

# THE GRID

London Gliding Club Magazine / MAY-JUN 2020



## Escaping to Virtual Reality

*Club activities during the pandemic*



THE VIRTUAL LGC EASTER COMPETITION

LADS ON TOUR - DENBIZZLE EDITION

SOARING THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

THE G-MLSY BUILD STORY

AND MUCH MORE

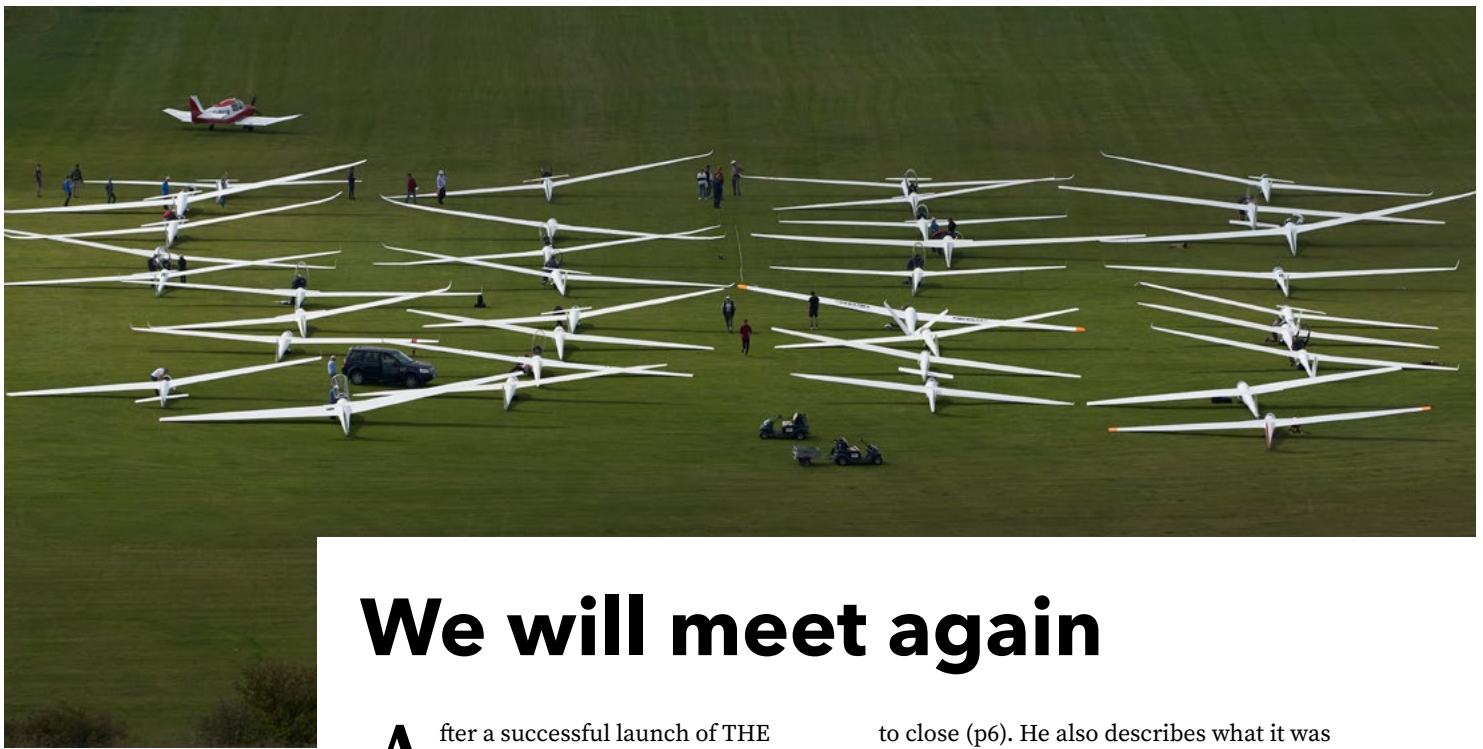


LONDON GLIDING CLUB



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LGC airfield from above.  
*Photo by David A White*



Keeping hopes high for the 2020 Regionals. Photo by Tony Hutchings.

# We will meet again

**A**fter a successful launch of THE GRID, and hoping for an incredible flying year, we found ourselves grounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I had just achieved my XC endorsement in December, had purchased the Full Monty (still unused!), and was ready to start venturing outside gliding range, aiming for my Silver distance and even conversion to HBB. Looking back, I'm quite happy that I had a pleasant flight in early March, when, for the first time, I was climbing higher and faster than others.

Some of you were fortunate enough to have had the chance to fit in an expedition or a nice XC flight before we had to stop flying.

We all appreciate that the decision to suspend operations is not an easy one as it has a significant impact on staff and members. And on top of that, after a wet and windy winter, the weather in April was exceptional.

That said, the LGC community did not stop. Many members had the initiative to organise virtual events, from lectures to competitions, and for that, we are thankful.

## THE LOCKDOWN ISSUE

This issue of THE GRID brings you a mix of experiences from expedition memories to lockdown stories, including exploring the outdoors and spending hours in the gliding simulator, Condor.

Our Chairman, Andrew Sampson, talks through the coronavirus situation (which may have changed by the time of publication) and remembers the last time the club had

to close (p6). He also describes what it was like learning to fly in the 1930s (p36).

Carol Marriot shares her flying experience in the Canadian Rockies of Invermere during the summer of 2019 (p8).

The lucky lads went on tour to Denbigh just before the lockdown, with Justin Craig, Liam Bennett and Stefan Astley (who got his gold height) describing their incredible flights (p12).

David A White, who should have been in Shobdon, revives stunning photos of Cerdanya 2019 (p22).

With all the online activities, Tom Pridgeon reports on the successful virtual Easter Competition (p24), John Smith shares his experience of flying in Condor (p27), and Martin Hayden celebrates the Wonder Wednesdays via Zoom (p35).

Mark Newland-Smith talks about his life in lockdown and clarifies the rules of flying the ridge safely (p28).

On the powered side, Steve Lynn is back with new KS travel stories (p10), and Trevor Mills tells everything about building G-MLSY (p30).

And since our club does not lack curiosities, David Lord finds a macabre clutching hand (p34).

Thank you all for contributing to this issue, and I hope you enjoy it.

We will meet again!

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Rafael Schouchana - Editor

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## Cover photograph

Your dear editor flying a Ventus 3 in one of the Virtual LGC Easter Competition tasks.

# CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Welcome to new club members

- › Angel Daimay
- › Ben Boshier
- › Geoff Boswell
- › George Durrant
- › Joseph Burtonshaw
- › Marco Zanchi



## Free bottle of champagne

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

Nigel Perren

## Events

Date	Event
Cancelled	Soaring Course
Cancelled	FI(S) Seminar
Postponed	LGC Annual General Meeting
Suspended	Enterprise Week
Suspended	Inter-Club League
Suspended	Racing Week
Suspended	Air-League Course

Full calendar:

<http://www.londonglidingclub.co.uk/googlecalendar.xml>

## New roster plan

The usual weekend roster is suspended while the club implements the Corona Contingency Plan.

To volunteer for one of the roles, log in to:

<https://www.e-allocator.com/>

## Online courses and talks

Stay tuned as Bronze Training and Wonder Wednesday sessions are being carried out online. Instructions and dates are communicated via e-mail.

Most sessions are done via a software called Zoom.

Download it at <https://zoom.us/>

## Annual General Meeting

Due to the pandemic, the AGM, which may not be held online, will be rescheduled. The new date will be announced as soon as there is more clarity on how to conduct it while keeping all participants safe.

## Next deadline

Submit your story to THE GRID by

**21st June 2020**

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

# SAMPSON'S SCRIPT

BY ANDREW SAMPSON

It seems an age since I wrote in the last edition that the soaring season had started and we were all looking forward to going cross-country again. It's remarkable how quickly things can change, and at the time of writing, we have been in 'lockdown' for a month. Of course, it's extremely frustrating to see beautiful soaring conditions and yet to be unable to take to the sky and escape it all. But that's simply not possible, and like everyone else, we must do our part by complying with the government and PHE guidance and by supporting all those people in the NHS and other public services who are working so hard to get us through this dreadful situation. Hopefully, it won't be too long before we can return, but at present, I can't make any promises as to when that might be.

## CORONA CONTINGENCY PLAN

Your committee met 'virtually' on 16th March and again on 23rd March, and reviewed a 'Coronavirus Contingency Plan', making many difficult decisions concerning our operations. These were overtaken by the government 'lockdown' arrangements. Our next meeting is due later in April, and we will keep you up to date with progress via email and the minutes which are available via the website.

Obviously, our income from flying operations, whether for members or trial lessons and courses, has stopped altogether, and as a result, we have had to take drastic action to control costs wherever possible. Our direct or 'variable' costs, such as the use of aviation fuel, have stopped in line with the lack of activity, but we have had to put in place measures to cut our overheads.

We have taken advantage of the government facilities to help small businesses. As a result, our staff are 'furloughed' and their jobs protected, and our self-employed

contractors will benefit from the government scheme. We are hoping the arrangements for rates relief and grants for small businesses will apply to us. Our aircraft still require insurance but are grounded, and the extent to which we can benefit from this financially is yet to be resolved. Other insurances remain in place, covering us for risks such as fire and theft. Overheads such as heating, electricity, even postage, continue at a much-reduced level.

## 'It's remarkable how quickly things can change, and at the time of writing, we have been in 'lockdown' for a month'

Several times in the past, often at the 'Forum', members have questioned our financial structure in general, and in particular our policy in respect of the level of reserves. The reserves are built up in 'good' years and are there partly to act as a safety buffer in the event of difficult times like these, not that we could have predicted this disaster.

Even with these actions in place, with no income at all during the 'lockdown', inevitably our reserves will be eroded. It is too early to tell just how serious this will be, but the Treasurer and I can reassure you that, in terms of finance, the club is in no immediate danger.

The BGA has been proactive in supporting clubs with advice and guidance, and I have participated in conference calls with other club Chairmen (and women) as well as a survey of clubs addressing various issues such as finance, member communications, and site security. Some clubs are much worse off than us, and there are support arrangements available from the BGA and organisations such as the Philip Wills Trust. At present, we do not need to call upon these facilities, but there is some comfort

from knowing they are in place.

## LOCKDOWN ACTIVITIES

Meanwhile, there have been several initiatives to help us stay in touch with fellow members. Apart from broadcast emails, the members' Facebook page, and this magazine, there has been a lot of activity using video conferencing. There have already been two "Wonder Wednesday" events (wonder when we're going to be flying again), thanks

to the efforts of Chula Rupasinha and Martin Hayden, who hosted the events on 'Zoom'. The first was a repeat of the 'History of the Club', presented by myself, Carr Withall and Paul Candler. This was followed by a session on 'RT for Glider pilots' given by Chula, and at the time of writing Paul will be leading a session on airspace files. The events have been very well attended, and there are several more in the pipeline.

The Easter Competition was a great success, blessed with superb weather in the Slovenian Alps. We used the 'Condor' simulator and 'Discord' for the RT. Our thanks go to 'director' Tom Pridgeon for organising the 4-day event. There were over 100 competitors, many of whom were 'hors concours' pilots from other clubs in the UK or overseas. On each day we flew in a different class. Congratulations to winner Stefan Astley and runner-up Ed Johnston. I ended up rather a long way down the field, my excuse is that it was my first time using the Condor simulator, with a rather unpredictable old gaming joystick, and I had a tendency to crash or land out, or both. On the last day, after losing a wing at 20,000ft in wave (I was distracted with the stick in one

hand and a cup of tea in the other), I was told about the 'Q' button - this is known as the 'miracle' button and instantly restored the glider for the price of 200 points! I'm determined to get one of these fitted in my own glider.

