THE GRID

London Gliding Club Magazine / SEP-OCT 2020

Better than expected

How our members adapted to the new rules and made the most of the Summer

LGC'S NEW WEBSITE

GLIDE AND SEEK - INTERVIEW

BACK IN THE SKY - PART II

WHAT TUG PILOTS WANT

AND MUCH MORE







Photo by David A White.

hen I joined the world of gliding, I was told it was a sport for hopeful people. Even if the weather forecast was questionable, pilots would turn up at the club and hope for the best. "The rain might just miss us!", someone said.

Back in April, when we were closed, many of us were wondering what kind of season we would get. Competitions were cancelled, instruction suspended and currency fading away. The glass was looking completely empty.

Fortunately, the government allowed us to operate again and, taking into account all restrictions imposed on our operations, I must admit that, so far, the season has exceeded my expectations. Did I get my Silver C? Not yet! But I remain hopeful that I might still get part of it this year.

Considering we were not even sure if we would be allowed to fly this year, I am glad that being hopeful paid off. The glass is half-full, and the list of achievements (pg. 5) speaks for itself, with many solos, re-solos, conversions and badges. Cross-country pilots accumulated many kilometres, keeping LGC in the top 3 of the BGA ladder. And we no longer need to take our food to the club!

THE SUMMER EDITION

This issue of THE GRID brings a mix of stories and information from our members who have been active during this Summer. Andrew Sampson gives us an update (pg. 6) on the club operations under COVID-19 guidelines, and appeals for someone to take over the Club News on S&G after doing it for ten years (pg 30).

Paul Candler reminds us how pilots used to photograph each turnpoint after a conversation during the Task Week (pg. 10), and David Starer explains what tug pilots want from the person running the tower (pg. 13).

Follow Part II of Ed Downham's epic flights in June, including two 600km tasks (pg. 16).

Find out more about Glide and Seek, in an interview with former LGC member and creator of the app, Clement Allen (pg. 20).

Roger Leslie shares stunning photography of the last Wednesday Evening of 2020 (pg. 24), while Steve Lynn takes KS to more adventures (pg. 26).

David White, István Tóth and Robert John contribute to a photo gallery showing why we love gliding (pg. 28).

Thank you to the contributors, and don't forget to submit your photos and stories to THE GRID!

Rafael Schouchana - Editor

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Cover photograph

Sierra India captured at the beginning of Phase 1. Photo by David A White.

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to new club members

- > Anthony Landau
- > Peter Ellis
- > Simon Cattle



Free bottle of champagne

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

Nigel Perren

Achievements



Date	Name	Achievement	
- 440			
12/07/2020	Tomasz Skorzewski	Solo - aero-tow	
18/07/2020	Rolph Overvliet	Bronze badge	
22/07/2020	David Lord	PA1	
22/07/2020	Peter Farrimond	PA1	
03/08/2020	Peter Farrimond	Bronze badge	
05/08/2020	Rafael Schouchana	RT license	
07/08/2020	Simon Cattle	Solo - aero-tow, Solo - winch	
07/08/2020	Henry Haxby	Solo - winch	
08/08/2020	Fiona Guest	RT licence	
18/08/2020	David Lord	Bronze badge	
26/08/2020	Rolph Overvliet	Aerobatics - first solo	
05/09/2020	Tomek Skorzewski	ASK 23 conversion	
Submit your achievement at			

Note on Achievements Notice:

http://bit.ly/lgc-achievements

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.

Safe winch launching

As winch launching is available again, pilots (other than instructors) are reminded that if they wish to use the club gliders on the winch, then they must have undertaken an annual winch launch check and/or training.

An annual check is also strongly recommended to pilots flying their own glider.

If you are interested in becoming a winch driver, please contact our winch master, Allen Kefford.

Volunteers & booking

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/

Next deadline

Submit your story to THE GRID by

30th October 2020

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

SAMPSON'S SCRIPT

BY ANDREW SAMPSON

oon after I wrote my last Script, on July 4th, we moved to 'Phase 2 Ops' which allowed for dual flying by persons not from the same household, and therefore instructional flights. We thank those instructors who have been able to assist. Among other measures, we have been experimenting with a perspex screen for the K21 which divides the two cockpits giving a degree of separation between front and rear, although at the expense of clarity of communication between instructor and pupil. We have also established an 'instructing bubble' system, which seems to be working well.

