

# THE GRID

London Gliding Club Magazine / JAN-MAR 2021

## New year, new expectations

*Preparing for a more promising gliding season.*



THE BGA LADDER AND OLC  
LIVING WITH A SELF-LAUNCHER  
MUSINGS IN LOCKDOWN  
2020 WINNERS OF THE LGC TROPHIES  
AND MUCH MORE



LONDON GLIDING CLUB





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**“Charlie Charlie” towing 328 in a  
Summer day of 2018.**  
*Photo by Rafael Schouchana*





# A LONG WINTER

**W**ell, 2020 was a year that required strong adaptation skills. With a global pandemic that pushed us in many directions, we all had to get used to frequently changing rules.

Apart from the increased hope created by the vaccination program, this winter has not been different yet.

I can say, from personal experience, that this 3rd lockdown forced me to reflect on life in general. How I see myself now and where I would like to be in the future, my goals for 2021 and what is really important in life.

Since September, I chose a path of becoming much healthier, physically and mentally, and invested a lot of my time exercising and in self-care.

I have to admit that the lack of club activity made me shift my energy to other aspects of my life, which caused another delay to the magazine.

Speaking about THE GRID, considering the reduced amount of gliding activity and the challenges in getting content for six issues per year, we decided that, at least in 2021, we will move to quarterly issues. This will allow us to collect more exciting content from you. Hopefully, you will still enjoy sharing your stories, photos and reading what others had to say.

In any case, 2021 is here with a renewed expectation of a promising high season!

## IN THIS ISSUE

In the first issue of this year, we celebrate the 2020 winners of the LGC trophies (pg 6), and say a big thank you and goodbye to Trevor, who was our chef for over nine years (pg 22).

Andrew Sampson gives us an update on our club operations (pg 7). Tom Pridgeon describes in more details how the BGA Ladder and OLC work, showcasing the creation of Glana, by Hugo Ribeira (pg 9).

Paul Richer tells us what is it like to live with a self-launcher (pg 14), while Mark Newland-Smith shares his musings about Red Kites (pg 18).

As usual, Steve Lynn and KS went on new adventures just before the lockdown (pg 20).

On the historical side, Andrew Sampson shares some extracts of the Sailplane magazine of 1935 (pg 24).

As we look forward to a great season, a beautiful gliding photo gallery reminds us of the joy of flying (pg 12), the Dunstable Regionals will be back in August (pg 17), and a new 6km run challenge is up for grabs (pg 23).

Happy new year and I look forward to seeing you again!

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Rafael Schouchana - Editor

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## Cover photograph

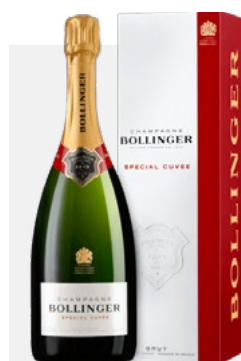
LGC and the deflated balloon in Cerdanya, 2019. Photo by Rafael Schouchana

# CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Getting back on track

Our CFI is concerned that so many of us will not be current by the time we are allowed to fly again. He is planning to put together a package that will enable members to get back into practice safely.

Details are yet to be verified, but the plan is to make the package financially attractive so that our members will want to make the most of the offering. It may well be a flexible arrangement that will be moulded to the needs of the individual.



## Free bottle of champagne

For the first LGC pilot to fly his/her first solo 300km in a private or club glider.

Nigel Perren

## Bronze lectures

Martin Hayden is organising Bronze lectures during the Winter. To join, email [martin.glide099@outlook.com](mailto:martin.glide099@outlook.com).

Tuesdays, 7 to 9pm

9 Mar - Revision & Exam practice

16 Mar - Multiple Choice Exam

## Instructor recency flying

The CAA has agreed that instructors need to remain in current flying practice to exercise the privileges of their ratings. They have allowed that instructor gliding may take place to achieve these ends.

Our instructors started flying from **Tuesday, 23rd February.**

There is **no** allowance for any other General Aviation during the lockdown. All COVID-19 rules are to be adhered to.

We hope that others will soon be allowed to fly solo based on the present government roadmap out of lockdown.

## Winter Wednesdays

Thank you to Andrew Roch for organising multiple Winter Wednesdays talks on Zoom.

## Achievements



Submit your achievement at <http://bit.ly/lgc-achievements>

### Note on Achievements Notice:

Achievements beyond Silver Badge are not detailed above as they are acknowledged in S&G. Make sure your name is on the list on the notice board so that we do not miss you out.

## Next deadline

Submit your story to THE GRID by

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Fill in the form at <http://bit.ly/thegridmagazine>

## Congratulations to the 2020 winners of the LGC trophies



Photo by David A White

At our glittering prize-giving ceremony, held alongside our annual Christmas Party, our Very Special Guest was there to present – virtually – our 2020 Trophies.

Due to the unusual circumstances facing us during the year, several of the prizes were not awarded. Nevertheless, there

were some outstanding performances, and many of our cross-country pilots recorded more activity on the ladder than in the previous year. So the trophies were thoroughly deserved, and our congratulations go to all the winners.

Andrew Sampson

Trophy	Awarded for	2020 winner	Comment
Dudley Hiscock Trophy	Winner of club ladder	Ed Downham	29322 Points: Also runner-up, BGA national open ladder, and winner, national weekend ladder.  2nd: Tim Jenkinson  3rd Mark Newland-Smith
Frank Foster Boomerang	Best recorded & declared out and return from the club	Warren Kay	504km Crediton W 21 July Lak19/15m
Stafford Allen Trophy	Best flight in a 2-seater	Ed Downham	758km Triangle SCP-NET-MEH @ actual 100kph, 5289points
Derry Trophy	Service to the club	Robin May	Service as Tugmaster and leader of Cadet Scheme
Harry Middleton Cup	Best photographic contribution to the club magazine	David White	Regular contributor
Dent Trophy	Most meritorious gliding performance during each year	Tim Jenkinson	748km + crossing the Wash + 2 other flights each over 5000 points
JJ Trophy	Most meritorious achievement in a pure glider	Paul Whipp	Pure Glider ladder winner.  Geoff Glazebrook (Longest Flight) and Stefan Astley (Highest score single flight) commended.



# SAMPSON'S SCRIPT

BY ANDREW SAMPSON

**H**appy New Year! Despite all the problems of last year, I think we got the most out of a difficult situation. We missed eight weeks of flying during the first lockdown from mid-March to mid-May, but apart from that, it was a reasonably good year as far as cross-country was concerned. Instruction and support for new or relatively inexperienced members were more difficult. Still, one of the most positive outcomes has been the 'instructor bubble' system which proved very successful for all those involved. By the time the second lockdown arrived on November 5th, the weather had turned for the worse anyway, and the rest is history.

## PRIZEGIVING

One of the club's annual traditions is our prizegiving, in recent years combined with the Christmas lunch. In keeping with the covid situation, this was our first ever 'virtual' party, complete with silly hats and some very impressive jumpers. Several mince pies and glasses of wine were seen disappearing slowly (or quickly), and much fun was had through the Christmas Cracker joke competition. At least we did our best!