We managed to meet up in the club 'Zoom' bar afterwards to swap stories, each of us sitting at our own homes in the evening sun, almost as if we were at the club together. Before the pandemic, I had hardly ever used video conferencing, but now I am completely converted. The technology has advanced considerably, and I have been surprised and impressed at how easy it is to set up and use. Of course, it is not a substitute for the 'real thing' of personal social interaction, but it is a fairly good alternative. I've been using it to stay in touch with family and friends and can assure you it works, and it's free of charge.

Other activities that help to keep the spirit of the club alive include informal groups such as Daniel's Friday flying group, or Rupert's Tuesday Gang. I know there are several other groups in place, in touch frequently, or occasionally, by email, phone, Facebook or other media. These all help to reinforce a sense of belonging and can help us face up to this difficult situation, especially for those members who are doing so alone.

### **'As far as I know, this is the first time that the club has had to cease all flying activities for any significant period since the second world war.'**

Some of us suddenly find ourselves with more time on our hands. I'm more or less on top of the list of domestic and gardening chores, and apart from spending time grappling with Condor, I've been looking through some of the club archive material. In the last few months, several items have come to me for safe-keeping, and the



**D-Day chart drawing**  
*Photo from the archive*

contents are truly fascinating to anyone with interest in history. There is enough material for us to have a regular 'history corner' in this magazine.

#### **WORLD WAR II**

As far as I know, this is the first time that the club has had to cease all flying activities for any significant period since the second world war. The foot and mouth disease curtailed cross-country activity, but at least we could stay current with local flying.

During the 1930s and '40s, LGC pilots each had a personal section in the club logbooks. The earliest

entry is from D Morland who records "First Ab Initio flights in Zogling at Ivinghoe" in May 1930, and he achieved his "A" certificate there on 28th July, a flight of 36 seconds! The first reference to flying at Dunstable is from 15th September, when J M Symmons achieved his "A" certificate with 32 seconds, also in the Zogling.

These club records confirm the last few flights were in April 1940. W E Wilkins writes on 14th April: RhönBussard, 15mins, W, Hill soaring and thermals to 1100ft. 1st soaring flight in Bussard, Oh Boy!! Then "24th May 1940 Joined the RAF." Subsequently, the site was requisitioned as a prisoner of war camp. Dunstable pilots dispersed and were represented in all three services, and they made up the bulk of the training staff of the Glider Pilot Regiment. Flying eventually resumed in 1946. Obviously, we hope our wait won't be quite so long!

So now we have to sit and wait. I know many members are working at home, and some are busier than ever. Others are furloughed. Some are with family and loved ones, and others are on their own. We have some in the NHS, or other public services, and we are grateful for the part they are playing in the fight against the virus. Whatever your situation, I wish you well, and I really hope it will not be too long before we can meet again at our airfield and enjoy our wonderful sport once more.

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**Andrew Sampson**

INVERMERE / CANADA

# SOARING THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

BY CAROL MARRIOT

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No outlanding possibilities here!  
*Photos by Carol Marriot*

**D**uring a holiday to Canada last summer, Chris and I arranged a visit to the Invermere Soaring Centre, nestled in the heart of a valley of the Rockies. The morning produced classic-looking cumulus in excess of 5,000 feet, and if we had been at Dunstable, the entire fleet would be in the air, but nothing was airborne at Invermere because the clouds were still below the mountaintop heights.

So we did what glider pilots worldwide do and just sat around chatting while waiting for the weather to improve. After being regaled with tales of rattlesnakes found in gliders, a Duo Discus with the memorable registration '007' ('C-FDUO') was rolled out of a small hangar and towed to the nearby end of the single runway.

The gliding club owns two gliders (both Schweizers, a two-seater and a single-seater) and has use of the Duo. Our pilot was Trevor Florence, who is well-known in

**'Field landings are not an option, because there are no fields!'**

Canadian gliding circles and is also acquainted with the pilots of Omarama in New Zealand including former LGC course instructor Mike Till. Trevor is happy to take fellow glider pilots in the Duo on various tours of the valley and beyond to glaciers, according to weather and budget.

The atmosphere at the club seems very laid back and informal. Once the cloud base was high enough (the mountains to the immediate east of the airfield reach up to above 8,000 feet, those to the west were a little further away but looked to be higher), it was pretty much a case of 'get in the glider and go!'

We did query the non-use of parachutes and were told that no-one would be jumping out



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Clubhouse, hangars and trailer rack at Invermere.



of the glider. The rock faces on either side of the valley are very steep and jagged, so an emergency landing of any kind would not be survivable, according to Trevor.

I probably don't need to write too much about the scenery as the photos here show more than words could tell. Trevor is an excellent pilot and tour guide. We each had an hour's flight, and during that time, only two other gliders launched, so the sky is uncrowded and there are no real airspace restrictions, with flights to above 20,000 feet being possible from the site.

Field landings are not an option, because there are no fields! Although the valley floor is flat, it is mostly given over to picturesque lakes and wetlands adjacent to the Columbia River. There are, however, many other airstrips in the very long Columbia valley.

Flying from Invermere is certainly very different from flying from Dunstable. It seems as if the only downsides of gliding in the Rockies are caused by weather, as the club is closed for several months over the winter, and can also be affected by smoke from forest fires in the summer.

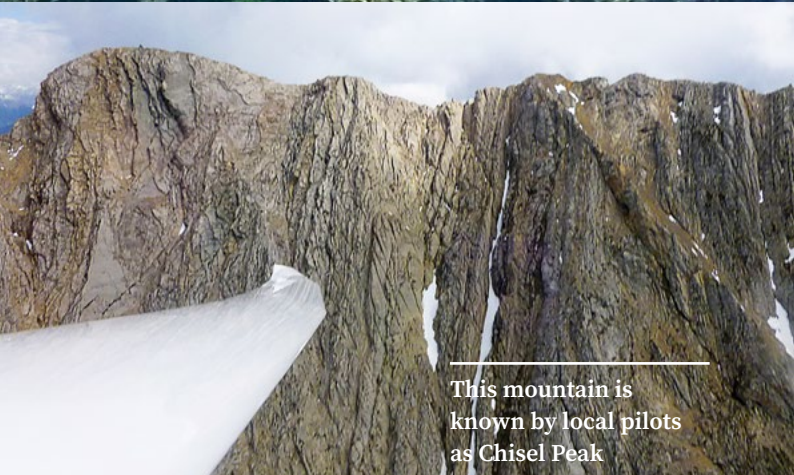
While we were able to say to the locals that our club is open 364 days a year when we were asked if flying took place on each of those days, we had to admit that the answer was 'no'. There was some amusement when we said that our club had circa three hundred members, as well as a 300ft hill; I guess we should have added that we are not all soaring the hill at the same time!

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Carol Marriot



Soaring the Rockies.



This mountain is known by local pilots as Chisel Peak



Chris in the back of the Duo, ready to launch.

G-FLKS

# THE CONTINUING STORY OF THE TRAVELS OF KS

BY STEVE LYNN

On Friday 13th March, Steve Lynn & Mike Biggs took KS to Kemble, aka Cotswold Airport. Apart from being a busy GA airfield with the excellent AV8 cafe, Kemble is notable today for its aircraft scrap/salvage operation. A few examples here.



Overhead control tower with Gnat, Hunter and AV8 cafe.  
*Photo by Mike Biggs*



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High approach, taxiway is a long way off. *Photo by Mike Biggs*

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Taxying past some scrap airliners. *Photo by Steve Lynn*

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KS amongst airliners waiting to be scrapped. *Photo by Steve Lynn*



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Return leg, above cloud. *Photo by Mike Biggs*



DENBIGH

# LADS ON TOUR DENBIZZLE EDITION

*Just before the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Justin, Stefan, Liam and Hugo enjoyed a long weekend soaring the waves of Denbigh.*

BY JUSTIN CRAIG, STEFAN ASTLEY AND LIAM BENNETT

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*Photo by Stefan Astley*

# THURSDAY - ARRIVAL

## JUSTIN

**T**hursday mid-afternoon hitching up 906 in the rain at Dunstable with the prospect of a 185-mile drive and a mediocre forecast, was less than I might have hoped. Oh well, I have a new car that I had barely driven so headed off resigning myself to a long weekend of listening to stories of how good the flying might have been.

Heading up the tedious 50mph average speed section of the M1, I was distracted by several work calls, exiting the M1 on to the more civilised M6 into improving weather and now buoyed by messages from Liam and Stefan who had arrived earlier in the day, rapidly rigged and enjoyed several hours soaring and familiarising themselves with the location. Hugo had also arrived and shoehorned himself into the back of a local Duo.

Escaping the worst of rush hour at Birmingham, I hit the M54 ...

the car is great, I'm happy with it, understand how well it tows and am delighted with the gestures of encouragement from other drivers as they are overtaken by a 30ft trailer. Past Telford, Shrewsbury and hitting Wrexham the topography is becoming more interesting, a flavour of what might be in store. The weather is stunning with a few decaying cumuli left in the sky, and I am not far away with the prospect of a cold beer to greet me.

Pulling into Lleweni Parc, I was immediately impressed with the setup. The airfield has a single East-West tarmac runway with a perimeter track around the outside. At the West end, there are several hangars, a clubhouse and a selection of wooden eco huts available to rent as a step up from tented accommodation. The eco huts look great, but at the end of February and early March, we had chosen a local Air B&B expertly researched and secured by Stefan.

Having met up with the boys, we head off to locate our accommodation. The cottage is about 15 minutes from the airfield on the other side of the town. There are just the four of us, but the cottage would comfortably sleep ten to twelve and is very well kitted out. A couple of living rooms, one with a balcony the other with a wood-burning stove, there is a large kitchen with a refectory table and a highchair!

Once settled, we headed out to get some supplies and find a pub for dinner... but not before Stefan tucked the highchair into Liam's bed!

After dinner, we spent the evening in front of a log fire comparing forecasts and agreeing that it was looking positive.

Photo by Justin Craig



## LIAM

I had initially planned to drive up to Denbigh very early Thursday to get a flying day. But looking at the forecast, I felt that it was 50/50 if it would be a good day. So I elected to be lazy and have a slight lie in.

I left the trailer at work a couple of days before to avoid having to go to Dunstable, saving roughly an extra hour on the journey. I left a rainy Wycombe and drove to the Burger King at Telford services before arriving at Denbigh just in time to watch Stefan land. I was jealous of the soaring day that he had. The weather was stunning.

We sampled a local pub that evening, and Stefan told us about how he pulled a Mini Clubman out of the mud, in the dark. He's quite keen to share that story - so next time you see him, please ask!

## STEFAN

Justin, Liam, Hugo and I had been planning an expedition trip to Denbigh for a few months, and we finally got a date in the diary of March. When it finally arrived, things looked a little bleak.

Hugo and I left Dunstable on a miserable Thursday, at around 07:00 - The intention was 06:15; however, it turns out that the 2009 Mini Clubman does not handle wet airfields well. One rescue later and a 4-hour drive stopping at Corley on the way up we arrived safely for day 1 of early-season thermals (or not so early, 4-5 knots in places!) to familiarise with the area and the airfield operations. Justin and Liam joined us in the evening, and we sussed out the cottage and found a pub - A successful Day 1!



Exploring - Denbigh Ridge.  
Below, 4kts thermals!  
Photos by Stefan Astley



After landing.  
Photo by Stefan Astley



## FRIDAY - THERMAL DAY

The grid.

Photo by Stefan Astley

### JUSTIN

Up early and after a cooked breakfast we head off for briefing by Chris Gill, the CFI. Chris provided a comprehensive safety and airfield briefing with an upbeat take on the day's weather. Aside from displaying good airmanship, there is only one rule at Lleweni Parc... stay off the grass!