Meanwhile, Istvan is back, and courses have started again. The winch has been seen in action, and gradually the club is beginning to look vaguely normal.

And of course, Trevor is back!
As you will all know by now, the constraints we face at present have a particular effect on the restaurant – the reduced seating, and the lack of visitors from outside. So I would urge everyone to starve yourselves at home and let Trevor supply all your needs at breakfast and lunch and hopefully a few snacks as well! A brisk walk around the airfield perimeter will soon put things right.

The office is open on a part-time basis, and the furlough scheme is being wound down. Please remember, however, that we cannot return (yet) to the habit of everyone dropping into the office for a chat. Even though we have the health check, face coverings, and hand sanitiser in place, having lots of members and others congregating in the office is not appropriate, much as we would like to get back to the old social atmosphere.

Gradually life is returning towards normality, but as we all know, the coronavirus is showing a second peak around the world, and there are several areas of the UK where cases continue at a worrying level. We must all remain vigilant and keep our fingers crossed that we don't have to put our plans into reverse. So as they say, 'make hay while the sun shines'!

'So far this year we have logged 6 flights of 750km, and a further 26 flights of over 500km, so we've had some great soaring days.'

THE SEASON SO FAR

Which brings me onto our favourite subject, the weather. So far this year we have logged 6 flights of 750km, and a further 26 flights of over 500km, so we've had some great soaring days. July was quite a good month for soaring, and according to the BGA ladder, we recorded 14% more x/c kilometres than in July of 2019. This was despite many of us - particularly those with 'pure' gliders - tending to be more cautious than usual to avoid landing out. In contrast, August has been dire. First, it was much too hot and stable, then it rained. Across all BGA clubs, the level of x/c activity is about half that of August 2019, and we are no different.

Our thanks go to Guy Corbett for leading our Racing Week, and to Mark Newland-Smith for leading our 'Not the Dunstable Regionals' Task Week. If it had been a 'real' Regionals, it would have gone down as one of the worst affected by the weather. Thanks to Paul Candler, who set up a unique scoring system, we were able to have a competitive element, and I was very pleased to achieve a 'day winner' in my class with 19 points! Together with the help of Phil Warner doing the met, Mark proved the effectiveness

of having an early-morning 'Zoom' competition brief and, apart from the weather, everything went smoothly.

OUR NEW WEBSITE

By now you will have seen the new website is up and running. This is the result of a lot of work over the last few years, with several different members contributing at different times. In particular, we thank Alex Hippel and Alex Horstmann for their work this year. We are extremely lucky that we completed the site just as the old site suffered a fatal blow - I'm not sure of the technicalities, but a security update of underlying software rendered it u/s just as we were switching on the new site. Thus the 'old' site produced by Melissa Andersson has now gone, and once again we thank her for all her work across more than a decade.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND CLUB OPERATIONS

Meanwhile, your committee has been working in the background. Since March all our meetings have been by 'Zoom', and in many ways, it is more effective. As we don't have to travel to the Club (usually on a Monday or Friday evening), we have much better attendance; usually 100% and the meetings are more effective – and shorter! Minutes are available via the website.

As you can imagine, over the last few months, we have been preoccupied with the coronavirus situation and the various operational processes and guidelines aimed at helping us operate whilst complying with the government guidelines.

Of course, it is a difficult task, and the situation is continuously evolving. As you know, we have been using 'e-allocator' as a means of enabling volunteers to form a 'viable crew', and the system has worked reasonably well so far. Our thanks go to everyone involved for rising to the occasion and enabling us to fly despite the restrictions.

However, there are a couple of downsides that point to a need to revise the system again. Firstly, as ever with voluntary schemes, a lot of the work is done by a relatively small group of members, whilst a number of pilots who have clearly been enjoying their flying, apparently do not feel the need to contribute to the team effort. The second issue is that, as people understandably wait for the forecast to decide their commitments, we end up with days where there is apparently 'no viable crew' when people are willing to come and join in. This is very similar to the situation in the past when everyone would look at the webcam to see if there is activity, then make their decision. Thus you get the self-fulfilling prophecy.

