying about going down!

Peter was next, shortly after take-off he went out of tow direction, released (after Clive had let off the tension) and landed. Straight away he was launched again for a perfect flight and spot landing (must be league training?).

Martin was next, again for a perfect flight.

By the end of the day Martin, Peter and myself had six good launches each between 600-1050ft; a few flights were extended by thermals and small height gains (to 1200ft. A.T.O.). The potential was there!

Day 3. On the third day's towing, only Peter and I from the syndicate could fly. Rick Wilson and Richard Gibbs came to observe. No thermals developed but we each enjoyed five launches up to 1,000ft.

Conclusion: Towing is, to my mind, another way for hang gliding to develop. Dave and Clive have really got it worked out with good equipment and methods.

I do believe that there are no short-cuts and land towing is at present only for competent pilots.

Reprinted from *Volplane*  
*Thames Valley HGC Magazine* — September 1980



# Thunderstorm in the Owens Valley

by Mick Pollard

The first three weeks in July saw myself and another pilot, Billy True, enjoying our flying holiday in the Owens Valley. This is the tale of one of my more memorable flights.

The day in question was the last day of the XC classic. The weather did not look too promising as a cloud was starting to form over the White Mountains as early as 8.30am. It promised to be overdeveloped by the time we got to take-off. However, as the three trucks of the contest set off for Gunter we decided it was worth a try and headed out to Piute launch to avoid the crowd. Piute was three miles north of them.

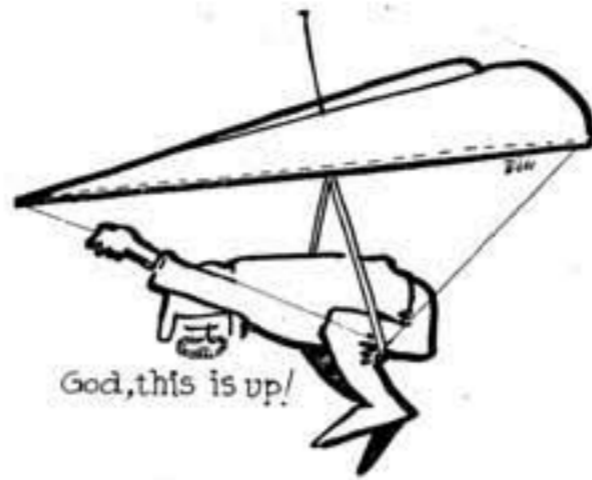
Having heard over the CB that the task for the day was to fly north to White Mountain, return to launch, then turn north once again and fly to Zacks Ranch, I decided to try for a distance flight — the holiday was drawing to a close.

The cloud street which had developed was now a solid bar stretching 25 miles to the end of the range and beyond. I took off swaddled in shorts, jeans, T-shirt, three pairs of socks, long-sleeved shirt, jumper, two flying suits, duvet jacket, gloves and boots. Only a couple of pilots had taken off from Gunter, so I headed off in the uncluttered air leaving 64 pilots trying to psyche each other out.



My launch was pretty uneventful and I settled down in my harness to begin looking for lift. The thermals were fairly easy to locate, as expected, and I was at cloudbase around half an hour later. From then on it was a see-sawing flight along the edge of the cloud street until I arrived at Montgomery peak at the end of the range. As I had been flying along I had noticed that the base of the cloud had become darker, and further out into the desert I could see light showers of rain. I was stalling around the sky between Boundary and Montgomery peaks for about ten minutes, observing the rapidly darkening clouds with a cool detachment that seems incredible to me now. I had been averaging 14,000ft. for about an hour, and had been up to 15,500 on a number of occasions, using oxygen above 15,000, and I remember clearly making decisions, but it still hadn't dawned on me that things were quickly getting out of hand. The solitary view I beheld was pretty awesome as I concentrated on looking for lift — trying to make up my mind whether to carry on or turn the flight into an out-and-return. I wasn't very hopeful of making it a distance flight, as the clouds had obliterated the sunlight except for the odd patch on the valley floor some 8,000ft. below around Janie's Ranch.