The airfield has a Skylaunch winch and a Eurofox tug. Not having towed behind a Eurofox, I was a little sceptical but reassured

that it comfortably tows a two-up Duo Discus Turbo. The speed and climb rate is very impressive, and following a rather uneventful tow, we all enjoyed a couple of hours of thermal soaring.

The day was reliable with a cloud base of 3,500ft AGL which gave me the confidence to push south-west toward the Snowdonia National Park 25km from the airfield, enjoying stunning vistas of the snow-capped mountains some 20km further on.

Paying to too much attention to the view, I dug myself into a bit of a hole and found myself considering the out-landing options which were plentiful. However, careful consideration needed to be given to gradient and direction of slopes along with any local topography that would influence wind conditions on approach. Fortunately, I avoided what would have been a very muddy retrieve and was able to scuttle back to the airfield.

Denbigh sits in a valley about 1000ft lower than the ridgeline, lying roughly NNW / SSE. I was very grateful for this... the glide back felt very marginal until the final few kilometres when the ground fell away, and I was able to get re-established for more local soaring.

Once everyone was back on the ground, we played a bit of Tetris squeezing A5, X8 and 08 into the hangar before a beer on the way back to the cottage and an early night with the promise of a decent wave profile for Saturday.







Thermals, looking South.

*Photo by Stefan Astley*

## STEFAN

**D**ay 2 was much of the same with a full complement of expedition pilots.

We sampled the foot of the mountains leading into Snowdonia focused on "The Lake", as it was affectionately known on 130.105 (fortunately the largest body of water around second only to the Irish Sea), which turned out to be called Llyn Brenig and known to the RAF as Playboy Lake (because it supposedly looks like a bunny rabbit).

Cloud base was reasonably low, so an early landing for dinner and further beers.

## LIAM

**A**fter a comprehensive briefing from Chris Gill, we had a fun day exploring the area in weak thermals, before a night in the fantastic cottage that Stefan had organised.



Justin in 906.

*Photo by Stefan Astley*



Liam in 08.

*Photo by Stefan Astley*



## SATURDAY - WAVE DAY

Stefan in A5. Below, Liam landing.

*Photos by Stefan Astley*

### LIAM

On Saturday, Stefan, Justin and Hugo put on a fantastic breakfast. I also managed to turn the toaster up after only having slightly warm bread the day before. Heading down to the airfield, I was a tad sceptical; the cloud was pretty much on the deck with light drizzle and howling wind.

But sure enough, a wave gap formed, and we got launching in quite sporty conditions. I was at the back of the queue, so I was one of the last gliders to launch. Not an issue, the tugs were fairly efficient. A final tighten of my straps and I was off; it was probably the roughest aerotow I've ever had. I released at around 2,000ft, straight into 2kts which took me up to 8,700ft before dying off. The wind at altitude was pretty strong. Pointing into wind and slowing the glider down to just above stall, I managed to get a ground speed of -12kts. Wave really is magical!

It was my first flight in wave, and I'd be lying if I said I had any idea what I was actually supposed to do! I tried pushing into a higher system but didn't manage to get into it. After a couple of hours of playing about flying in formation with Stefan and Chris, who was now in 906, my toes were frozen. We each took it in turns to fly an approach, holding in the weak wave to the south of the airfield until it was clear. So I descended out of the silky smooth air into the rough rotor below.

I flew the approach at 75-80kts which is just below the yellow arc in my ASW15, and that was very quickly washed away when going through the wind gradient! The curlover from the trees to the south of the runway was also rather strong. On the ground roll, the glider had a tendency to weathercock into wind which was made worse once the tail skid was down. It didn't take long,



that despite full deflection I was slowly drawn off the edge of the runway into the soft mud, nothing broken and only a little dirt on a wingtip. A £1 in the air ambulance tin for breaking rule #1.

Justin and Hugo were there to greet me and drag me to the edge of the airfield in Denbigh's Land Rover. I'd like to say a huge thank you to Daniel Jamin who kindly loaned me his oxygen system! Also, a big well done to Stefan for his Gold Height.

Ending the day with dinner at the local Chinese, Chris had very kindly asked the restaurant to supply a high chair for me. A theme of the trip!



Minus 18.3 Degrees at 18,500ft.

Photos by Stefan Astley

## STEFAN

The epic wave day. Denbigh is perfectly positioned for regular wave in prevailing winds downwind of Snowdonia. Initially, it looked as though it might be relatively low and at risk of closing in at any moment. As the day developed, however, a very reliable lower wave system

and upper wave system to about 8,000ft and 18,000ft respectively set-up right over the site. The pictures speak for themselves!

I had been chasing gold height since Aboyne in around 2009, and thoroughly smashed it here despite a good attempt in Cerdanya in

2018. I missed it by 200ft in Aboyne and missed Diamond here by 400ft. That puts the capability of this site very much into perspective!

Oh and – The 2009 Mini Clubman confirmed its inability to handle wet airfields... two rescues... *But I don't like to mention it.*

## JUSTIN

Looking out of the window in the morning was very interesting. The cottage was surrounded by low cloud but with a noticeable wave gap in the direction of Denbigh.

We headed out to the airfield, where having had the place to ourselves on the previous day, there was now a flurry of activity with locals getting gliders ready.

Following the briefing, we got the gliders in line and launched into the gap. Not being an experienced wave pilot, I was a little apprehensive about going first. The wind was strong, and Chris had briefed that the tow would be sporty. He was not

wrong. I found myself opening the airbrakes on a few occasions to remove big bows in the rope. The tug pilot knew exactly where to go and released us in the sweet spot.

I got established and climbed well through 7,000ft. I managed to fall in and out of the decent lift, but after an hour and a half found myself topping out at about 11,000ft. It continued to work, but only at a knot or so. Stefan demonstrated patience and was able to get up to a little shy of FL195.

Did I say the day was sporty? At height, I had 43 knots wind indicated on the LX. This made for a very interesting approach.

Chris had briefed us on the wind shear we could expect and the influence of a tree line that would keep half the runway in a wind shadow. I elected not to use landing flaps but rather stick in a neutral flap setting. I set up for a high approach and was extremely grateful for the 85 knots I had. The biggest issue about landing was the subsequent ground handling, although I need not have worried. Chris was there as I rolled to a stop and was ready to assist and get the glider into a safe parking place off the end of the runway.

Another successful day followed by a meal in town with a few of the local pilots.



Chris Gill in 906.  
Photo by Stefan Astley



# SUNDAY - RIDGE BASH

Photo by Stefan Astley

## STEFAN

It was meant to have been Justin's day. Except, it turns out to have been Liam's day – Who still even now owns the Junior BGA Ladder for his effort at the club ridge task of 140km between Dyserth to the north and Denbigh Ridge South (funnily enough, to the south – Close to Pentrecelyn).

We launched after the rain stopped at around midday upon which Liam managed a speed of 99.7kph handicapped, which in the ASW-15 was very impressive. Hugo and I managed 124.0kph and 118.5kph respectively (Justin's speed unknown!). After an early landing and a mass de-rig in the stubs, we headed for home.

All in all, the entire site provided the most fantastic four days of gliding we could've hoped for at very affordable rates. A massive thanks to the lads for making it such an enjoyable trip, Chris Gill manager at Denbigh for the hospitality and babysitting (Liam that is), and a massive personal thanks to Andy Sampson for his generosity in not only loaning the oxygen kit to finally nail the gold (and almost the diamond) height but the glider to go with it too!

We can all thoroughly recommend a trip here, and while the site is best enjoyed for the modest to more experienced glider pilot, dual flying in the club's DG1000 with Chris is always welcome.



Chris Gill, site manager.  
Photo by Stefan Astley

## JUSTIN

To the North East of the airfield runs a 30km ridge. With a perfect forecast for 15-20 knots directly onto the hill, we were excited for a good final day. Following several squalls on the airfield, we got going and completed a 140km ridge task at

circa 130kph. What a day, most of the flight was at or below ridge height at 90 – 100 knots!

Lleweni Park has been around for a long time. In the last couple of years, Chris Gill has taken over the day to day operations

and has done a fantastic job of putting it on the map with some real pioneering flights. They are very welcoming, professional and ready to get you flying at every safe opportunity. Moreover, they don't want you on the grass, which makes for a mud-free winter site!

## LIAM

Sunday was spent on the ridge, 140km at 100kph, dodging rain showers! The 15 doesn't go too well with wet wings, but a few extra knots quickly made them dry again. I still managed to do the task quite a bit slower than the others - lesson learnt, I'll have to be less cautious across a couple of small gaps next time.

A brilliant group effort to clean and de-rig the gliders, it's impressive how quickly you can de-rig three gliders when there are four of you! Following Justin's navigation around a closed road with a lack of diversion signs, we made it to Telford Services for another complimentary Burger king, before arriving back at LGC by 8 pm.

Denbigh is a fantastic site, which is superbly run by Chris Gill. I totally agree with Justin's sentiment!

A few LGC members have made the trip to Denbigh recently, and we're always welcome. Chris really pushes the boundaries on what can be done in North Wales, and there are plenty of two-seat flying opportunities.



Hugo in X8.

*Photo by Stefan Astley*



Home convoy.

*Photo by Stefan Astley*



Sierra India waiting for the tug

EXPEDITION

# IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SHOBDON

BY DAVID A WHITE

**E**xpedition deposit paid – tick. Flying account in credit – tick. Cottage booking – tick. ARC renewal – tick. Airspace and turn point files updated (thanks again for the seminar, Paul!) – tick. Sierra India was all set to tow to Shobdon in late March for a week's flying when a nasty little bug started going around and spoiling things. You know the rest of that story, so far. Come the subsequent deadline for article submissions to The Grid, the memory card in my camera was, therefore, looking uncharacteristically empty.

Quite apart from the lack of recreational aviation in my life for the last few weeks, like with many others, working from home has left me with quite a bit of extra time to decide what to do. In my case, that's the result of not making a 4 hours,

*'Anyone who's previously flown in Cerdanya will recognise the vistas and remember the stunning Pyrenean backdrop and the exceptional soaring'*

4 trains, 4 tube round-trip daily commute across London.

A new addition to my daily routine is a run. OK, to be honest, not daily. But I have gone from couch to 5km in the first month of lockdown, as well as got on my bike or just gone for a government-mandated stroll each day. I'm fortunate to live within a few miles of the Club, with easy access to the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where socially distanced exercise is possible. I hope others, especially those in more built-up areas, have found safe ways to maintain a reasonable balance of physical and mental

wellbeing during the lockdown.

Mandatory wellbeing sorted, that should, in theory, be about 15 hours more per week available for discretionary spend. Unfortunately, work inevitably seems to have expanded to take part in that. It can be difficult to get away from work when it's sitting in your home, bleeping on several devices from early morning till late at night; especially now there are those additional COVID-19 mitigation projects in your portfolio. There's also the long list of DIY projects avoided since I took up gliding. And of course, the family who doesn't always get their fair

share of my time, and friends outside of the gliding movement which I'm now speaking with a lot more often than I used to.

Despite that, I've definitely had more time on my hands. In the absence of gliding proper, for me, the next best thing is to immerse myself in pictures and videos of gliding. From re-watching the Balleka channel on YouTube to trawling through my own photo library, I've certainly been spending time I didn't previously have.

So what about the article I promised the Editor for the next issue of The Grid? Well,

here you have it: a rambling, off-topic, thinly veiled excuse to trot out some more gliding photos. While it should have been Shobdon, I've given the Editor a shortlist of those I took on the 2019 Expedition to Cerdanya from which to choose. A few days ago, these started popping up as memories in my photo library as 'on this day in 2019'.