We are likely to return to some kind of rota system in the near future, and we are working on the next update to our operations

'It's reasonable to expect every flying member to participate in at least one of these roles, within the context of the COVID-19 guidance.'

guidelines. An essential part of our club culture has always been that every member contributes for the common good, and in terms of flying operations that means instructing, tugging, winch driving, tower control, or ground crew (or any combination or permutation of these roles). It's reasonable to expect every flying member to participate in at least one of these roles, within the context of the COVID-19 guidance.

Hopefully, by now, you have noticed the bar is available. This is another essential part of club life, and one of the great privileges and benefits of membership is enjoying a drink with friends and swapping howidunnit tales after a good soaring day. Please don't be shy about opening the bar, it's very simple, and the new cashless payment system is extremely easy to use.

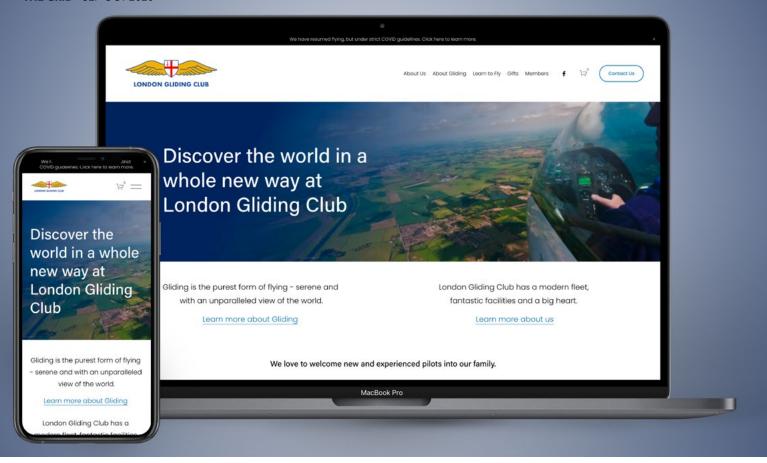
THERE IS STILL TIME

It's been excellent to see a busy launch point again, and lots of new faces. We have several new members who joined towards the end of last year, and this year so far we have 21, which considering the coronavirus situation is very promising. Please, everyone, remember to make them welcome and help them settle in and make new friends.

Looking forward, we still have the last few weeks of the 'season' ahead of us, hopefully with lots of flying opportunities. Remember that the latest 'last cross-country flight of the year' is usually in late October or early November, so there's still plenty of time!

Andrew Sampson Chairman





LGC ONLINE

LGC'S NEW WEBSITE

BY ANDREW SAMPSON & THE WEBSITE TEAM

By now you will have noticed things have changed at www.londonglidingclub. co.uk. The old site has gone, and now we have a new shiny one.

Melissa Andersson produced the old site so long ago that she was still called Melissa Jenkins and Windows XP was the bee's knees. I have absolutely no technical knowledge in the area of web design but what I do know is that she achieved a website that was revolutionary in its creative approach. It involved a lot of bespoke programming as it was done long before the modern tools we take for granted today.

Some time ago (it feels like ages) we realised a new site was needed. Our objectives had changed. 'Some time ago (it feels like ages) we realised a new site was needed. Our objectives had changed. Technology had moved on.'

Technology had moved on, with a vast increase in the use of mobile phones and tablets, the speed of connection, and memory capacity. Standard editing tools such as WordPress had arrived. Meanwhile, Melissa had acquired a new husband (Conny, credited with many if not all the images on the old site), and an increasingly demanding career.

We formed a team with the only qualification being that you had to be called Andrew (Sampson, Roch, Beckingham) or Alex (Hippel, Horstmann), and there were various other contributors. We built a model of what we wanted and gradually filled it out into a sort of prototype. Earlier this year the process accelerated under the guidance of the Alexes and we settled on Squarespace as the underlying website editor. In the end, it all fell together quite quickly – as with many projects, 80% of the time went into planning & design, 20% actually making it happen.

We were doing some final testing ready for launch when we heard from Melissa that a security update in part of the software underlying the old website had had a terminal 'We could do with more good-quality photographs, not just static photos of gliders, but shots showing real members active at the club and looking as though they are enjoying themselves!'

effect on the site, which would have required a large amount of manual intervention to rectify. So the decision was made, and we switched on 31st July.

FIRST VERSION

Please do explore the site. You should find it works well on almost any device. Perhaps the best benefit is that it is extremely easy for even a complete amateur (like me) to update. So if we want to add, delete, or amend something, it's fairly straightforward.