I was pleased to award several of the club trophies (with assistance from the Very Important Guest). The recipients are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Behind the frivolities, there were some more serious points.

The difficulties of 2020 meant that we felt it was inappropriate to award several of the trophies. There were no Regionals or aerobatics competitions and limited early solo, cross-country pilots or instructor development opportunities.

On the other hand, at the other end of the scale, there were some excellent soaring conditions when we could fly. A look at the BGA ladder shows that our cross-country pilots were as

**“I was pleased to award several of the club trophies (with assistance from the Very Important Guest).”**

active as ever, with several members completing more flights, hours, or km than in 2019. Some of the 'usual suspects' once again impressed us with truly brilliant flights.

## THE DERRY TROPHY

One of the most prestigious awards, though, is for activities more generally conducted on the ground. The Derry trophy is a delightfully detailed model of a Cambridge glider in copper, presented by Cyril Derry Esq in April 1937, and is awarded for 'Service to the Club'.

As we all know, the club runs primarily on volunteer effort. Many deserve recognition for their efforts. At the end of last year, Robin May stood down both as Tugmaster and as leader of the Cadet Scheme.

I don't think we take our tug pilots for granted, but because we are so used to an efficient and safe aerotow from our strange airfield, more or less whenever we like, we perhaps don't recognise the depth of training and effort behind it. Building on his professional background in civil aviation and his second career as a champion international glider pilot, over 40 years, Robin has built an aerotow operation that is the British gliding scene's envy.

Our Cadet Scheme was established sometime before I joined the club, and Robin took over the leadership around 20 years ago. Since then, it has become a model for other clubs. Each year there is a new intake, and they have become an essential feature of the club. Many have become commercial pilots, but whatever their chosen career, they have benefitted from the scheme's skills and personal development.

It won't be long before we see our first 'second generation' cadets!

Thus it was a great pleasure to be able to honour Robin in this manner. He has our sincerest thanks. Following in his footsteps will be Dan Chilcot and Mark Newland-Smith, and we wish them every success in their new roles.

## THE LAST CROSS-COUNTRY OF THE YEAR

When the bar reopens, I will have to present John Thompson with his official pint of ale as his prize for the last cross-country flight of 2020, an out-and-return to Ravensthorpe Reservoir (113km) at an almost pedestrian actual speed of 44.3 kph, on October 11th.

There is a similar prize for the first x/c flight of the year. As I mentioned in the last edition, across the previous decade, the earliest 'first x/c flight of the year' was on February 15th (2018), although in 2019, there were two flights on January 28th that nearly qualified. Sadly this year, the date may turn out to be more about covid restrictions than the weather. We don't want pilots rushing off cross-country seeking this illustrious prize until they are fully current. So, for that reason, we might have to water down the award to a shandy.

## ENDING OUR 90TH-ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Many of you will have forgotten that 2020 was our 90th anniversary. Somehow we got distracted. Depending on how you interpret history, we are the oldest club in the country. Many clubs were formed that year, and we can argue with Kent as to who was created first. Still, we were both flying by

Easter. By the end of the year, our club was established at 'Pascombe Pit', which was initially rented, and later purchased from farmer Pratt. (Pascombe Pit is now known to club members as the "Bowl"). I think our airfield must be the oldest gliding site in continuous use (apart from the war) in the country.

**“We know life will be different, but there is no reason why the club shouldn't come out of this situation with renewed vigour.”**

#### WELCOME 2021

We enter 2021 with optimism and enthusiasm, although with some new challenges. With our indomitable team spirit and culture of volunteering and mutual support, we should be able to bounce back quickly. We know life will be different, but there is no reason why the club shouldn't come out of this situation with renewed vigour.

Of course, we don't know the timing yet, and frankly, your guess is as good as mine! We also don't know whether it will be a gradual return, using something like our Phase 1, 2 & 3 regimes, or whether we will have something more like an overnight re-start. I want to think that we will be back in the cockpit and current by Easter – fingers crossed.

When we do get the go-ahead, we should be able to respond quickly. We already have well-tested COVID-compliant operational procedures. The fleet will be ready for use, but one of the significant issues facing our CFI and Safety Officer will be the establishment of a regime that enables members to return to a proper level of recency and currency in flying, as well as ensuring our usual rigour in ground operations is restored. Many of our instructors themselves have had limited opportunity to practice their skills. The initial priority will be to re-establish the instructing resource so that everyone else can benefit from relevant checks and re-training.

#### CHANGES TO THE RESTAURANT

However, one of our most significant challenges will be the restaurant.

Just after Christmas, Trevor informed us of his decision to stand down.

We all recognise the enormous contribution he has made over the last nine years, and I have sent him our sincerest thanks for all he has done. Trevor (and his cuisine) has become integral to the club, and he will be difficult to replace.

Many of you will appreciate that the highly variable demand, overlaid with a strong seasonal pattern, makes it extremely difficult for the restaurant to be viable even in the capable hands of a competent chef. To be viable, the restaurant needs the enthusiastic support of members and a good flow of business from visitors. The last couple of years has shown a decline in trading, and, of course, the pandemic has accentuated these challenges. Until we are fully back to normal, there is little chance of the restaurant service being sufficient to support permanent staffing.

We are looking at what options might exist for the restaurant, recognising that it is an essential feature of the club. Hopefully, we will be able to reopen by the time flying operations are back to normal.

**“We have applied for and won a grant under the DfT and CAA Airfield Development Advisory Fund, granting us consultancy advice in marketing aimed at new member recruitment.”**

#### MEMBERSHIP

At the time of writing, we don't have the 2020/21 financial results yet. But with almost no AEI and course income and generally lower activity, we have been hit hard. The blow was softened to an extent by further cost control and the effect of government support schemes. There will be a large deficit for the year, but thanks to past good stewardship, the club has adequate reserves to cover the shortfall.

We actually increased our (flying) membership in 2020 with 31 new joiners giving us a small net gain.

There are encouraging signs of growing interest in gliding and pursuing outdoor activities.

It is the time of year when annual subscriptions become due. The committee has already agreed there should be no increase this year and no penalty for late payment. The subscriptions cover your annual membership. Despite the situation, we ask that you support your club by paying your sub on time in the usual manner. We fully recognise that we are entering a year when service delivery to members will be affected, hopefully only for a short period at the very start of the club financial year. We hope to make up for that with accelerated or increased support when the time comes and by being well-prepared for a resumption of normal service.

The new website is in place and being updated continuously. We have a new 'Introductory Membership' ready to be launched, focusing on new members. The Winter Wednesday series continues, and other pre-season activities such as the Bronze Lecture programme are in place.

We have applied for and won a grant under the DfT and CAA Airfield Development Advisory Fund, granting us consultancy advice in marketing aimed at new member recruitment. This should be completed by the end of March.