Anyone who's previously flown in Cerdanya will recognise the vistas and remember the stunning Pyrenean backdrop and the exceptional soaring (and the occasional scrub day) followed by the camaraderie, food and

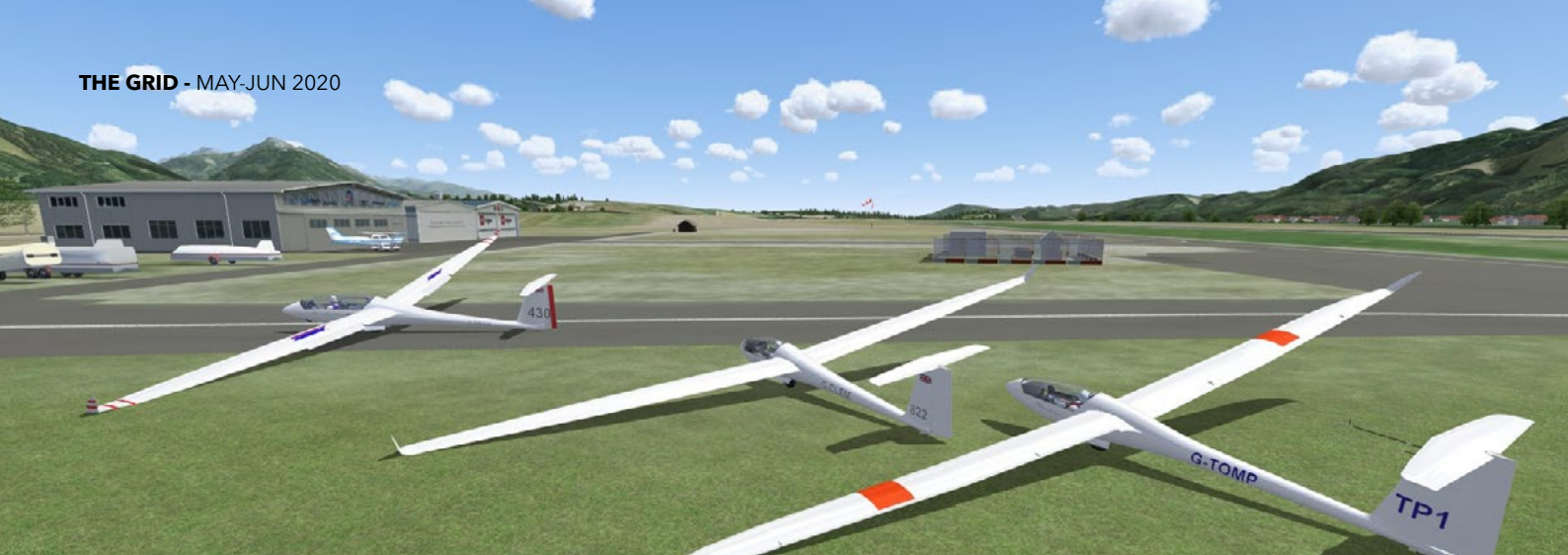
drink in the evening - all of which make our Club Expeditions so enjoyable. Hopefully, anyone who hasn't yet done so will be inspired to join a future trip.

I'm itching to get out of lockdown and back in the cockpit of Sierra India or a Club K21. Still, meanwhile, I've deferred the Shobdon cottage booking until 2021, and my head is in 15kts of lift, up-wind of a fine lenticular marking a wave bar running 30km along the Cerdanya Valley.

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David A White





## COMPETITION

# THE VIRTUAL LGC EASTER COMPETITION

BY TOM PRIDGEON

Late one night at the end of March, I was messaged by Steve Hayley, suggesting that in lieu of the Easter Competition we usually fly from LGC, that a virtual one is hosted online, using the gliding simulator, Condor (<https://www.condorsoaring.com/>). Christian set up a channel for LGC members on Discord (a free web-based programme), so we could chat to each other while in the game and (or online in general) to help make it that bit more realistic.

For those who are not aware, Condor has been around as a gliding simulator since 2006 but was given an upgrade in early 2018. The team behind it work on it in their spare time and have focussed on making it, overall, the best soaring simulator available. Unlike other simulators, they do not allow third-party add-ons and do not compromise when it comes to aircraft performance. They spend a considerable amount of time on each aircraft model, ensuring that it looks and handles exactly like the real thing. They also thoroughly check the flight manual to ensure nothing is missed out.

At the time of writing the ASW20 is the next glider to be released although there is a long queue of more to come to the nice list of already available aircraft. There is a good mix of gliders included in the game, although it is worth buying some of the extra ones.

The landscape is made in such a way that despite knowing you are in a simulator, you can be easily immersed in your surroundings. While Slovenia is the default scenery, all additional landscapes are available for free and are very good representations of the area they cover. The levels of realism are now so good that some gliding clubs in the UK are incorporating it into training simulators. We are going to be one of those clubs in the future, but that is another story for another time.

## BACK TO THE COMPETITION

After some quick research, knowing that to get this up and running would need to be done quickly, I created the competition online (<https://www.condor-club.eu/home/1/>), with Melissa agreeing to host the tasks. We decided that three sessions a

day would be sensible, allowing everyone the chance to take part at a time that would suit them.

The competition aimed to be as fun and as inclusive as possible, getting members online together and socialising as much as is possible in the current climate, with scores being of secondary importance. Assuming that a vast majority of members that would be interested would not have Condor or have very little experience on it if they chose to buy it, I threw in two practice tasks over the weekend ahead of Easter.

The practice tasks were designed to allow people to fly online together as well as getting used to the simulator in a more structured environment. To help keep this as straightforward as possible for as many people as possible, I kept all the tasks set on the default scenery of Slovenia. Other sceneries are available (all are free at <https://www.condor-club.eu/home/1/>). I would suggest to anyone who has the game that the UK sceneries are worth getting and, if possible, 'ArcAlpin2', this fully covers the Alps within its 531,000km2 area!





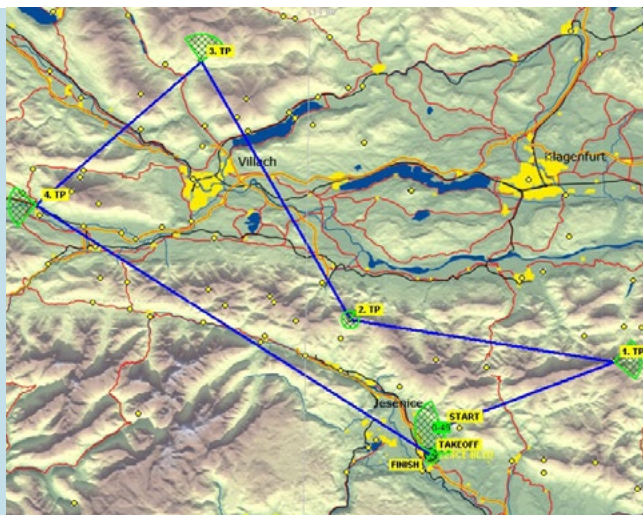
**DAY 1 - 153KM**

Glider Class = 20m Multi-seat (Duo Discus XL only at the time of the competition)

The weather was a 12kt SSW'yly with strong (approx 7kt) thermals to about 7,000ft. The restrictions were that everyone had to compete in the Duo Discus XL (comes with the game) as well as a maximum start height of 4,900ft. Thermals were an option in addition to ridge running, but the fastest tactic was not to stop but slow the cruise down in the right places.

**Top 3:** Brad Soanes, Clement Allen and Luke Dale

**Best club member:** Tom Pridgeon (6th)



**DAY 2 - 205KM**

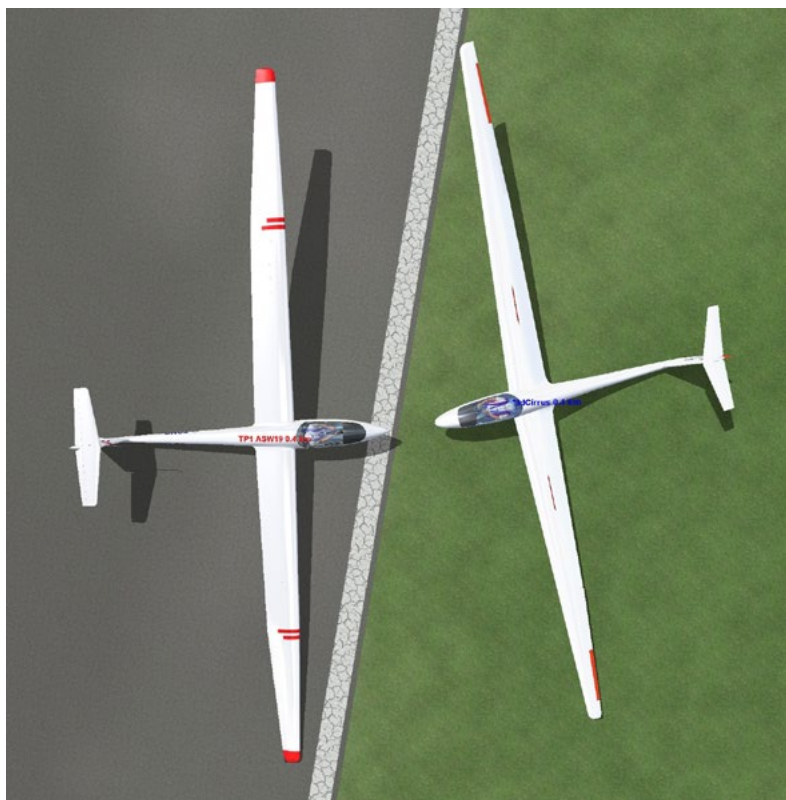
Glider Class = 15m Flapped - The Diana 2 is the default glider, but there are also the DG808-15 and the Ventus 3-15.

The weather was a 15kt NNW'yly with medium (approx 5kt) thermals to about 8-9,000ft. The restrictions were that everyone had to compete in a 15m flapped glider, but the maximum start height was raised to 5,900ft.

This was a pure ridge running task although the challenge was that the wind was in the opposite direction to the previous day which can make for a challenging pre-start environment.

**Top 3:** Quinten Hermans, Mathias VanEynde and Cliff Jefferies.

**Best club member:** Stefan Astley (6th)

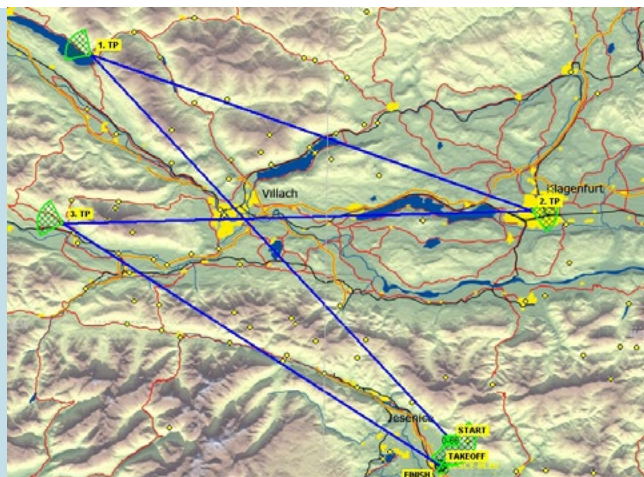


**DAY 3 - 220KM**

Glider Class = Club Class – The Std Cirrus is the default glider, but there are also ASW19, LS4 and Std Libelle

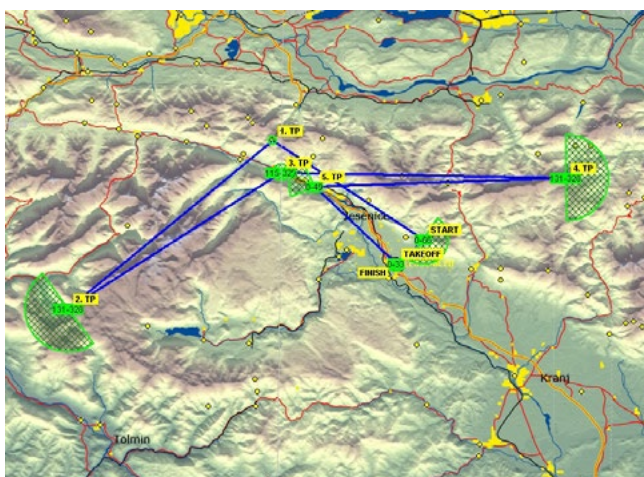
The weather was a 15kt SW’yly with strong (approx 7kt) thermals to about 10,000ft. The only restriction outside glider class was that the maximum start height was 6,600ft. This task was a mix of thermalling and ridge running. To keep the durations low, I couldn’t set much more in thermals, but this did shake up the results a bit.