We're treating this as a first version. The basic structure and content are there, but there is lots of room for further improvement.

In particular, we could do with more good-quality photographs, not just static photos of gliders, but shots showing real members active at the club and looking as though they are enjoying themselves! For the serious photographers note that the preferred format is 16:9 landscape and images will be reduced to between 1500 and 2500 pixels wide and around 500kb size.

Ideally, we will include some short video clips as well – there are some good generic BGA videos about gliding (Glide Britain), but it would be nice to have material exclusive to LGC. Volunteers, please!

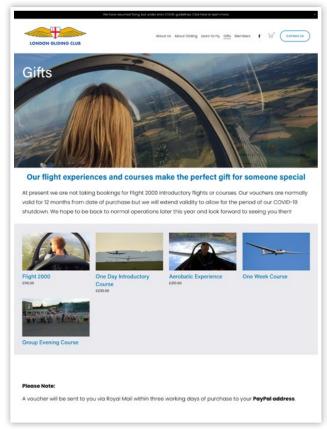
At first, we have concentrated on the 'public-facing' or marketing aspect, 'All about LGC', 'About Gliding', and 'Learn to Fly' (with us). Visitors can purchase vouchers for Introductory flights or oneday courses as before, but the key underlying aim is to attract new long-term members, and we had a couple of new product ideas up our sleeves when COVID-19 arrived, so these are on the shelf for now. As you can see, the coronavirus situation is reflected in various parts of the site.

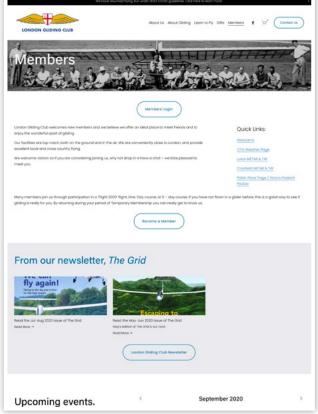
MEMBERS AREA

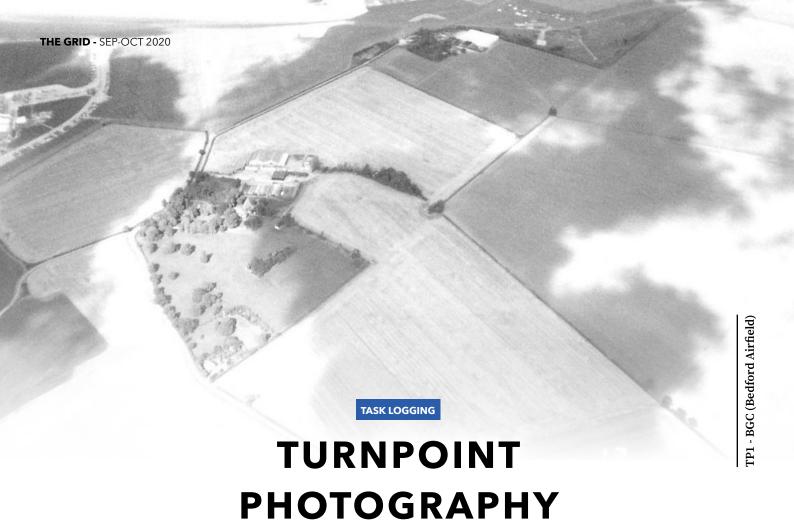
The members' area is admittedly rather basic at present. Obviously, we want much of it to be seen by the public so they can get a feel for what it's like at LGC. However, we are planning to add a new private area exclusive to members and offering lots of useful information and services.

Please do send us your feedback, comments and ideas, whether it concerns the overall approach, style, specific content, or just a spelling error. In the members' area, there is a link to a page where you can send in your thoughts.

Andrew Sampson & the Website Team







BY PAUL CANDLER

n the Monday evening of Task Week, prompted by the club Duo Discus completing a task with no batteries (and therefore no flight trace) and by a couple of people trying to use the BGC (Bedford Airfield) turnpoint that day, removed from the BGA list in 2012, there was a bit of chat on the Task Week WhatsApp group about turnpoint photography.

I posted my photograph of BGC, taken on 28th August 1999, during the Dunstable Regionals. It was the first turnpoint on my first completed 300km flight, and in my first season flying LS7wl 795.