There is a lot to do in 2021. The club will need your help in enabling us to return to normal (and safe) flying operations as soon as we can and face these new special challenges. I look forward to seeing you at the launch-point as soon as we are allowed. Meanwhile, stay safe and keep an eye open for further announcements.

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**Andrew Sampson**  
Chairman



# THE BGA LADDER

BY TOM PRIDGEON

For those who are not totally sure what it is, the National Ladder is an informal, year-long soaring competition intended for UK-based glider pilots. Yes, it is informal, despite what you may hear from some of the more experienced cross-country pilots on the morning of a good day.

In addition to that, it is used again informally by the BGA to work out who is eligible for the majority of the BGA Trophies each year and an informal archive of traces that they can and have used when it comes to Airspace negotiations. Finally, from more of a club perspective, it also helps advertise that we are active and engaged in the cross-country scene.

It is very easy to use, and I would suggest that as many pilots as possible use it. Provided you can submit an IGC file for your flight, and you did not make any illegal airspace penetrations, you can add your flight. If you are in a 2-seater,

“Thanks to excellent work by Hugo Ribeira, we have a new Flight Viewer called ‘Glana’.”

only the pilot flying it as P1 can “claim” the flight on the ladder.

The uploaded flights do not have to be record-breaking or the longest/fastest flying you have ever done. Still, I would strongly suggest that as many valid/legal flights are submitted because, at the very least, it may help add that bit more weight to the BGA’s fight against airspace changes. I try to upload as many flights as possible, especially if I use the concessionary airspace around LGC.

## CLUB TASKS

In addition to the tasks you set yourself or are set as part of a competition, there are also some club tasks. Club tasks are listed on the My Flights page and may be flown in either direction. They will always be scored as if they had been pre-declared and may be used in any of the following ways:

1. To act as a fall-back task if the pilot’s primary declared task needs to be abandoned (e.g. in the case of poorer than expected soaring conditions on the primary task).
2. To act as an additional task if the pilot’s primary declared task had been achieved more quickly than expected.

3. To act as the main task if the pilot has not made a declaration but finds after launching that the soaring conditions are much better than expected.

This does not absolve the pilot of the responsibility of checking for NOTAM’s and any other airspace requirements.

## GLANA

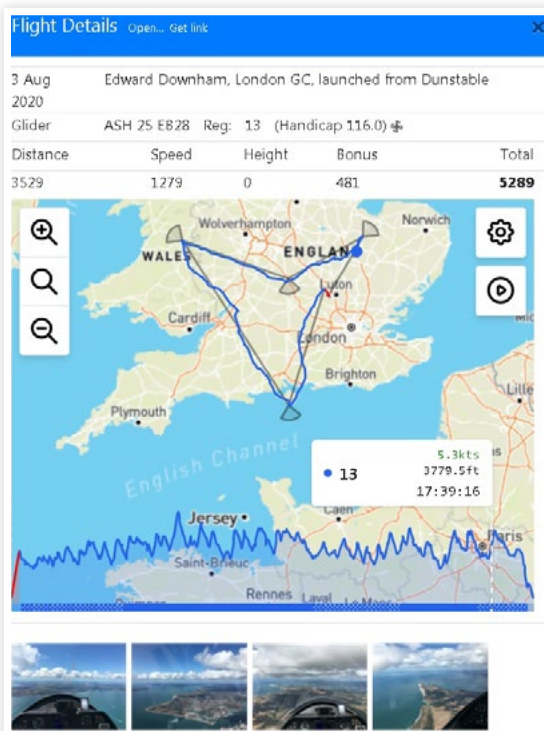
Finally, the ladder has had an update this winter. Thanks to excellent work by Hugo Ribeira, we have a new Flight Viewer called ‘Glana’. It supports dynamic flight replay and multiple flights on a single view. Coming soon are flight analysis stats and other goodies.

To enable Glana for yourself, log in, click on your name and then Calculator & Display Preferences. Turn on one or both off:

- Use Glana for Flight Details
- Use Glana to compare multiple flights

With the first turned on, the display of a single flight will use the Glana’s viewer.

With the second turned on, a new button, ‘Select Multiple Flights’, will appear at the top of the Daily Scores page.



A task by Ed Downham submitted to the BGA ladder.

Task Description	Details	km	Shape	Active From	Claim	Claim Reversed
100k FAI Triangle	LEZ-BIB-NOS-DUN	111.9	FAI 28%	19-Nov-20	+	+
100k Open (non-FAI triangle) task	LEZ-BUC-SAC-DUN	115.2	FAI 25/45	19-Nov-20	+	+
200k FAI Triangle	LEZ-HUS-RAM-DUN	200.9	FAI 28%	19-Nov-20	+	+
200k Open (non-FAI Triangle) Task	LEZ-OXF-OUN-DUN	204.9	Normal	19-Nov-20	+	+
300k FAI Triangle	LEZ-AND-PSE-DUN	313.4	FAI 28%	19-Nov-20	+	+
300k Open (non-FAI Triangle) Task	LEZ-NWK-ELY-DUN	318.9	FAI 25/45	19-Nov-20	+	+

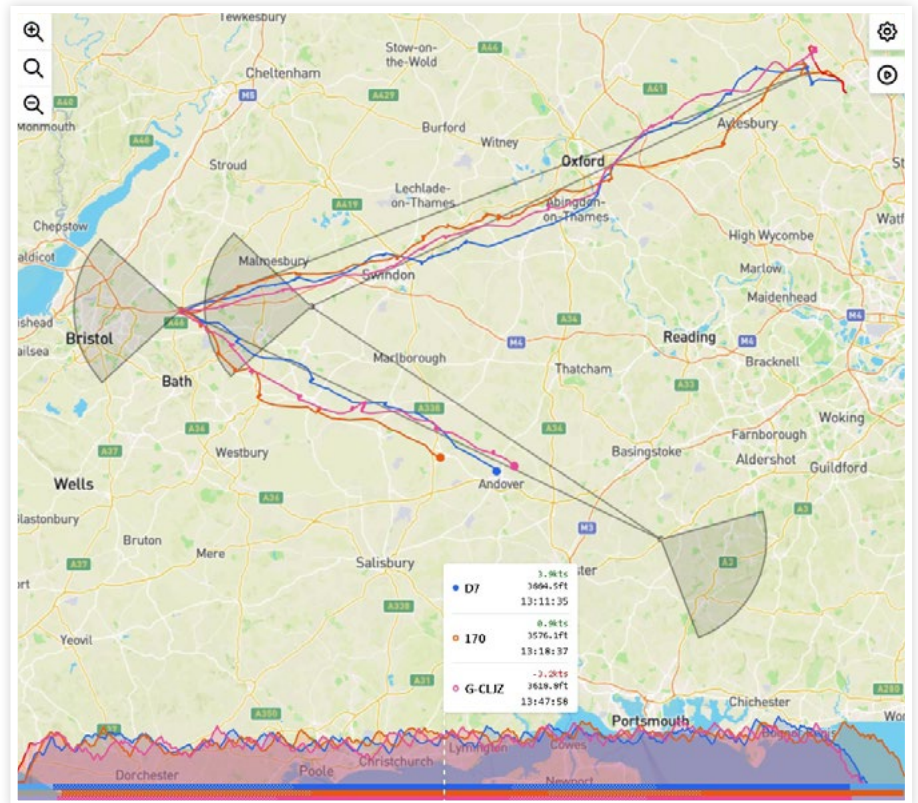
Image from the BGA ladder.