We found that over the weekend the servers were becoming very busy with a lot of lag times between control inputs and outcomes, therefore for the final race, Clem Allen agreed to host the server to see if that would make any difference.



**Top 3:** Quinten Hermans, Brian Camps and Mathias VanEynde

**Best club member:** Tom Pridgeon (6th)



**Top 3:** Clement Allen, Brad Soanes and Luke Dale

**Best club member:** Stefan Astley (4th)

**DAY 4 - 156KM**

Glider Class = 18m flapped – The Antares 18S is the default glider, but there are also the Ventus 3-18, JS1-18, DG808-18 and ASG29-18Es

The weather was a 27kt SE’yly with no thermal activity as the simulator time was set to 0500! The main difference this time was that almost all the turnpoints had a minimum height limit. The first point had no restriction, but the final one had a maximum height which meant that pilots had to manage their decent whilst also maximising their speed. The maximum start height was 6,600ft. This was to encourage everyone to use the wave system to complete the task.

The tactic here was to race to the second leg as fast you dared before slowing up and climbing to 15,000ft or more prior to running the wave clouds to turn the high turnpoints followed by managing the descent to the low final control point and pushing into a strong wind for the final glide back.

**RESULTS**

After four days of fun, Clement Allen finished first place in the overall results, followed by Luke Dale and Stefan Astley. Being the only club member in the top 3, Stefan took the 1st prize - a 2,000ft aerotow credit to his flying account.

Congratulations!

Tom Pridgeon

#	Pilot	Score
1	822 Clement Allen	3832
2	G Luke Dale	3761
3	430 Stefan Astley	3683
4	TP1 Tom Pridgeon	3489
5	LOT Michal Cenzartowicz	3364
6	G9E Edward Johnston	3313
7	OB7 Oscar Butlin	3101
8	RAM Robin Martinus	3094
9	225 Ben Hudson	3082
10	CB8 Christian Brunschen	3039

CONDOR

# FLYING IN CONDOR

BY JOHN SMITH

Soaring the Slovenian waves.  
*Screenshot by Rafael Schouchana*

**D**uring this current pandemic lockdown, where all flying is cancelled, I have had to turn to the use of my computer to get my fix. My machine has two 'Flight Simulator' programs, both capable of flying gliders. The one I use most is Condor, currently in version 2. The scenery, as with all simulation software, is not photo quality but good enough to recognise all significant features. The only problem I've found is that the aerotow is trickier than in real life until you adjust the sensitivity of your controls according to your input method. I use a joystick. As there is no adjustment in its native software, this has to be done in the game's own software.

The major advantages to this program are that the weather algorithm is excellent and you can try out aircraft you will never get to fly in real life. You can also go places you will never get to see and set your own tasks, as well as downloading ready-made ones or joining races from the internet. The only downside is there are very few tasks on the net using UK scenery unless you go to [www.condor-club.eu](http://www.condor-club.eu) where, if you search, there are a few ready-made UK tasks to download.

**'The major advantages to this program are that the weather algorithm is excellent and you can try out aircraft you will never get to fly in real life.'**

One of the other advantages of this program is the ability to port the output from the game's internal GPS (NMEA signal) to an external moving map. Nearly all of the tasks available on the internet have no airspace provision, so a PDA running a moving map with airspace enabled is a boon especially if planning a real-life flight and are going to use said PDA in your glider.

#### LGC EASTER COMPETITION

In light of the above, when the LGC Easter competition was announced, I decided to join and try my luck. I have never flown in any competition before (real or virtual) and must admit that at the end of the four days, I ended just where I expected with regards to LGC members. However, against all registered competitors who competed over the whole four days, I didn't come last! Boy, did that please me.

I must congratulate Tom Pidgeon for the tasks which I found reasonably challenging,

although I suspect they were quite easy for most of you.

I must also thank him for helping out with a problem on the first day. I couldn't get the start gate to go green and accept I'd passed it. Tom pointed out that my altimeter was set wrongly. I had it set to QFE when it should have been QNH - duh!! Just by dropping the best part of a thousand feet, the gate opened - so problem solved. By the time I got away, everyone had gone. However, I did catch a couple of other gliders up, so I did finish in front of some.

Days two and three went well (for me) as I finished in the lower middle of the table, just where I expected - I was quite happy with that. Day four was a disaster as I crashed. Anybody interested in a somewhat bent 18-metre glider with one wing missing, currently sited on a hillside in Slovenia? No, I thought not.

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John Smith

LOCKDOWN & SAFETY

# LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

BY MARK NEWLAND-SMITH

Sharing the ridge with paragliders.  
*Photo by David A White*

I'm starting to write this on a lovely warm spring day. Being quite stable with the wind from the East, I know I'm not missing a classic day, but it's only a matter of time. Looking back at my logbook, it's exactly a month since my last flight - it already seems a lot longer.

We have sort of been here before. Some newer members may not know that during 2001, due to the outbreak of BSE (or Mad Cow disease), although flying from the

mountains. It was my first trip there for some time, and it reinvigorated my desire to fly in the mountains. It's a cruel coincidence that that is where I had planned to be this week, but of course, the French shut down shortly before we did. So what is a seriously addicted glider pilot to do in lockdown?

Another activity that I enjoy is walking, but in the summer it is best done in the same sort of weather (a sunny day but with cool air) that

Back indoors I've been catching up with decorating, and for something slightly more creative, inspired by Daniel's pictures of homemade bread, I have over the last week grown (is that the right term?) a sourdough starter, and have just produced my first loaf. It did not rise as much as it should have done and was a bit undercooked, but it tasted OK and made good toast. Unfortunately, as anyone trying to bake knows, flour is difficult to find, so I'm thinking about using some I found at the back of the cupboard that has a sell-by date from 2015! Desperate times call for desperate measures!

On a positive note, a gliding friend in Germany has just contacted me to say that in his area, the South West, gliding is to be allowed from the 20th April, so perhaps there is hope on the horizon, but I think that we are probably some way behind them, in more ways than one.

## SAFETY MATTERS

When I took over the role of Safety Officer, I said in my first article that: "I probably won't write articles for every newsletter but would like to invite others to do so. The best way to promote safety culture is if we all try to be open about our limitations

**'Inspired by Daniel's pictures of homemade bread, I have over the last week grown a sourdough starter, and have just produced my first loaf.'**

airfield was not restricted we were, for most of that summer, initially restrained from flying cross-country at all. Then only if we were always within range of a landable airfield, since landing out would have seriously disrupted farmers.

However, the club was able to carry on with the Cerdanya trip. Since the Duo Discus would not be needed in the UK for a while, it was dropped off at Sisteron on the way home (only a slight detour), and a few of us made trips down there to satisfy our craving by flying in the

we like for gliding. I've often flown on a day that turned out not to be as good as hoped (or where I'd not flown as well I'd hoped I would) and thought, why did I rig? I could have just gone for a nice long walk. So now, being lucky enough to live in the open countryside, I have been using my daily exercise allowance to go on some long walks as well as do a bit of cycling. So far it has been beautiful weather for this, and I've been enjoying exploring some of the local footpaths, and particularly the number of Skylarks that seem to be about this year.

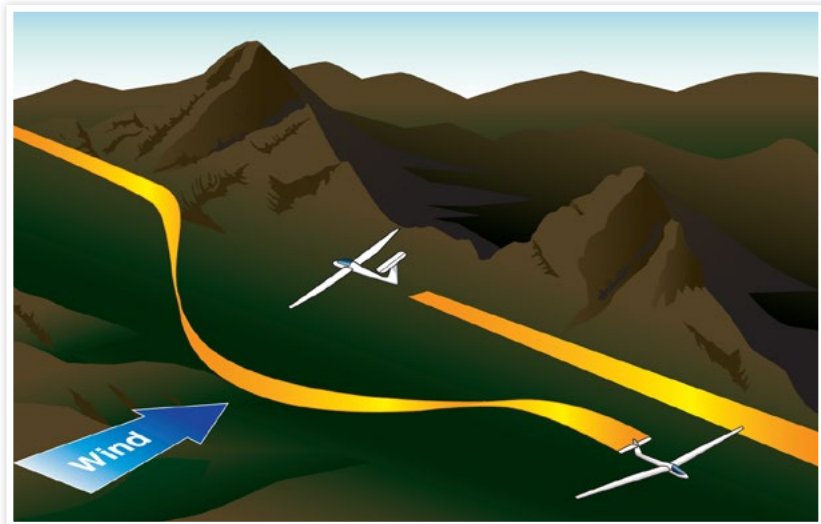
and admit to our mistakes so that others can learn and benefit from your experiences." So, I've lived up to my promise and only inflicted a few articles on you. However, our new Editor has told me that he has had some people comment that they would like to see more Safety articles. Now, this may be an editor's ruse to get copy or perhaps some people are keen to hear more from me, (really?) but I would reiterate my earlier plea for others to consider writing on the subject. If you have had an incident or have an opinion on any matter relating to Safety that you might like to share (whether you are a Full Cat or an Ab initio), please get in touch with me to discuss it. I don't have the inspiration to write every month, or perhaps it is an indication that we have a fairly good safety record that I'm not prompted to do so, but in lockdown, a couple of things occurred to me.

#### RIDGE ETIQUETTE

Before the lockdown, we had a number of good ridge days over the winter, and a couple of people admitted to me that they were a little rusty on ridge flying rules, particularly in relation to oncoming traffic. So just to recap, the standard rule of the air is that when two aircraft are converging head-on, they should both turn to the right. When flying on the ridge, this rule still applies except that, of course, the glider with the ridge on their right cannot easily turn right without putting themselves behind the ridge in sinking air, or indeed in a mountain flying situation hitting the rock face. So, the simple rule is that the glider with the hill on their right has the right of way, and the glider with the hill on their left should move out to the right.

What some pilots forget is that this means that when you have the hill on your right, you are OK to fly quite close to it, whereas when you have the hill on your left, you should fly further out to allow those coming toward you plenty of room without the need for evasive manoeuvres. I think that a lot of people believe that they need to be over the top of the ridge to get the best lift, but the higher you are the further out from the ridge you can fly and still be in good lift.

When you need to make a turn to



**‘The glider with the hill on their right has the right of way, and the glider with the hill on their left should move out to the right’**

avoid a potential conflict try to do it positively, i.e. a relatively steep turn so that your movement makes it obvious to the other glider that you are deliberately altering course. It will also help the other glider to see you if they have not already done so.

#### KEEPING CURRENT IN LOCKDOWN

We don't know yet when we will be allowed to fly again, but by the time we can, a lot of people may be lacking currency. For more experienced pilots, it may not be as bad as for those just starting to learn, but it will affect us all. So I wonder, are there any ways in which we can keep mentally current? Well, for what they are worth here are a few ideas.