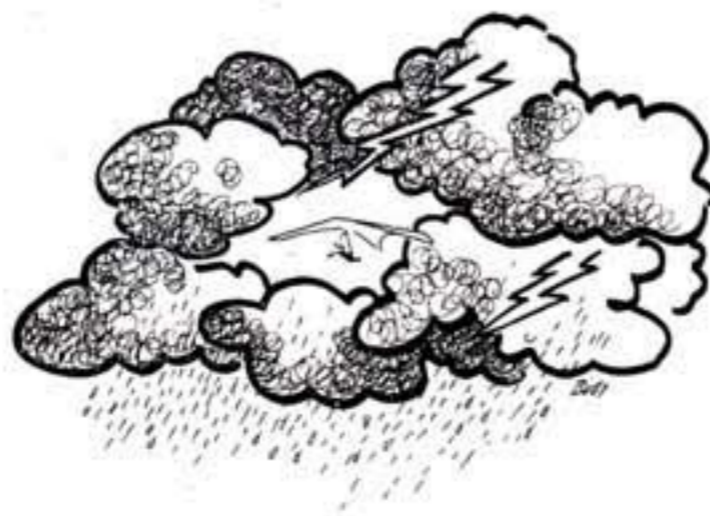
It was at this stage that I picked up a thermal that was just too good to resist. I was circling in lift that varied from 500 to 1,000fpm, still undecided what to do when I saw a jagged fork of lightning strike behind and below me between Boundary and Montgomery Pass.



*It was a millisecond after that when the cool ace cross-country pilot you have been reading about disintegrated. With a mental shriek I pulled the bar to my knees. The off-the-clock vario that had been music to my ears a few seconds before was now a nightmare as the reality of my predicament came home to me. I took a quick scan round the horizon to see the showers that had seemed so harmless a few minutes ago had turned to heavy rainfall that blotted out the landscape. It looked like the sky had fallen down!*

On looking ahead, still with the bar hard down, I could see big black clouds and showers in the distance. Couple all this with the odd roll of thunder and the knowledge that there was still 9,500ft. of altitude to burn off, then you have one very frightened pilot. Lots of miserable options were presented to my numbed brain, as I started climbing at 1,000fpm ie. — "I'm going to get fried" — or "It's not going to be any good pulling my chute till I get very near the ground, because I'm only going to go up again".

About this time I realised that holding the bar down just wasn't going to be enough, as I was still making 2up, and anyway, holding it down that far was quickly knackered my arms. I therefore hunched myself over the control frame and hooked the bar over my knees. This took the strain off my arms and I was able to take stock of the situation. I had around four miles of desert to cross to make Benton station. I didn't have the slightest desire to be stuck in the middle of the desert with a thunderstorm crashing around me, and elected that, rightly or wrongly, I was going to try to make it there.



Halfway I was beginning to feel more confident, as I was managing around 400fpm sink, and returned the bar to its normal position — thinking I might be able to turn round, make it to Janie's to hang around until the sky had cleared. Jeez — what a loony! As I let go I was seized by 500fpm lift and heavy turbulence, which cured me of any further ambition and once again I returned the bar to my kneecaps. Flying in this unusual position seemed awful scary when I first went to it, but after the full half hour it took me to descend to within 300ft. of Benton I was quite used to it — to the extent of being able to take a couple of snaps of our hero on the 110 camera on the A frame (thinking "This is going to make a great tale" — they didn't turn out very well). Nodding my head I found had given me very swift diving turns, and pulling out close to the ground I was on finals. I hadn't an earthly as to which way the wind was coming from, and had set up an approach which I thought was right. Wrong! Late dirt on a 3mph downwind. I didn't care though — I had my arse on the deck in one piece!



I was trying to get my head together when a bloke on a motorbike drove up and started rabbiting on about hang gliding — you know, the usual punter's stuff — "How much do they cost?" and "That was a hard landing wasn't it", etc. etc. I couldn't believe it, to survive a thunderstorm in the Owens and get hit by a nerd. I didn't say anything, just walked behind my glider and breathed oxygen until I settled down. I was about to de-rig when the wind blew from the opposite direction and blew my kite over, narrowly missing the head of my friend on the motorbike. This caused a rapid quickening of pace as I wondered what 10 trillion volts down the king post would feel like. As soon as I had de-rigged I started watching the increasing violence of the storm. The winds were blowing hard from the south, which I took a picture of, then equally hard from the north. At one stage Benton was completely enveloped by a dust storm!