I was actually using the camera as secondary evidence that day. My primary evidence was one of those new-fangled EW Model B Flight Recorders, linked to a Garmin GPS III Pilot Sat Nav, and recording at 24-second intervals. 'Turnpoint photographs had to be on 35mm black and white film, and as my photographs weren't required by scoring, I got them developed after the competition.'

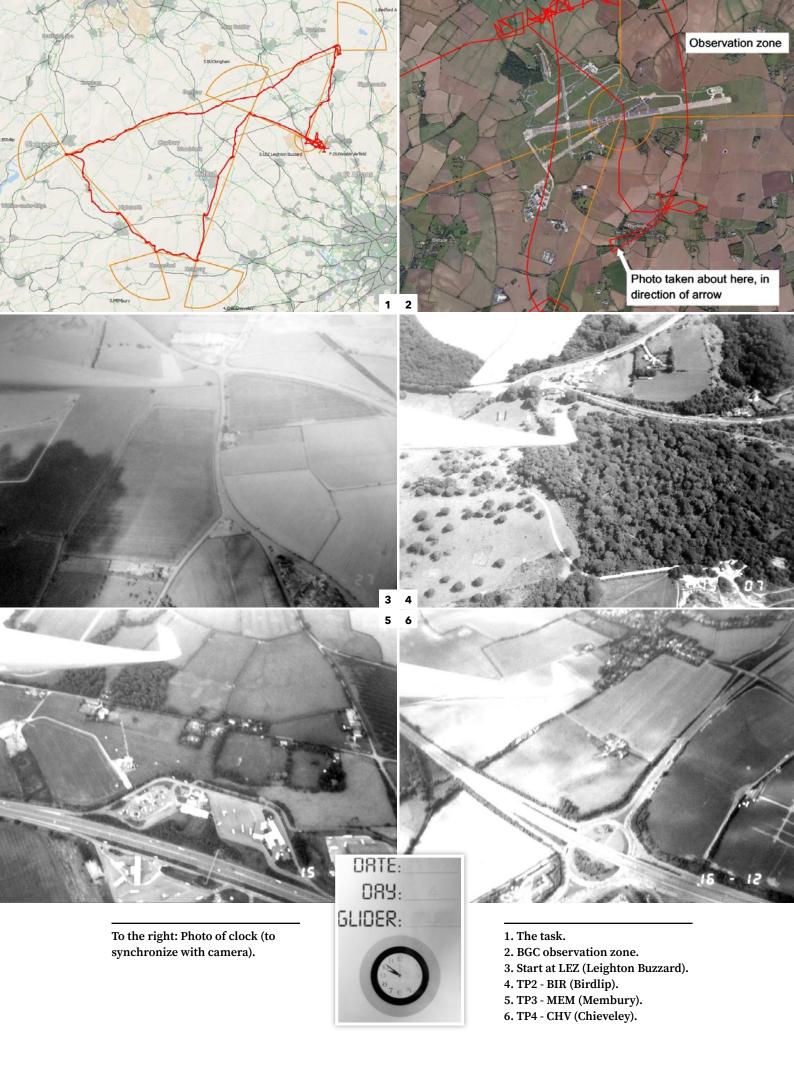
Luckily my GPS trace showed that I had completed the task successfully, passing through all of the turnpoints, as on closer inspection, I clearly wasn't in the observation zone when I took the picture at BGC. It looks like I flew past the turnpoint, missing the zone, to a thermal north of the airfield. Then I flew back through the zone to take the photograph in the wrong place, and then back to the same thermal.

Turnpoint photographs had to be on 35mm black and white film, and as my photographs weren't required by scoring, I got them developed after the competition. I came across the prints a few years

ago and scanned them. I'm not sure if there was another picture in the set that I didn't scan, but it looks like it was a good thing I wasn't relying on the photographic evidence that day! If I'd relied on the photograph, I would have been scored as landing out near Bedford Airfield, and if I'd tried to claim a Gold Distance, it would have been rejected.

Within a few years, photographic evidence was no longer acceptable in competitions and soon after that for badge and record claims.

Paul Candler





TUG TALK

WHAT TUG PILOTS WANT

(WHAT WE REALLY, REALLY WANT)

BY DAVID STARER



ello Dunstable Radio, your friendly tug pilot here with some tips on how best to communicate with me at the launch point.