Click this and checkboxes will appear allowing you to select a collection of flights, then click 'View Flights' to display them all in Glana. 'Clear Selection' resets the flights list display. To the right are some examples of it in use.

Hugo was beta testing even more features at the time of writing, which should allow for simple flight analysis using it on the ladder. Whilst it looks like it cannot totally compete with the abilities of thorough analysis on SeeYou, you should be able to see where you pulled ahead of your peers (or vice versa) on a group task quite easily in the bar that evening!

To submit a flight, you need to create an account, but after that, you are free to upload your flights. The rules are on there, which cover everything in a lot more detail but if you need a hand, feel free to ask me whenever you see me at the airfield.

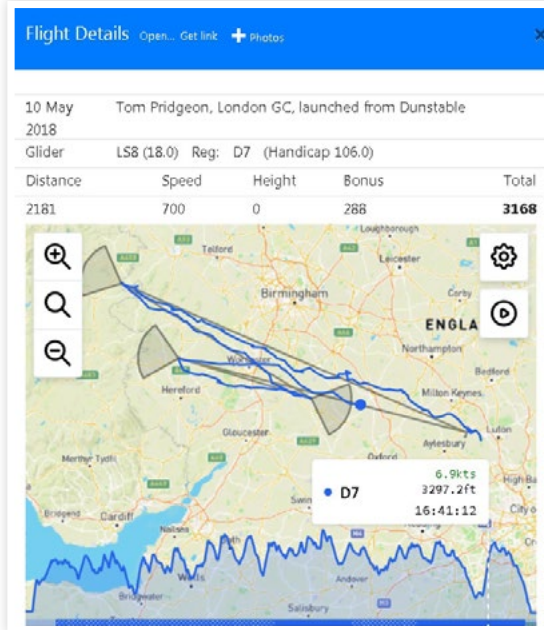
Visit the BGA Ladder at <https://www.bgaladder.net/>



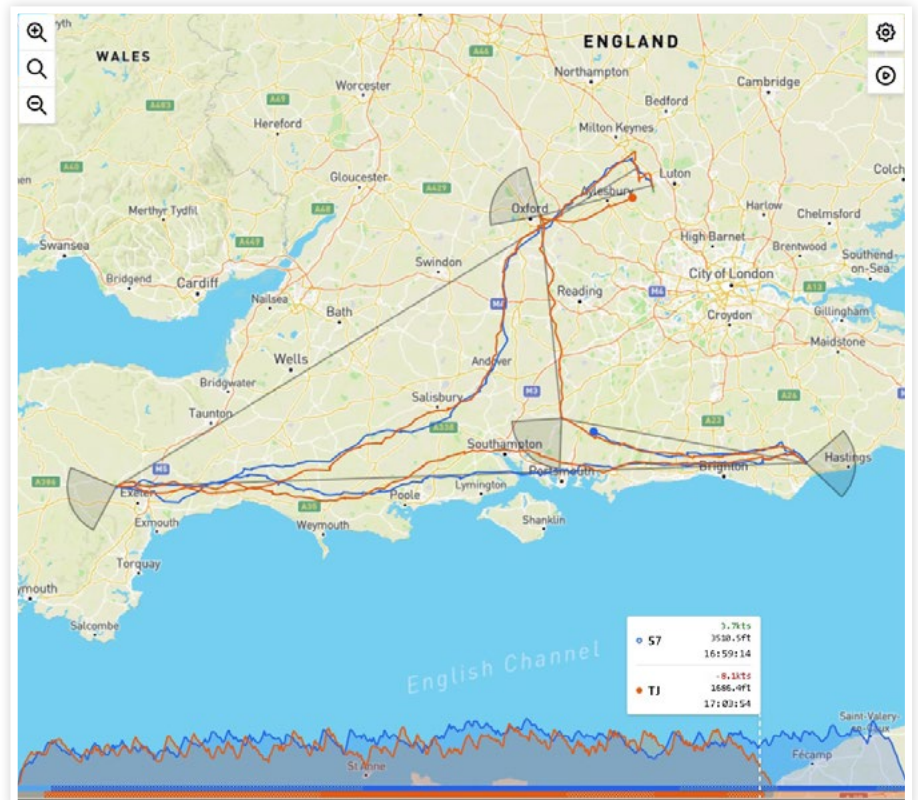
Using Glana to compare multiple flights. Above a 400k task.

57 vs TJ below

Tom Pridgeon



Glana's viewer





# OLC - ONLINE CONTEST

BY TOM PRIDGEON

If you thought that the BGA Ladder was simple to use, OLC is even easier!

Similar to the ladder, you will need an account and provided you can provide an IGC file for any flight, and you did not illegally bust any airspace, you can upload it.

OLC is a platform that glider pilots use worldwide, so it's interesting to see what happens in other countries when we fly.

Where it differs from the ladder is that it does not matter whether your flight was declared or if you turned any turnpoints. All you need to do is double-check the time you came off tow or started the task and the time you landed, and it will do the rest. Your distance is measured from the most extreme turning points in the flight and does not need a ground-based turnpoint. I also find that the distance is more accurate, so use that for my logbook as it will include diversions around airspace, bad weather etc.

'I have flown with a few pilots on Condor who have said that what they see on OLC from the UK is impressive given our small size.'

Some basic flight analysis functions are included, but that will be based on the leg information that OLC has made for you, so it may differ slightly from a declared task, but usually not by much.