#### *For those still learning/early solo*

Look back at your logbook and think about the flights that you have had, what the instructor wrote (apologies if it was me as you probably can't read my writing).

Think through pre-flight checks and remember the order we do them in.

Think about eventualities. Look out of the window or go for a walk and think about the weather and what it would make you consider regarding eventualities. Remember, it's not just about a launch failure but any other issues that might arise.

Read any books you have or can buy on learning to glide or gliding theory.

#### *For the more experienced*

If you live near the open country, why not go for a walk and look at which fields are landable? Think about how you might set up your approach into the field. Look at the hedge and trees on the approach, and what effect this will have on the available length of the field. Is there any slope on the field? What is the surface like? The best thing about this imaginary field landing is that you can just carry on with your walk and not have to wait for the retrieve crew.

For those who have already done a lot of cross-country, looking back over old traces in SeeYou is worthwhile. Look on the BGA Ladder and download the traces of other pilots who flew that same or a similar task on the same day as you and compare them. What was their climb rate relative to yours? How long did they spend circling? Did they deviate more or less from the track?

The above is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but just a few ideas. On the other hand, perhaps the best way to stay sane is to forget about flying until we are allowed to do it again. It's your choice.

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#### Mark Newland-Smith

Flying Safety Officer (and gliding addict)



HOW I DID IT

# THE G-MLSY BUILD STORY

BY TREVOR MILLS

Well, here I am on day 23 of the lockdown thinking of what to do with the day? I've written up all my logbooks, done some flying on X-Plane, had a go at the Easter Competition on Condor, and watched lots of aviation-based YouTube videos. What next, I thought? Ah, I know, how about a 'How I did it' write up for the excellent new-style LGC magazine, The Grid? But this is going to be a very different 'How I did it'!

At 42, I finally got to do what I've wanted to do ever since I was a young boy, fly! On 20th February 2000, I woke up and announced to my lads that I was going to the London Gliding Club to learn to fly and become a pilot. I arrived at Dunstable on a glorious, warm sunny day, fluffy clouds and a stiff wind on the hill. There was tons of flying activity, and it looked like great fun. A brief visit to the office and I was signed up on a Fixed Price to Solo programme with Andy Roch leading me to the launch point to take me for a flight. One hour on the hill and I was completely hooked. It was magical; nothing could compare with the feeling of flying!

That was just over 20 years ago. I've done quite a bit of flying across the

**'After one particularly bad journey, which included a telling off for being late for an instructor duty, Karen suggested that I buy myself an aircraft'**

world since then, culminating in a trip to Namibia that included a few 1250km and 1000km flights with Robin May in 2012. Surely nothing can better that? Well, life moves on as it does with events that happen here and there, but one thing that has been constant throughout is my love of flying, and I still get a tingle down my spine every time I fly.

### A LIFE BY THE SEA

I moved down to Whitstable with Karen 5 years ago to enjoy a life by the sea. However, I didn't want to stop gliding or leave LGC and all the friends I have there. So, it meant a journey of around 110 miles via the M25 and M1. It's an easy drive, 70mph on cruise control for 1hr 45m (or that's what it should be!) but it was often much longer, with one journey taking nearly 5 hours! It meant for any instructing, tugging or personal flying I did, entailed several hours of travelling before or after (or both!).

After one particularly bad journey, which included a telling off for being late for an instructor duty, Karen suggested that I buy myself an aircraft and base it at Maypole, which is a sleepy little airfield around 10 minutes from home. I thought about it for a nanosecond before making my decision. Well, I couldn't argue with her, could I?

### RESEARCH

The next day I visited Maypole and talked to the owner about basing an aircraft there. He said he only accepted sole owner aircraft at the field because of limited movements, so that set one of the criteria! Having had shares in several EASA aircraft and gliders in the past, my second criteria was to learn more about aircraft including carrying out my own maintenance, so I decided that an 'LAA Permit' aircraft was the way to go.

I searched through the classified ads for aircraft on the market at the

time. There was a variety of aircraft that looked really good however it was the Piper Sport PS28 that caught my eye. It looked so sleek for a GA aircraft, and I found one for sale at North Weald and arranged to view it. The owner advised it was around 8 years old, that was on an 'EASA permit' and not an LAA 'Permit to Fly', meaning that it was subject to 'normal', e.g. high maintenance, EASA and CAA administration costs each year. It sounded like a nightmare, so I gave it a miss and booked a visit to Air Expo at High Wycombe to see what was on offer there.

In June 2019, I visited the Bristell UK stand and saw their demonstrator. It had similar lines to the Piper Sport as the same person designed it, Milan Bristela. Still, it had several design changes which engineered out the shortcomings of the original design and made it a much better aircraft both to fly and operate. Bristell offered it in an advanced kit form, and as I had just retired with lots of time on my hands, I thought it could be an interesting project for me to get more 'hands-on' with aviation. After talking to Bristell UK and looking at build options, timescales and prices, it all seemed possible.

I walked away with my mind made up, I was going to order the kit, but a self-build posed a few problems for me as I'd never done anything like this before and didn't know where to start. I also didn't have anywhere to build it or have all the right tools, but hey, I thought 'that's just detail!'

#### FINDING HELP

I returned home and discussed the thought of building my aircraft with Karen, who immediately told me I needed help! I wasn't quite sure what she meant, but I took it in the spirit I'm sure it was intended and contacted the LAA as I'd joined the association several months before. I needed someone knowledgeable to bounce the idea off and came across an LAA inspector, Ian Daniels, who luckily was based at Maypole Airfield. On our first meeting, we got on really well, and I could tell Ian was going to be a good ally. He was very knowledgeable, helpful and explained the high-level process of building an aircraft, including the challenges I would encounter. Of

course, the first challenge was that I didn't have a workshop to build it in, but he told me not to worry, to place the order and he would find a place to build it in before it arrived.

I organised a test flight of the Bristell on 4th July 2018. It leapt off the ground, flew very well, had a good solid feel and the cabin was very spacious and comfortable. I asked that Karen was also given a flight as I wanted to make sure she would be happy to fly in it as we intended to use it for some of our trips away into Europe. She came back with a great big smile on her face, advising me that she loved it and I should order one. I was surprised how eager she was, but I later found out that she had been told that the wing lockers could hold 4 cases of wine each!

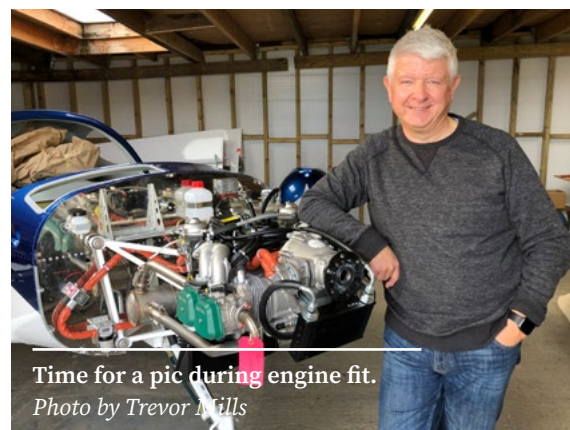
#### DELIVERY

My Bristell kit 382 was delivered to Tony Palmer's airfield near Eastbourne on 1st November 2018. Tony invited me over, and we went through the kit, explaining each part to me. The first thing I was advised to do was fill all the rivet heads before the aircraft was painted. At the time of delivery, I still hadn't found a place to build it, so Tony kindly offered me the use of his hanger to do this before it went for painting. Karen offered to give me a hand, and we spent the next four, very long and chilly days filling every single rivet and sanding them down in preparation for painting, it was no mean feat! On 25th November it was transported to the painters, and I wouldn't see it again until mid-January!

In the meantime, I booked myself on a couple of LAA courses which covered basic wiring and Rotax engine operations. I researched what tools and materials I needed in advance and Ian came up trumps finding me a workshop on Maypole airfield. A chat with Maypole's owner confirmed that I could use it for my build, and now I was all set to start. I re-took delivery at Maypole on 17th January 2019, ready for the start of the build.

#### STARTING THE BUILD

I started work on 22nd January 2019. I had already produced a project plan with the build stages detailing what I needed to purchase and when. I also set up a blog, <https://g-mlsy.home>.



Time for a pic during engine fit.  
Photo by Trevor Mills

blog, so I could record the stages of the build and perhaps help others should they decide to build a Bristell. I decided to be very disciplined in the amount of time I spent on the build, treating it more like a job. I worked roughly 9-5 every weekday and also the occasional evening. Every evening I reviewed what I had done that day, wrote up the blog, updated the project plan, ordered what I needed in the coming days and prepared the schedule of work for the next day. Amazon and eBay became my new best friends, and I got to know my neighbour, Sue very well, as deliveries arrived several times a week and she took most of them in for me!

It didn't always go to plan, and I must admit there were some frustrations during the build. Some items were missing from the kit (including a build manual!) requiring calls to the agents and some orders were delayed, especially the Airmaster prop from New Zealand that was late by six weeks! But I enjoyed every single minute that I worked on the build. Each day brought new challenges and problems, but each day I learnt new skills to overcome them, often involving lots of research to allow me to complete the job in hand.

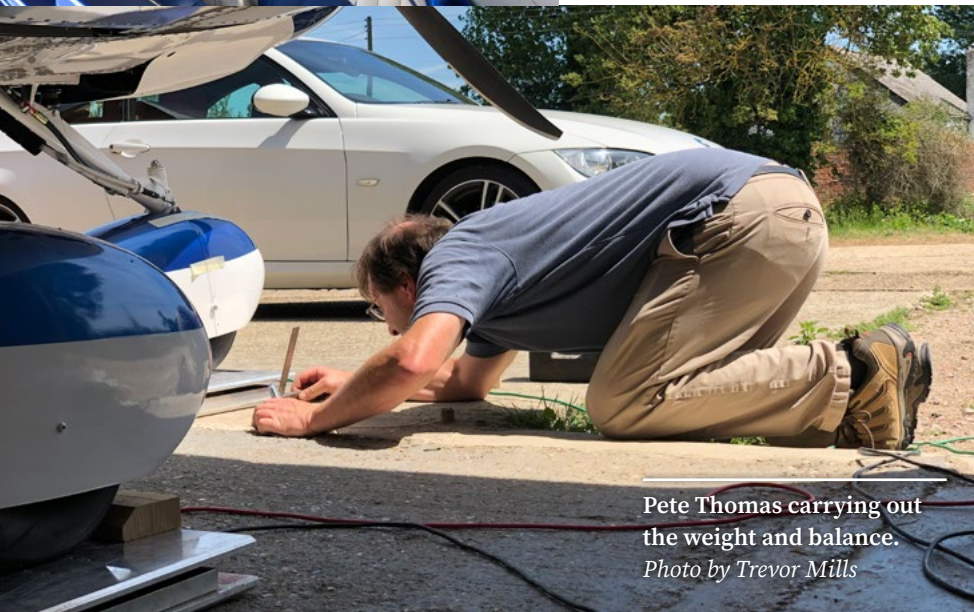
Before I placed the order, I looked at several Bristell aircraft. I was particularly interested in the colour scheme, external lighting, avionics, panel makeup, layouts and operational ergonomics. So, when I finally placed the order, I knew exactly what I wanted and had a design of how it would all work. I had chosen to use the Rotax 912ULS but wanted to get the best performance from it, so after carrying out a lot of research, I decided on an Airmaster constant speed prop.



Tom Rose bragging again.  
Photo by Trevor Mills



Powering up the panel for the first time.  
Photo by Trevor Mills



Pete Thomas carrying out the weight and balance.  
Photo by Trevor Mills

Although it was more expensive, I must admit I'm delighted with it. It allows the aircraft to achieve the maximum performance from the engine in every stage of flight while being very easy to operate. I didn't want to use any 'steam' driven instruments, so the design of the panel consists of two 10" Dynon Skyview HDX EFIS screens with a Garmin G5 for redundancy, all with full battery backup. I also included full navigation linked autopilot as the aircraft will mainly be used for touring, and with an 800nm range, it will reduce long flight fatigue.