Here's the why, what, when and how of passing information to the tug pilot.

Part 1: The Why, the What and the When

WHY TALK TO US?

In the tug, we carry a card on which we record, among other things, the name of the pilot who is paying for the aerotow. This information is vital to the club, as it enables the office to bill the correct member for the tow. The office staff need to match the name on the tug card to the corresponding entry on the aerotow log, so it is important that this information is passed accurately.

WHAT DO WE WANT YOU TO TELL US?

As I mentioned, we need to record who is paying for the tow. In

'The ideal time to pass the pilot's details is while the glider pilot is doing his checks and the tug is waiting to line up in front of the glider."

some cases, the flight might have been pre-paid, but we still need to know who the paying pilot is.

Solo flights

Tell us the surname and initials of the pilot.

Instructional flights

Tell us the surname and initial of the pupil. Occasionally, the instructor may decide to pay for the tow, in which case, tell us the surname and initials of the instructor, not the pupil's name.

Air experience flights

Tell us the surname and initials of the pupil. Also mention that it is an air experience flight; we will note this on the tug card. As it's a pre-paid tow, the office won't have to waste time searching for a name that doesn't exist within the membership.

Course flights

Similar to air experience flights, just mention that it's a one-day course, aerobatic course, or whatever.

Family and friends flight

Tell us the surname and initials of the club member, not the family member or friend.

Occasionally...

When we are taxiing towards the launch point, it isn't always obvious which glider is next to launch. This is particularly true when we are on the west run and approaching a wide grid head-on. If you are keeping track of the launch order, you can help us line up in front of the right glider by calling us to indicate where the next glider is. The ideal time to make this call is just as the tug turns towards the

grid at the end of its landing run.

"Charlie alpha, your next glider is next to the tower" or "Charlie alpha, your next glider is in the middle of the grid" is a great help.

There isn't much point in saying "Charlie alpha, your next glider is 527" because we usually are approaching head-on to the gliders so we can't see the tail number.

WHAT DO WE NOT WANT YOU TO TELL US?

The instructor's name (unless the instructor is paying for the tow)

The pupil's membership number (we don't record this on the tug card)

Voucher numbers for AEI flights (we don't record these either)

Pilot's date of birth, inside leg measurement, in fact, anything else at all.

WHEN DO WE WANT YOU TO PASS THE PILOT'S DETAILS?

Think about it from the tug pilot's point of view. It takes both hands to taxi an aircraft, so if the tug is moving, we aren't going to be able to fill in the tug card, so there's little point passing a message while the tug is back-tracking or positioning in front of the glider.

We usually switch off the radio before shutting down the engine, so if the propeller isn't turning it's unlikely that we will hear you.

Another giveaway is whether the tug pilot is wearing his headset; if not, he won't hear you whether the radio is on or not.

So, pass the information when the tug is **stationary**, but with the **engine running**.

Don't wait until the glider's canopy is closed and the wing-tip runner is levelling the wings. The ideal time to pass the pilot's details is while the glider pilot is doing his checks and the tug is waiting to line up in front of the glider.

If we haven't received your call by the time the wing-runner gives the up-slack signal, we will ask you for the pilot's name. This clutters up the frequency, wastes time and is a distraction for everyone concerned at a time when they really should be concentrating on achieving a safe launch.

What's really irritating is having to drag the pilot's details out of Dunstable Radio every time we are about to line up for a launch. So please help us reduce our workload by passing the message at the right time without having to be asked.

Part 2: The How

If you're still with me, you will have everything you need to keep your tug pilot happy and the aerotow launch point running efficiently. You need to go no further unless you'd like a few more tips on the how to be a great radio operator, in which case, read on; you might even get a job with NATS!

HOW TO PASS YOUR MESSAGE

This is the big one; even if you pass the right information at the right time, a garbled message is useless.

The two essential goals of radio communication are:

- Brevity
- **Unambiguity**

Don't gabble

You may have seen TV shows or films where air traffic controllers talk very fast to commercial traffic. ATC uses precisely defined phraseology to achieve the goals above. You are not ATC, so speak **slowly** and **evenly**. Remember the tug is a noisy environment even when the engine is idling, so deliver your message as if conversing in a crowded, noisy room.