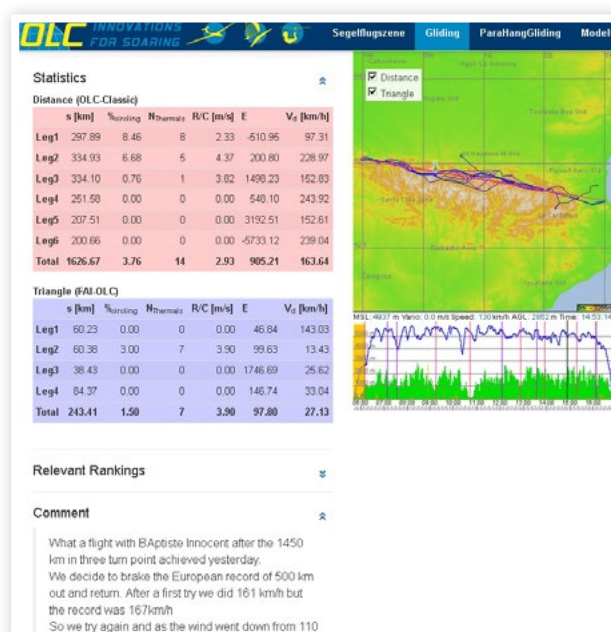
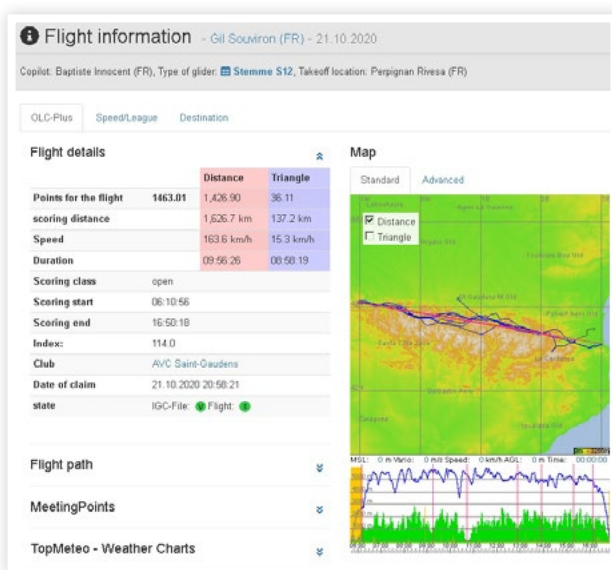
There are a small number of pilots in the UK who upload their flights to it. I have done so for the last 11 years, and there are about 11 others at LGC who have used it. Speaking to a few about how they find it, we believe it gives us an incentive to fly more meaningfully, either when abroad or when the weather makes an attempt at ladder flying more of an issue. For the more competitive amongst us, you can maximise your OLC points by flying a shape with three long legs and including a closed FAI triangle. Sometimes, after finishing

a ladder task, some of us even try to increase our OLC distance, making the extra flying more worthwhile than just landing.

In a similar way that the BGA Ladder helps to promote the club within the UK, OLC is where we can show ourselves off more internationally. I have flown with a few pilots on Condor who have said that what they see on OLC from the UK is impressive given our small size and the challenges that airspace and the weather present us.

Visit OLC at <https://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-3.0/gliding/index.html?c=C0&sc=&st=olc&rt=olc>

Tom Pridgeon



Flight details (above) and statistics (right). Photos: OLC





GALLERY

# GLIDING LIFE

CAPTURED BY THE LENSES OF OUR MEMBERS

Submit your photos at <https://bit.ly/thegridmagazine> to have them featured here.



Sierra India landing - July 2020.  
Photo by David A White



Stefan getting ready to launch - Regionals 2018.  
Photo by Rafael Schouchana



Martin prepared for some wave in Denbigh -  
September 2020. Photo by Rafael Schouchana





Above: Mark Burton in the Arcus - July 2020  
Photo by David A White



Above: Mike Biggs in Sierra India.  
Photo by David A White



LGC during the Regionals 2018.  
Photo by Rafael Schouchana



Tug fleet - Regionals 2018  
Photo by Rafael Schouchana





Photo by Paul Richer

G-MSIX

# LIVING WITH A SELF-LAUNCHER

BY PAUL RICHER

I don't know about you but landing out adds nothing to my enjoyment of gliding. I have always found it a waste of time. As a result, across the years, I had got into the habit of flying more cautiously than I perhaps needed to, setting myself tasks that were less ambitious than they might be or not pushing on when the weather was starting to look a little suspect.

In '86 and '87, I had the occasional flight in a Motor Janus that could be hired from the motor gliding club at Enstone. I used the engine to go ridge soaring at Talgarth, soaring to Nympsfield and Shobdon, landing for tea, and heading back to Enstone. It was enjoyable flying, so much so that in July '87 I arranged a demonstration flight in a DG400. The importer flew it into Dunstable. I had a couple of hours flying in it. It launched very nicely, but I didn't feel it to be a particularly nice handling glider. At the time, I was

**'M6 was the first self-launcher on-site at Dunstable. I was very conscious of the unpleasant noise the engine makes, so I got into the habit of launching away from the main launch point.'**

flying our syndicate's Mosquito (an underrated machine), and the DG400 didn't feel as good. In any case, a very experienced pilot looked at the DG400 and said to me, "Why would you buy one of those when you could have one of these?" pointing to his ASH25.

## A FEW YEARS LATER

We swapped our Mosquito for an ASW24 in '88 and then moved onto an LS8 in '96. LS8s are great machines. They handle beautifully and will climb in the merest whiff of a weak thermal. As great as the LS8 was, I hadn't lost my hankering for an engine.

In '99, my partner in the LS8, Ted Coles, agreed that we should buy a DG800B, so we came to own M6

– G-MSIX, which you will have no doubt seen around the Club. Ted agreed to buy me out of the LS8, which he would keep for himself, and we would share the DG. It was a much more sophisticated machine than the DG400, with better handling, 50:1 performance and much easier to use engine controls. The following year I flew my first 500k – down to Frome, up to Welshpool and home.

M6 was the first self-launcher on-site at Dunstable. I was very conscious of the unpleasant noise the engine makes, so I got into the habit of launching away from the main launch point. You will see on the SW run that I take off from the base of the hill keeping well out of the way of normal launch operations.



### WHAT'S IT LIKE LIVING WITH A SELF-LAUNCHER?

Firstly, the time you need to spend on maintenance is way, way, more than with a non-engined glider. There is a huge amount of additional mechanical complexity – the engine, fuel system, electrics, cooling system, propeller braking system, propeller raising and lowering mechanism and all the associated sensors and controls. Moreover, gliders are low production machines, so they have not had the development hours put into, say, the car you drive. There are bound to be issues. Don't let me frighten you off, though, because I find the effort all worthwhile. Since I first got M6, my gliding hours doubled, and cross country kilometres went way up.

On most cross-country days, I take off as the first few gliders are being launched from the grid. There are no gliders in front of me, so I just go when I want to; a great advantage of having a self-launcher. Unlike the grid launched gliders, I don't hang around locally. I launch to about 3500ft into the start zone, lose a few hundred feet whilst idling the engine to cool it down, pop the prop away and then set off on my task. The launch burns 2 or 3 litres of fuel, climbing at 800ft/min without water ballast

(the tank holds 22 litres). I am surprised that more grid launched gliders don't do the same as me, have a high launch and then just set off on the task, particularly those stuck at the back of the grid.

With the engine away, M6 is just a pure glider. Despite carrying an engine, prop and fuel, it actually has a low wing loading, so it goes much better with water on board. However, as anyone who flies a glider with an engine will tell you, the big difference is that you cannot afford to get too low before making the decision to abandon soaring and start-up. M6 has a big prop, and with that up and the engine not running, the glide angle is probably in the low 20s, so an early decision needs to be made about whether to start the engine before you get too low.

### HOW LOW IS TOO LOW?

I reckon on 1200ft, but I will go lower if there is an airfield underneath me or higher if I am over tricky terrain. I always expect the engine not to start, so I pick a field to land in, put the wheel down, and attempt to start the engine. It's only let me down once, and I had to land at Thame. After the engine cooled down, it started, and I was away. It's sure to let me down again one day, and I

don't want to be caught out without a landable field beneath me.