Conspicuity is very important these days, so I've fitted wing & tail strobes and strobe, wig-wag landing lights. It looks a bit like a Christmas tree when they're all on, but you can't miss me! Electronic conspicuity was also a very important consideration. I've fitted a transponder with ADSB 1090es out so others can see me and integrated a Pilot Aware Rosetta unit that displays ADSB, FLARM, Mode S and Pilot Aware traffic that feeds directly into the Dynon screens. Of course, as every glider pilot knows, the number one collision avoidance system is the Mark 1 eyeball!

**TEST FLIGHTS**

After 112 days, on 16th August (which was coincidentally the 17th anniversary of me gaining my PPL), G-MLSY was finished. A final

Inspection before the first flight was carried out and Ian completed all the remaining paperwork for the test flight application which was sent to the LAA the next day. Whilst away in Llanbedr, the LAA wrote to me with some minor queries that I resolved with them over the phone, and I received the test flight certificate on 14th September, scheduling the first flight with Robin May on 17th September.

Luckily the weather looked good, and Robin flew down to Maypole in his RV7. Karen, along with some of my family members gathered to see the first flight. Robin prepared a thorough test plan for each flight, and after some delay, due to technical issues, it was time for its first flight. I must admit it was quite an emotional moment, and I was thrilled to see it take to the air. Two test flights were undertaken on the first day with a couple of technical issues being reported by Robin which were attended to ready for the next day's test flights, but this time with me onboard, observing and recording flight and performance figures for the flight test report.

Unfortunately, we didn't get to complete all of the test flights in the two days before the weather started to deteriorate, so we agreed to resume when it was more suitable. It was around a month before all the flights and test reports were completed, but it was worth the wait. Robin wrote up the test pilot's report summarising with some very positive comments which I was very pleased with. It's amazing how much paperwork is required to apply for a Permit to Fly from the CAA, with the paperwork taking over 4 hours to prepare and photocopy. Overall, administration formed a substantial chunk of the time from the start of build to my first flight.

**MY FIRST FLIGHT**

After around three weeks, I received the Permit to Fly on 22nd November. The weather conditions were perfect, so it was time to fly her myself. After substantial checks and engine run ups to make sure all was





My first flight in G-MLSY.  
Photo by Trevor Mills



Karen taking it very seriously.  
Photo by Trevor Mills



Robin just before  
G-MLSY's first flight.  
Photo by Trevor Mills



Gill and Steve Lynn  
visiting Maypole.  
Photo by Trevor Mills

in order, I lined up on '20', opened the throttle and took to the air. In an instant, I was transported back to 20th February 2000 again. There's just nothing better than flying!

**RECOGNITION**

When you start a project like this, it's invaluable to have the support of people around you, and I can't thank **Karen** enough for her encouragement, support and help. She was absolutely fantastic before, during and after the build. My sons, **Dave, Chris, Andy and Steve** who came down to give me a hand when I needed more than two! **Ian Daniels**, my LAA inspector, was a star with advice, guidance and more than a few laughs throughout. He also signed off the 27 build stages, including all the paperwork for the test flight application (I think he needs a new pen!). I also had several visitors to look at what I was up to including my very best mate **Tom Rose**, who came down sporting some suitably sized tools! **Steve & Gill Lynn** popped down in Kilo Sierra for some fish and chips on the beach and then took some very arty photos. **Pete Thomas** who came down by car to carry out

the Weight and Balance for me at very short notice and **Robin May** who flew down with **Dave Bennett** in his RV7 and then unexpectedly offered to carry out the flight testing for me. I must admit I couldn't have picked a better, more experienced test pilot to entrust my pride and joy to on her first flight, thanks, **Rob!**

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- I've learnt a lot from this build and if ever fancy doing it yourself here are some thoughts.
- > Research as much as you can before attempting a project like this.
  - > Talk to lots of people before deciding on options, especially the LAA and those that operate similar aircraft to the one you're going to build.
  - > Decide on what options you're going to include.
  - > Decide on a realistic budget and add a 10% contingency, so you're not shocked at the overall cost.
  - > Keep a record of the costs as you go and don't forget to include tools, insurance, hire

of workshop, transport, travel and administrative costs.

- > Set up a project plan and work as much as possible to it.
- > Be realistic on how much time you can spend on it. Balance the imperative to get it done against the needs of others like family members.
- > Be resilient and don't lose track of the end goal – it's going to be awesome.
- > When placing an order, agree exactly on what you are buying and demand an inventory.
- > When you take delivery, check all items against the agreed inventory and if anything is missing, agree on a date when you'll receive it or a refund, if you have to purchase it yourself.
- > Ensure you get a fully up to date Build, Maintenance and POH manual for the aircraft and read it cover to cover several times.
- > Finally, have faith in your own abilities and enjoy every moment of the build – it's great fun.

Would I do it again? In a heartbeat.

Anyone interested in the build can read my blog at <https://g-mlsy.home.blog>

G-MLSY – LAA 385-15584  
– Bristell Kit 382

Build Start 22nd January 2019

Build End 16th August 2019

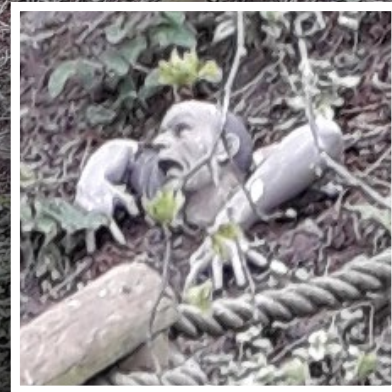
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Trevor Mills

NOT A MYTH

# THE EAST RUN CLUTCHING HAND

BY DAVID LORD



**B**e prepared to challenge everything you thought you knew about the phenomenon of the East Run Clutching Hand.

My wife Jane and I live in Eaton Bray, and we have three dogs. Jane is a keen walker and habitually takes two of the dogs on a long walk in the afternoon, accompanied by her sister. She came back one day and reported that she had discovered the most macabre thing lying in a field.

She explained that it is difficult to spot and easily missed, but she had managed to take a picture with her phone. At first, I just thought the fuzzy and indistinct image was simply chilling, but then it dawned on me, could this be the infamous clutching hand!

So today, I determined to go the location myself and discover the truth. Despite being restricted to "essential journeys" only, I judged that I would have no difficulty whatsoever in justifying my outing if challenged. In any event, I didn't need to go far, a short drive along Doolittle Lane to the spot where you can park opposite the old mill. Next to the old mill is a footpath. If you follow this path for a few hundred yards, you may be unfortunate to see the Clutching Hand for yourself.

Jane was my guide today – her sister refuses to go this way anymore – so I was assured by our safety in numbers.

As we approached, the Clutching Hand came into view. It was attempting to emerge from the

ground and search for more victims. There was a look of anguish and frustration on his face; the Coronavirus has made his hands idle! I almost felt sorry for him as we share the same frustration in these difficult times.

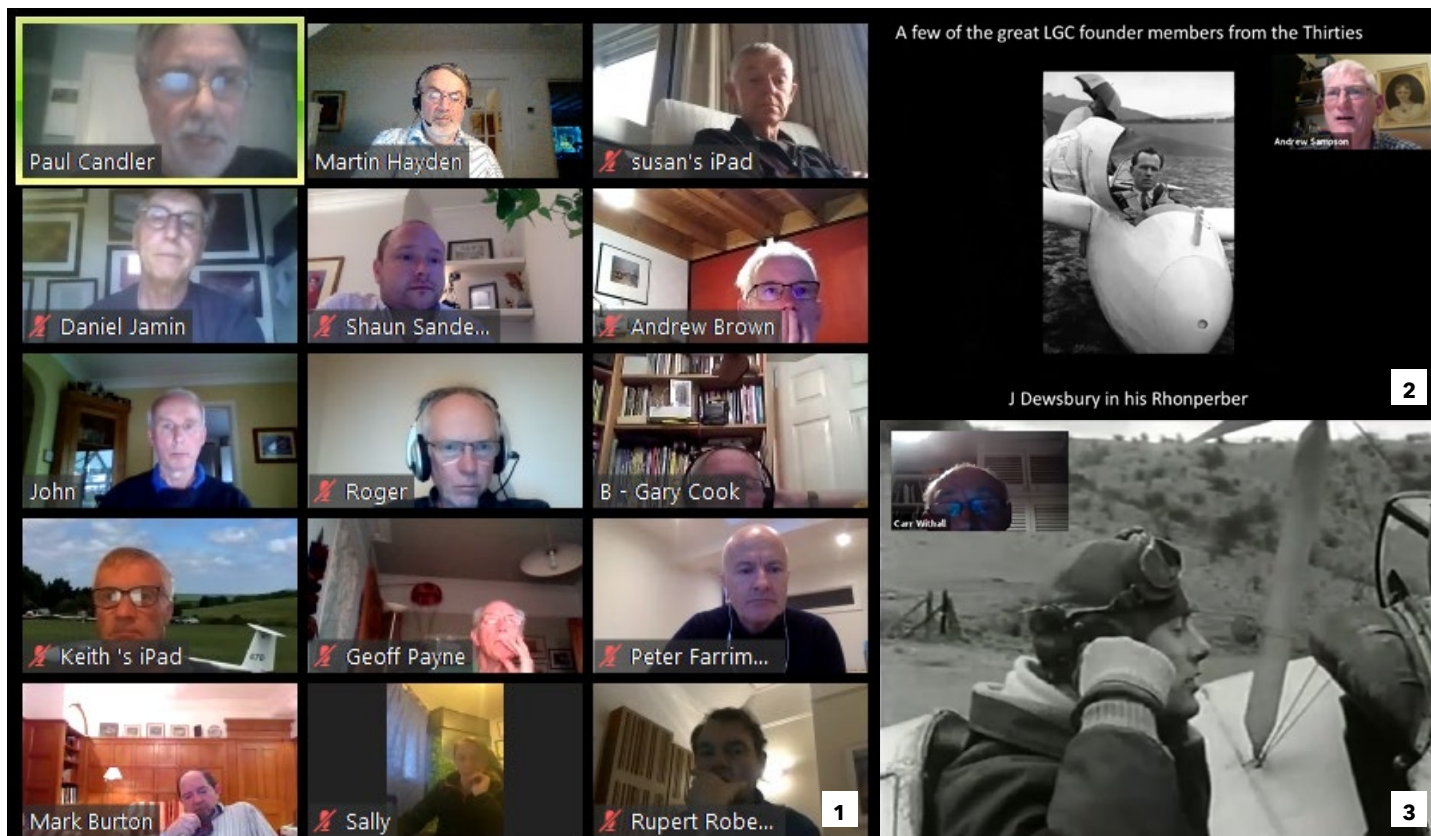
So here is the indisputable evidence at last! The hand may not be visible as you approach the East Run, but we all know his presence can be felt. So please, no more mumbo-jumbo about wind direction, curl-over, extreme sink, there is a darker force at play.

If you are in any way sceptical, just go to the exact spot yourself.

---

David Lord





## VIRTUAL EVENTS

# ZOOM TO THE RESCUE

BY MARTIN HAYDEN

Great to see so many old friends through the magic of web conferencing over the last few weeks.

This was Paul Candler showing us just how easy it is to download the airspace files for our Oudies and LX navigation systems (*photo 1*). Paul, we were much more interested than we appear, honest! Paul claims he was demonstrating the benefits of soft-focus (or a greasy thumbprint on the webcam) while the rest of us just look ten years older. That and the peek into the interior design are just two of the features of our new virtual world. Oh, and Pete, it's time you gave the iPad back to Sue.