After my retrieve had picked me up we made our way back to Zack's Ranch — with me boring them to tears with my flight and we watched the final flights of the Classic. Only about five pilots made the task, as the others had left it too late to take off, and couldn't fight the strong northerly headwind which was an aftermath of the storm we had left at Benton.

I met John Hudson at one of the retrieve trucks where he told me of his final bum flight. He asked me how my flight had gone, so I settled him down with a can of beer.

"Did I ever tell you of my flight in a thunderstorm in the Owens Valley, John"?

PS. Flew a total of 240 miles and had height gains of 11,200ft. and 9,000ft. Best flight 44 miles.

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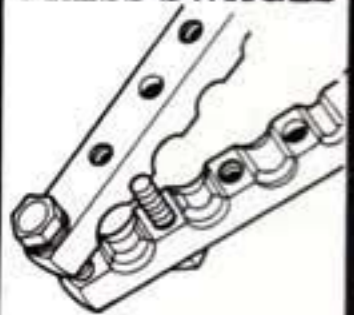
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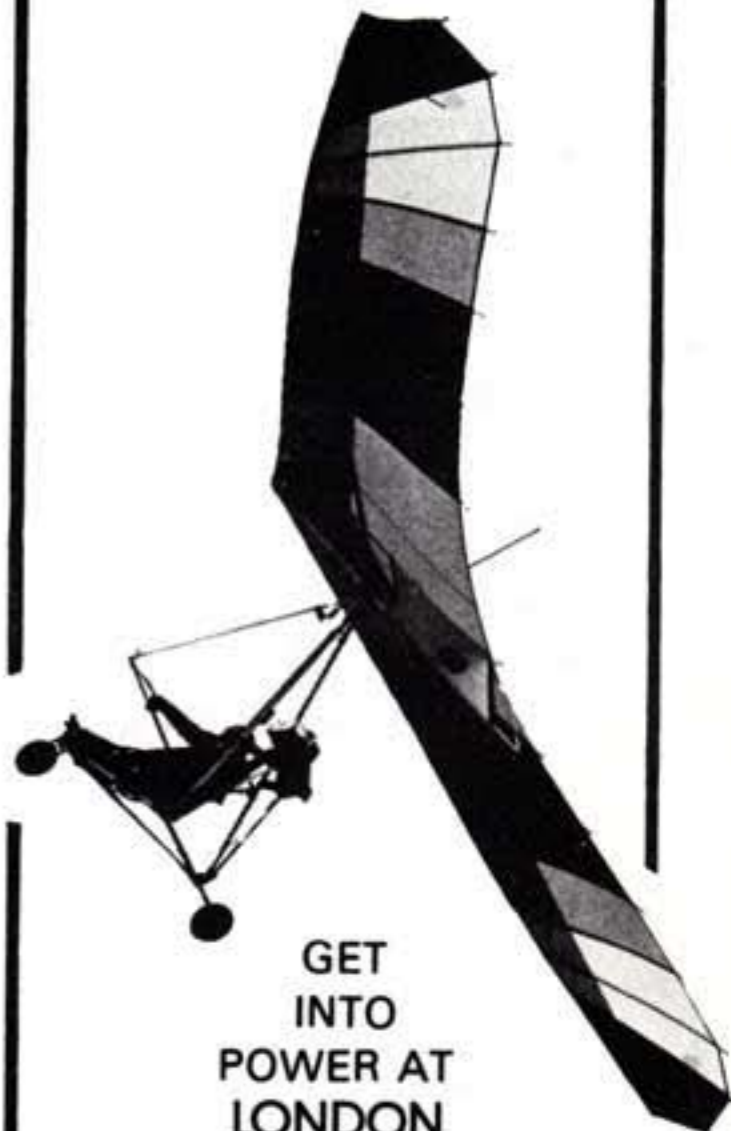
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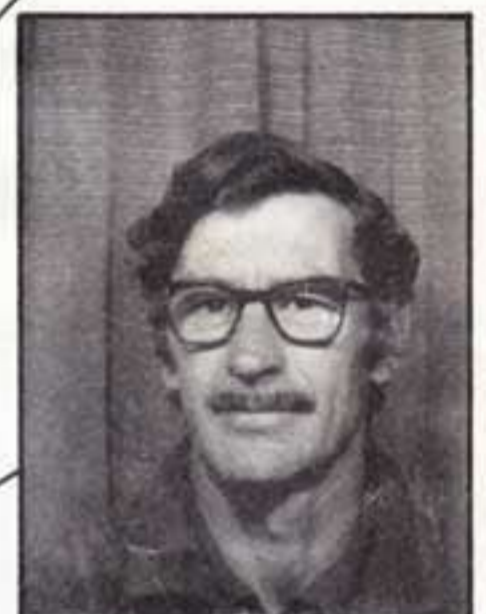
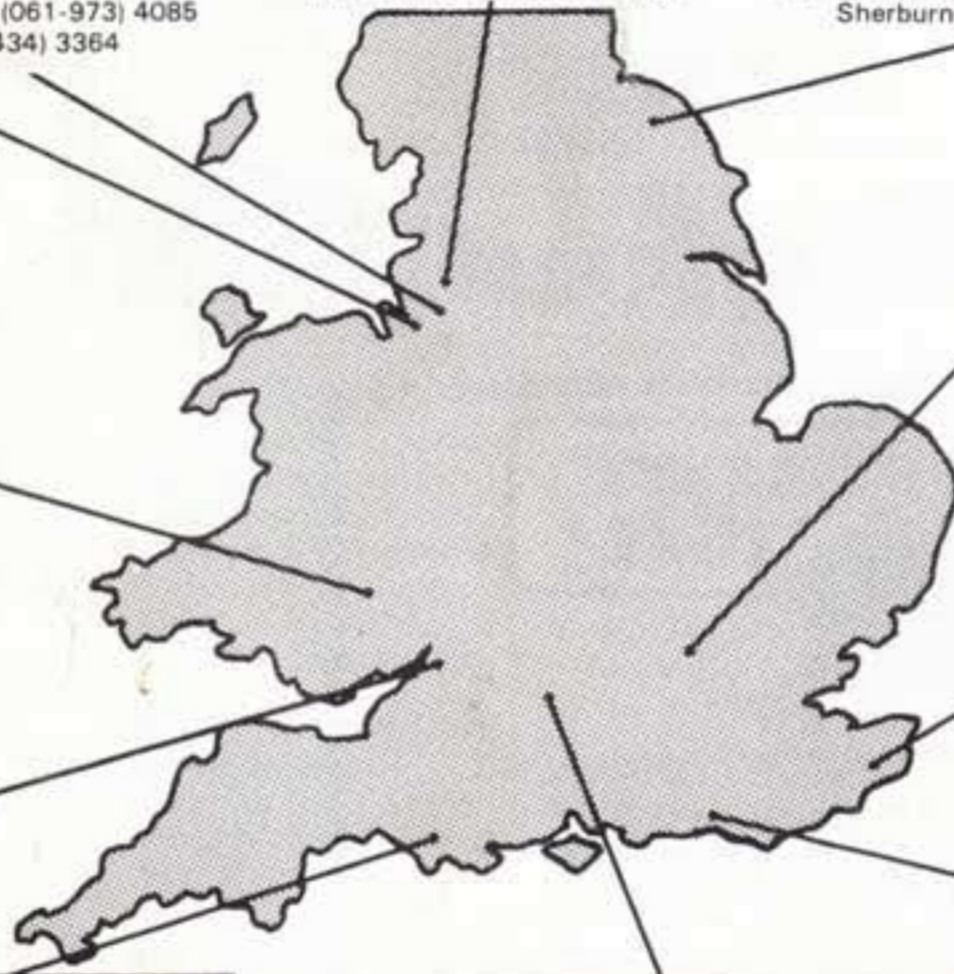
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