### FLYING LONG OUT AND RETURNS

I enjoy flying longer distances and visiting places I have not seen before, so I quite like flying long out and returns. You can be a long way from home, so this is perfect for a glider with an engine and a large fuel tank. In practice, I have found that if you can get there, undoubtedly the weather is good enough to get you most of the way, if not all the way back, so maybe trying out and returns in a pure glider is not such a bad thing to do. I have been down to deepest Devon, where it's rather nice to see North and South coasts. I have been up to Yorkshire, where you get the chance to use your Northern England map.

You could perfectly happily fly most of my flights in a pure glider, but I can think of a few standout flights where I needed an engine. A few years ago, there was a Dunstable Regional in progress, but Dunstable was under an 8/8ths layer of cloud, so launching could not occur. I could see that the cloud cover edge was not too far away to the west and confirmed its position, looking at a satellite image. I set myself a task with a remote start at Bicester, down to

Photo by David White



Approaching the Norfolk coast



the Isle of Wight, up to Hus Bos and home. No one else soared out of Dunstable that day.

7th July this year, no one else was flying out of Dunstable. I had not flown for a couple of weeks, and there didn't seem to be any decent weather in prospect. There were strong SW wind and lots of clouds. I thought a small task might be possible, so I declared Chinnor and Oxford South. I got down to Chinnor at an average speed of 42kph, the leg to Oxford was 22kph and then back to Dunstable at 95kph with the wind behind me. I would not have flown that task without an engine.

Then on 29th July, realising that I hadn't flown up to Yorkshire for a

few years, I set an out and return to Pickering. It wasn't the best direction to go in. As so often, the thermals weren't playing ball around the Saltby area, so I didn't reach the Humber until about 13:50 with another 60km to Pickering and then 260km to get home. The high cover was coming in, and I would have undoubtedly turned back with no engine or just a meagre turbo but, what the hell. I liked the idea of visiting Pickering, so I got there at about 14:45 after a bit of a struggle and got 85km back before starting the engine over a gliding club at Kirton in Lindsey, North of Scampton. Three climbs to 7000 feet or so got me home. I flew 345km out of my 525km and visited places I

had not seen for a few years. The only other cross-country that day was Ed in 13, who sensibly headed in the opposite direction to me.

I hope I have given you a flavour of what it is like to operate and fly a self-launcher. I don't get any of the thrills of taking a pure glider around a task, but I don't care because I am enjoying myself plenty. As for the very experienced pilot who suggested I buy an ASH25 like his, he ended up buying into a self-launcher.

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**Paul Richer**

---

**Paul preparing to land M6.**

*Photo by David White*





## COMPETITION

## DUNSTABLE REGIONALS 2021



Photo by Tony Hutchings.

**H**eld at the end of August, when most of the fields have been cut, The Dunstable Regionals is a great competition for pilots of all levels. Here are just some of the reasons why we think you should come and join us

- We are a friendly club with a reputation for running a challenging but fun competition with the majority of competitors, club members and visitors alike returning year after year.
- We have a well run professional restaurant, serving breakfast, lunch and evening meals.
- Affordable Club Bar open every evening.
- Entries will be split into two classes to accommodate all classes of gliders.
- Plenty of space on site for caravans and tents with good showers available in the clubhouse.
- Great location on the beautiful Dunstable Downs with plenty of nice walking options for family and crews as well as access to cinemas, shopping and other activities in Aylesbury or Milton Keynes.
- If you are short of crew, pilots run a WhatsApp retrieve group that has worked very well over the last few years.
- Pundits and novices are all welcome and we plan to encourage a mentoring scheme within the competition.

Lastly if you have any questions please contact me though the Competition Secretary, [Veronique@londonglidingclub.co.uk](mailto:Veronique@londonglidingclub.co.uk)

See you on the grid!

---

**Mark Newland-Smith**  
Competition Director

**WHEN**

21<sup>st</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**HOW TO ENTER**

Entry fee: **£180** (Juniors £90)  
Deposit: £50 due 19<sup>th</sup> April.  
Balance: due 19<sup>th</sup> July.

**ENTRY FORM AND MORE INFO**

<https://www.londonglidingclub.co.uk/dunstable-regionals-2021>



## RED KITES

# MUSINGS IN LOCKDOWN

BY MARK NEWLAND-SMITH

**D**espite lockdown and miserable weather over the Christmas period, it doesn't take much to bring a frustrated pilot's mind back to gliding. One of the presents I received was a book called *Birdsong*, not the novel by Sebastian Faulks, which I highly recommend to anyone who has not read it, but a collection of poems about birds.

One of the poems, by John Lloyd, entitled *Thoughts Of Boyhood*, starts with the following two verses:

*Well I remember in my boyish hours*

*Gazing with rapture on  
the fantailed kite*

*As hovering full o'er  
Breknock's ivied tower*

*Slowly he wheeled his solitary flight.*

*Now low, as though within  
the mirror clear*

*Of Usk's fair bosom he  
his form admired;*

*Now like the tenant of  
some loftier sphere,*

*A speck amid the far-  
off clouds retired.*

Coincidentally, Usk is the location of a small but lovely gliding club to the East of Abergavenny where I flew a task week many years ago, although I doubt that there

**'Red Kites were originally valued and protected, as their scavenging kept the streets clear of carrion and rotting food.'**

would have been much chance of seeing a kite at that time. I knew that kites were reintroduced fairly recently but did not know much about their previous demise, so I did a bit of research. According to Wikipedia, Red Kites were originally valued and protected, as their scavenging kept the streets clear of carrion and rotting food, but by Tudor times, they were apparently seen as vermin and by the 20th Century reduced to a few pairs in South Wales.

I grew up on the opposite side of the country and did not see a kite until I started gliding from Dunstable. I moved to the Club in 1989, which coincidentally was

the year that their reintroduction to the Chilterns started. Initially, one might see a kite once or twice a year, rare enough that it was always a remarkable event that added something to the flight. Nowadays, the reintroduction has been so successful that it is more

remarkable not to encounter one on a flight of any length. But, despite their ubiquity, I never tire of sharing thermals with these masters of the air and have on a number of occasions been giving a helping hand but one.

I remember a flight from a few years ago. I was returning home from the west and was fairly close to Dunstable, with almost, but not quite enough height to be sure of getting back. The path ahead was overcast, and so I turned south to a sunnier area, but it was late in the day and I didn't have much faith that I would find lift. As I was running along the sunny edge, I spotted a kite heading in the



same direction. I was out of ideas and so just followed the kite (it's surprising how fast they fly). Just as we were getting down to about field picking height, well I was, the kite was probably still quite comfortable, the bird pulled into a thermal, and together we climbed high enough for me to get home.