We've been making good use of these tools since the lockdown. The regular Wednesday slot, now christened Wonder Wednesdays as we all wonder when we'll be flying again, was very well attended. Andy Sampson (might seem like, but not really a founder

member) took us for a nostalgic trip through the club archive and photos from the early days of LGC (*photo 2*).

But the star performer was Carr Withall, who with the aid of some old films from the '30s, gave us a great picture of what it was like to fly here in the olden days. Carr can be seen here at the controls of a Tiger Moth (*photo 3*). Like most of us, he's still working on mastering the controls of Zoom, and we are so glad he did: to have someone who was actually there, knew the people was a real privilege. No one else could have added the priceless anecdotes and painted the vivid picture that Carr drew for us.

Other events that we hosted were Chula's R/T for Glider Pilots – the simple guide. He's also delivering along with two other CGC full cats the full-blown FRTOL (license) course as a BGA sponsored event. Some of you may have already signed up for that along with about three hundred others from up and down the country.

**'For the delivery of theory training, this is likely to become the new normal.'**

But don't worry if you missed it I'm sure it will come round again.

For the delivery of theory training, this is likely to become the new normal. The Bronze Lectures are an ideal case. These are now up and running on Zoom with about fifteen new and old members studying for the exam or just refreshing their knowledge.

So if you haven't yet got in on the act, have a look for events and links on the LGC Facebook page, or if you need help setting it up, send me an email or give me a call.

---

Martin Hayden

HISTORY CORNER

# LEARNING TO FLY IN THE 1930S

**W**hen the club first started flying in 1930, there were very few pilots qualified to instruct, and all training was done on single-seat 'primary' trainers using a bungee launch.

The 'ab-initio' pilot would start with ground slides on more or less flat ground, and would then progress to short ground-hops from what we now call hangar ridge, with the instructor running the wing

and frantically shouting the 'advice'.

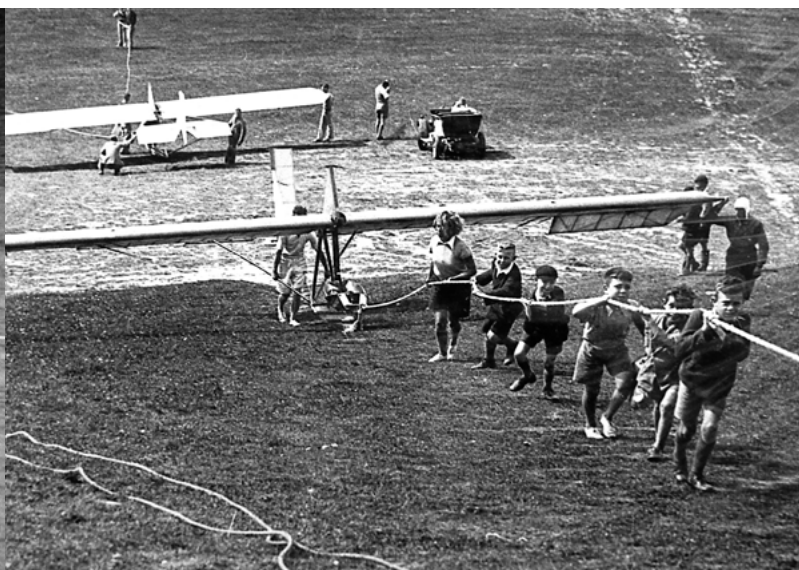
Gradually they would progress to longer flights and launches from further up the hill, until they were good enough to launch from the top. A 30-second flight earned the coveted "A" badge.

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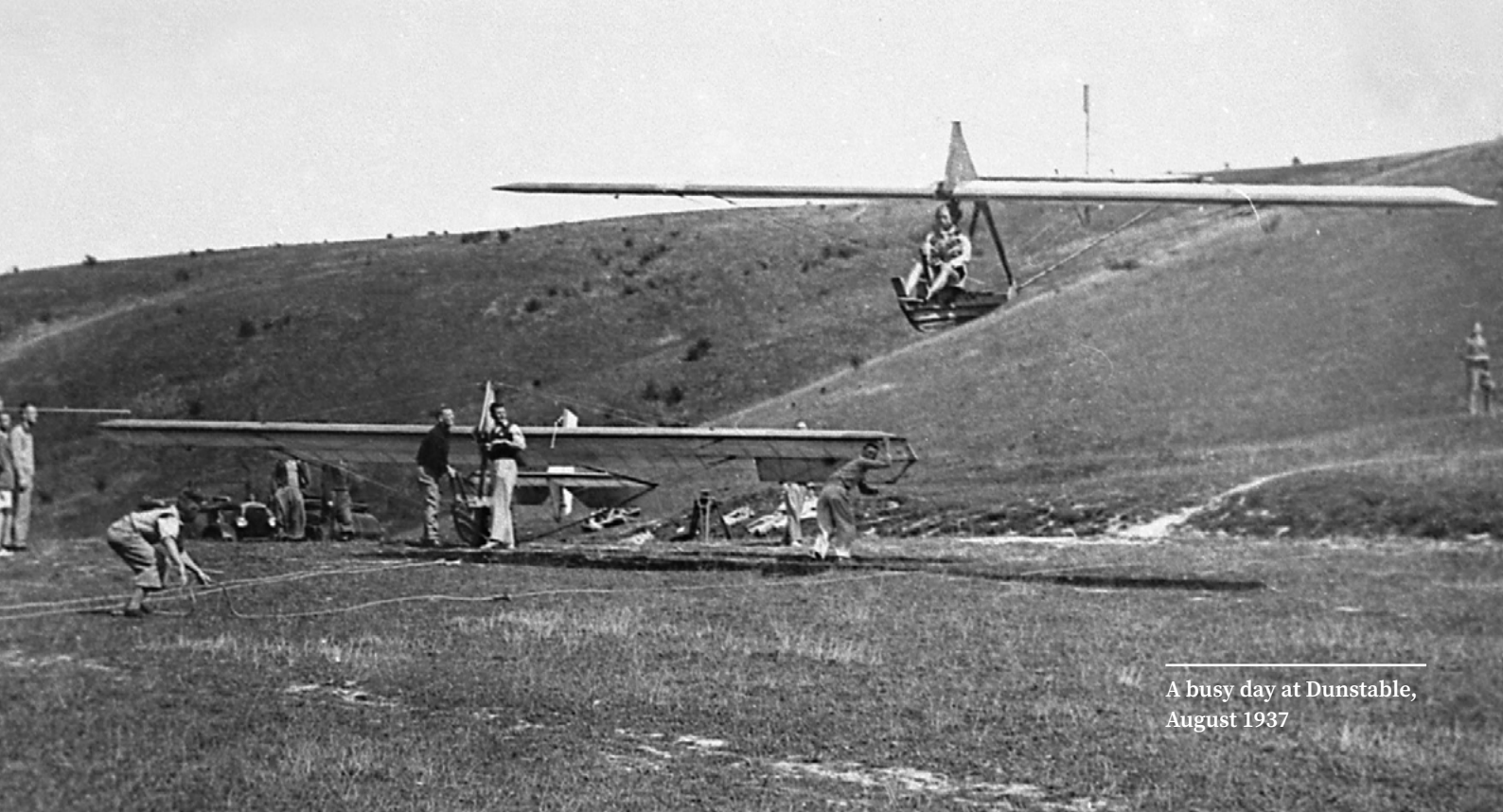
Andrew Sampson



Launching the Dagling from hangar ridge. Instructor Tim Hervey (complete with pipe) running the wing.



Dagling in flight, about 3ft agl, 1936



A busy day at Dunstable, August 1937

Nacelled Dagling, bungee launch from hilltop



Tim Hervey briefs the pilot for launch from the hilltop, 1938



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

(apologies to Sue Townsend)

## Chapter 61: New rules

Oh, Emm, Gee, I just don't geddit. The BGA Competition Committee has found a new sponsor - of all things, a beer brand! Would'ya beeleeve it! It's said to be good stuff but it can be completely addictive - if one person buys it, others nearby feel obliged to have one too, and so on until just about everyone has tried it. Apparently it's what they call 'viral' marketing. A bit dodgy if you ask me. Mind you, the beer has little effect on most people, but a few get totally hooked and end up with a serious hangover that can last for days.

Part of the deal is that they've introduced some new rules which everybody has to follow from now on. I'd just about got my head around the old rules, ready for my first 'Regionals' across-the-country competition and now they do this! Even the Direcktor is annoyed, they didn't even consult him, they just imposed them on everybody just like that. These new rules are totally diff'rent, really weird, like the beer. But at least there's a bit of time to practice and get used to it.

If you want to take part you have to buy a brand new 'Stimulator' type glider, nicknamed the "Condom". You can choose from all the usual classes but it's just not the same as flying your own pride 'n' joy is it?

And on the grid every glider MUST wear a canopy cover. (That's how they got the nickname, geddit?). It doesn't seem to matter whether it's one of those cheapo cotton jobs or a fancy shiny one with embroidered comp number.

Two seaters are allowed but only if PeeOne and PeeTwo actually live together. That could prove interesting.

Everybody has to use a self-rigging kit. And you can't share your kit or borrow someone else's (someone is making a fortune out of this). You can go to the bowser to get water ballast but you have to park in a queue with your car at least two car-lengths from the next one. And NO TALKING.

Everyone gets a diff'rent start time, so we all start on our own, none of that pre-start tactics stuff anymore, or chasing people. You launch, start, do the task, land, wash the glider thoroughly (as if we don't do that already) and go home. It's just not the same. Where's the fun in that?

But the real killer is the new "NO GAGGLE" rule. What's the point of that? We're allowed to go across country, one task a day as usual, but - get this - if we see another glider circling, we're s'posed to stay at least 2km away! What kinda rule is that? Do they fink we're going to catch

somefink, or what? So everybody has to find their own fermal and get on with it - on their own! Mega penalties for anyone found breaking the rules.

What's more, they're developing a mandatory software mod for the Flarm. So, if you've had a bottle of that beer last night, your Flarm starts flashing a "CeeVee" signal. Not sure what that stands for. If another glider comes within 2km of you, they get a "CV" alarm, and - get this - you BOTH have to land and go and hide away until their hangover has gone and your CV button is re-set. If you ask me, it's an invasion of my privacy, whose business is it to know about my drinking habits or who I mix with in flight? I think the idea is that as the supply of this special beer is gradually used up, and the habit disappears, the alarms will die down and nobody will get the hangover any more. Then they'll be able to remove the software mod again, let you fly your own glider, and everything goes back to normal. At least that's the theory. We'll see.

*To be continued...*

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Ad Nauseam



Part of our fleet waiting to be flown again.

Photo by David A White

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## Newsletter

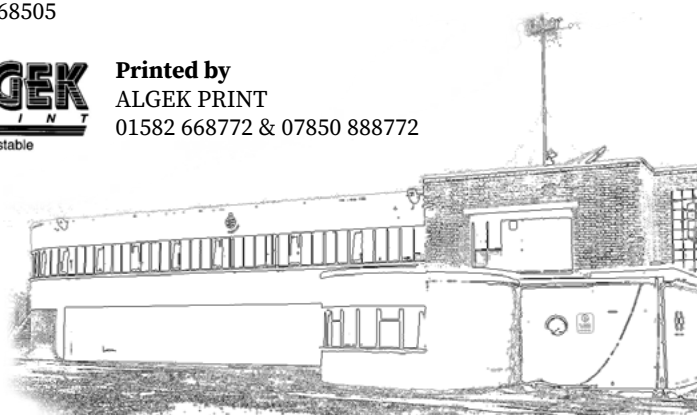
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