More recently, during the 2019 Dunstable Regionals, on Day 6, we flew a 150k task out to the south of Oxford. Just past Abingdon, I made a poor decision and pressed on under a big area of spread-out using the "there must be something there" principle, which, as principles go, is a fairly poor one. As I tried to cross the gap to sunshine, I got lower and lower and was on the point of landing at Abingdon when I found a small climb, but it fizzled out at about 1,500. I pressed on, deciding that I would forget the engine and if all else failed, I would land in one of the reasonable fields ahead.

As I got lower, with no sign of lift, I selected a field for a straight-in approach and had just put the wheel down when I noticed a kite on my right wing. Just then, it banked to the right, and I decided I had enough height to join for one circle, at the end of which I had enough to try another and so on until we reached about 1,500 where again the lift fell apart.

The kite immediately straightened up and pressed on into wind (which was back toward my field). I had no better idea than to follow. We flew together for a few minutes and were almost back down to the height we had started when we joined another kite, perhaps its mate, marking a climb that took all 3 of us slowly to about 2,000ft. At that point, the thermal died, and they were heading off, but not before helping me to a height from which I could reach the sunshine and a 4kt climb to over 4,000'.

The rest of the flight continued without drama, but it would have been a very different story without those kites.

Interestingly, one often encounters kites high in thermals, even at cloud base. Given that they are scavengers and can surely see enough feeding opportunities from lower down, why do they go that high? Perhaps like us, they just do it for fun, or do they only do it when there is a glider in the thermal? Is it perhaps out of concern for the big ungainly white birds that they continue to mark the lift to ensure that we are able to continue safely on our way? I like to think so.

---

**Mark Newland-Smith**

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**Red kite** - Photo by Seaq68 (Pixabay)



G-FLKS

# THE CONTINUING STORY OF THE TRAVELS OF KS

BY STEVE LYNN



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And on to lunch at Sywell.  
*Photos by Steve Lynn*



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Turning onto base leg at Deenethorpe,  
Corby behind.  
*Photos by Steve Lynn*





---

A trip to Deenethorpe's 1200m runway.  
*Photos by Steve Lynn*



---

KS in good company at Sywell .  
*Photo by Steve Lynn*



FAREWELL

# THANK YOU, TREVOR

BY ANDREW SAMPSON

In late December, Trevor informed us of his decision to stand down.

We all recognise the enormous contribution he has made over the last nine years, and I have sent him our sincerest thanks for all he has done. Trevor (and his cuisine) has become integral to the Club, and he will be difficult to replace.



Clockwise: (1) Trevor Mills and Karen hoping they can finish their giant cheeseburgers. (2) Trevor expressing his pride for his creation. (3) The infamous half-chicken. (4) Caption, anyone? (5) Sausage roll delight.

*Photos by Trevor Mills*



Photo by Jenny Hill, Unsplash



HEALTH

# LET'S RUN

BY RAFAEL SCHOUCHANA

If something changed in my lifestyle during lockdowns 2 and 3, it was getting back to eating a more balanced diet and exercising again. In the past few months, I started alternating between walking 10-15k steps a day and running 6-ish km.

Considering our sport involves sitting in the cockpit for hours, I thought it would be a good idea to launch a new club challenge: the LGC 6km run challenge. If the uptake is high, I might even come up with a trophy at the end of the year.

Exercising outdoors made my physical and mental health

improve a lot, so why not encourage my fellow LGC members to join the movement?

For reference, running two laps around the airfield is roughly 6km.

So, join us at <https://www.strava.com/clubs/londonglidingclub> and start tracking your activity.

**Rafael Schouchana**

*\* this challenge is not officially endorsed or organised by the club, but my initiative to encourage an active lifestyle.*

**Last Week's Leaders**

Distance	Total Running Time	Climbing
Peter Brown 54.3 km	Peter Brown 5:16:08	Peter Brown 212 m
Peter Farnimond 15.4 km	Peter Farnimond 1:30:47	Peter Farnimond 121 m
Rafael Schouchana 11.0 km	Rafael Schouchana 1:06:37	Sebastian Routledge 68 m

**This Week's Leaderboard**

Rank	Athlete	Distance	Runs	Longest	Avg. Pace	Elev. Gain
1	Peter Brown	12.1 km	2	6.1 km	5:21 km	114 m
2	Carla Astley	9.4 km	2	6.1 km	5:39 km	51 m
3	Oscar Butlin	6.6 km	1	6.6 km	4:33 km	44 m
4	Rafael Schouchana	6.3 km	1	6.3 km	5:58 km	15 m
5	Miles Porteous	5.0 km	1	5.0 km	5:08 km	37 m
6	Stefan Astley	3.2 km	1	3.2 km	5:50 km	18 m

The leaderboard as of 2/3/2021

## HISTORY CORNER

# EXTRACTS FROM THE SAIL-PLANE MAGAZINE 1935

The Sailplane was the forerunner to the modern Sailplane & Gliding. As in the modern magazine, there was a large section devoted to news from the clubs. Bound editions were kept at the club, and these extracts are from 1935.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 20TH

Gentle N.E. wind. Two machines spent the day ground-hopping, one of which was later transferred to the top to get some "A's" and a "B". These were obtained in no uncertain style. The first pilot hurtled the machine over the edge of the hill at a height of about two feet and proceeded to make a direct attack upon the ground; relenting, he (or she) pulled the machine up into a 1 in 5 climb, stalled on the top and, in another access of rage, again made a furious attack upon the ground, only to relent again and, pulling the machine out at a height of not more than 10 feet, proceeded to make the normal landing required by the "A" certificate conditions.

The next pilot also did a very decorative fight, curvetting gracefully hither and thither in a series of dives, stalls and incipient spins. Again a normal landing drew a sigh of relief from the frightened band of spectators on the hill-top.

After this, two more certificates were obtained, the flights being positively spectacular in their steadiness.

The pilots who obtained "A's" were Miss Evans and Messrs. McLellan

and Fox, while Paget obtained a "B", and we mercifully leave the reader to guess which was which.

## DANCE

The first club dance to be held during the five years' existence of the club has been fixed (provided enough entries are promised) for Saturday 23rd, at the De Vere Hotel, Kensington, from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

## SUNDAY MARCH 24TH

The day's flying commenced at 1.50 a.m., when the full moon had broken through into a clear sky after yesterday's rain. The FALCON was man-handled up the hill and Nicholson pushed off into the moonlight, getting up to what looked like 300 feet, but he couldn't read the aneroid. The air was smooth except for a mild bump or two when clouds got across the moon. (it was the moon that was above the clouds; not Nicholson, as stated in the Press.) Finally, when we had been up about 40 minutes, a large sheet of high cloud from the N.W. (ground wind W.S.W.), and visibility became so bad that he signalled by flash-lamp and car headlights were turned on for him to land, which he did at 2.30 a.m.

## SUNDAY, MAY 5TH

A slight westerly drift towards the hill. The FALCON, PRÜFLING, and two DAGLINGS spent the day gliding down off the top, all without emotion except in one case. The exception was one flight of the open DAGLING. Failing to get much height at the launch,

it did a stalled right turn to avoid hitting the public, then an incipient left spin because the pilot forgot to straighten his rudder, another stalled right turn to avoid sitting down the collection of cars at the bottom - all without damage either to itself, the public, the hill, the hedge, the winch, the cars, or the pilot. Flying then proceeded as before.

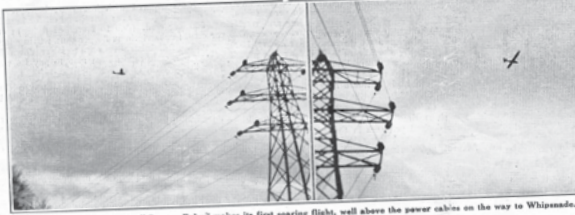
## SUNDAY, MAY 26TH

In a north-easterly wind no soaring was possible, and the winch was used instead. By means of it the RHÖNBUSSARD and GRUNAU BABY went up several times with various pilots, and Collins took the KASSEL two-seater up with a series of passengers. On one of these launches the cable broke at the bottom end and the KASSEL toured round with some 200 feet of wire hanging below; in spite of the release hook being open, the ring refused to fall off because the wire trailed along behind instead of hanging down vertically. There was a bright flash as it (the wire) touched the high tension cables but apparently none of the electricity thought of going up it to see what there was at the top. On the next flight the wire broke again at the point where the flash had previously taken place; this time Collins came down in a series of the tightest turns we have ever seen; evidently the autogiro is not the only type of aircraft that could be landed safely on a tennis court.

---

Andrew Sampson





The London Club's "Green Baby" makes its first soaring flight, well above the power cables on the way to Whipsnade.

London Gliding Club

Saturday, December 29th.—The hill-hauling which was got ready before lunch. With a west wind of force 5 (Borealis) ...

Sunday, December 30th.—The Desautel GRENAD BAR, finished by Slingby, was given its aerial baptism in the form of two ...

In no uncertain style. The first pilot hurried the machine over the edge of the hill at a height of about two feet and proceeded ...

The next pilot soared at a very decorative flight, curving gracefully hither and thither in a series of dips, stalls and ...

London Gliding Club

Sunday, March 24th.—The day's flying commenced at 1.50 pm, when the full moon had broken through into a clear sky ...

GREENAD BAR was first off, with Collins, who took it up and looped it. This is the first time a club machine has been looped ...

The moonlight DINGLING had a red-letter day, earning no less than six "C"s for its pilots. As the PAYLSON was responsible ...

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London Gliding Club

Sunday, May 5th.—A slight westerly drift towards the hill down the top, all without emotion except in one case. The moonlight at the launch, it did a stalled right turn to avoid ...

Monday, May 6th.—A faint wind from N.E. Brilliant, about very hot. The day started with primary instruction, then, about ...

The ground-lopers must have started early, since 14 pupils had a total of 100 hops before the rain got really too heavy ...

At ten minutes a dark "W" came over, consisting of low, heavy, cloud into which ragged bits were ascending. The moonlight ...

Ulster Gliding Club

April 28th.—SCUD II, pilot, the GREENAD BAR, when she was looped ...

London Gliding Club

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# SECRET DIARY OF AD NAUSEAM, AGE 47<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>

*(apologies to the late Sue Townsend)*

## Chapter 1(b)

I was chatting with my old mate Ab Initio over the Christmas break (2m apart of course) and how we hoped to be flying again soon. Fings got all reminissent and we got talking about them old days. He reminded me of his first ever flight...

Ohmygod! Just look at the instructor. Handsome. Close cropped sliver hair. Suntan. Those Roy-Bon sunglasses. Straight back. Confident smile. I know it, he's a jetfighter pilot on his day off. Ohmygod it's my turn. Stay calm. Don't let them see you shake. Ohmygod! Parachute.

Pull the red handle. No not now. Canopy down. Ohmygod! I wanna get out. He has control. I should bloody well hope so! Ohmygod! The cable's moving! Ohmygod!

Oh shiiiiii.....t

Oooh!

Oooh!

Oh wow!

Wow!

Oh wow!

....

Why didn't I do this years ago! Just see that view. Ohmygod we're leaning over. How thick is this glass fibre, I'm going to fall through the seat. Ohmygod! Can I have a go? Do we have to go down now? Can't we stay up longer? Ohmygod we're pointing down. We're going to hit the ground. Ohmygod! Oh. That was easy. Piece of cake really, anyone can do it. What was that you were saying about membership?

*To be continued...*

---

Ad Nauseam



---

Santa visited the club in December  
*Photo by Andrew Sampson*



# London Gliding Club Officials

## **President**

Carr Withall

## **Treasurer**

Mark Burton

## **Projects & Buildings**

Peter Brown

## **Bar & Catering**

Mike Barrowman

## **Welfare Officer**

Rupert Puritz

## **Deputy Welfare Officer**

Andrew Brown

## **New Members**

Rafael Schouchana

## **Social**

Gaye Flexen

## **Marketing**

Andy Zuchora

## **S&G Reports**

Tom Pridgeon

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Andrew Sampson

## **Vice Chairmain**

Alex Hippel

## **CFI & BGA/Airspace**

Andy Roch

## **Deputy CFIs**

Ryan Berry

Stefan Astley

Martin Smith

## **LGC Secretary**

Mark Peters

## **Flying Safety Officer & Cadet Co-ordinator**

Mark Newland-Smith

## **Chief Tug Pilot**

Dan Chilcot

## **Winch Master**

Hans Schuricht

## **Inter-Club League Captain**

Stefan Astley

## **Office & London Sailplanes**

### **Manager**

Andy Roch

andy@londonglidingclub.co.uk

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tel: 01582 663419 · fax: 01582 665744

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## **Newsletter**

### **Editor**

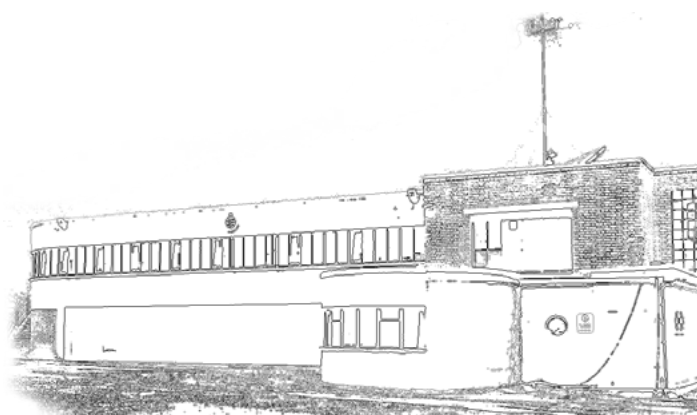
Rafael Schouchana



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ALGEK PRINT

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Whether you are a student considering a career in aviation, newly retired and looking for something new to inspire you, or just seeking a new outlet for your adventurous spirit, learning to pilot a glider at LGC can be the first step to fulfilling your dreams.

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