Don't "um" and "er"

It's always tempting to press the transmit button as soon as we

need to pass a message, only to find we don't know what we are going to say. So, it pays to rehearse the message in your mind before pressing that button. Then pass the message smoothly, in a clear, deliberate manner.

Avoid stepping on other transmissions

Listen before you press the transmit button and if another transmission is in progress, wait till it has finished before you transmit. If the other transmission is intended to elicit a reply from someone else, then expect a response and wait till the conversation is over before transmitting.

Don't use jargon

"Over" or "over and out" are the stuff of fiction; they serve no purpose other than to clutter up the frequency. **Never** use them.

If you know RT phraseology, use it where appropriate, but do so correctly. Otherwise, plain English is perfectly OK. You can download the CAA Radio Telephony Manual (CAP 413) here:

https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP413v21_6.pdf

Be kind to the tug pilot

At best, aviation radio is a very low-fidelity method of communication. Sound in the mid to top end of the audible frequency range simply isn't transmitted, so consonants, in particular, are completely filtered out, and it is left to the human brain to supply what is missing. This works reasonably well when the listener knows what to expect; this is one of the reasons standard RT phraseology exists. However, it doesn't work nearly so well when the message contains unfamiliar content.

A good example of this is when you give the tug pilot an unfamiliar or unusual surname. A foreign surname can be doubly problematic since you may not know precisely how to pronounce it yourself, and the tug pilot may have no idea how to write down what he hears.

The answer is to spell out any unusual surname letter by letter. Don't wait for the tug pilot to ask for the spelling, if you consider the surname is uncommon, just spell it in your first call to the tug. Speak slowly to give us time to write it down. If you know the phonetic alphabet use it, otherwise normal letter names are perfectly OK.

Part 3: For RT Superheroes Only

Congratulations on sticking with me this far, you are now a class-act radio operator! But are you ready to become an RT superhero? If not, no worries, stop here and make yourself a cup of tea. Otherwise, read on.

IF YOU WANT TO SOUND SUPER-COOL ON THE RADIO...

Signal strength

We use five standard values to describe the quality of a received transmission. These are distinct; there are no overlapping or partial levels, and they are not a continuously varying range like a volume control. I have heard "Strength about three-and-a-half" from Dunstable Radio, which is totally meaningless!

- 5 Perfectly readable
- **4** Readable with practically no difficulty
- **3** Readable with considerable difficulty
- **2** Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable
- 1 Unreadable

Usage Example

G-LGCA: "Dunstable Radio, charlie alpha, radio check"

Dunstable Radio: "Charlie alpha, receiving you strength five"

The international phonetic alphabet

A - ALPHA	N - NOVEMBER
B - BRAVO	O - OSCAR
C - CHARLIE	P - PAPA
D - DELTA	Q - QUEBEC
E - ECHO	R - ROMEO
F - FOXTROT	S - SIERRA
G - GOLF	T - TANGO
H - HOTEL	U - UNIFORM
I - INDIA	V - VICTOR
J - JULIET	X - X-RAY
K - KILO	W - WHISKEY
L - LIMA	Y - YANKEE
M - MIKE	Z - ZULU

Usage Example

Dunstable Radio: "Charlie alpha, the pilot in 527 is sierra, tango, alpha, romeo, echo, romeo, initial delta"

JUST A FEW USEFUL ITEMS OF PHRASEOLOGY

These are frequently misused or confused with one another. There are others, though it is unlikely that you would find a use for them when communicating with a glider tug. In any case, plain English is always a better option than misused phraseology.

Roger - I have received and understood your message

Affirm - Yes

Negative - No

Wilco - Short for "will comply", in other words, "I've received your instruction and am about to carry it out"

Usage Examples

Dunstable Radio: "Charlie alpha, we will be stopping for lunch at 1 o'clock"

G-LGCA: "Roger"

Dunstable Radio: "Charlie alpha, are you happy to tow this glider?"

G-LGCA: "Affirm"

Glider pilot: "Please tow me at 75 knots"

G-LGCA: "Wilco"

Finally...

When you make your first call to another station, state their callsign first, then yours, and then pass the message as part of the same transmission. Subsequent calls to the same station don't need to include your callsign unless you consider leaving it out would cause confusion.

Usage Example (good: concise)

Dunstable Radio: "charlie alpha, Dunstable Radio, your next glider is 527"

Usage Example (bad: three radio calls when one would have sufficed)

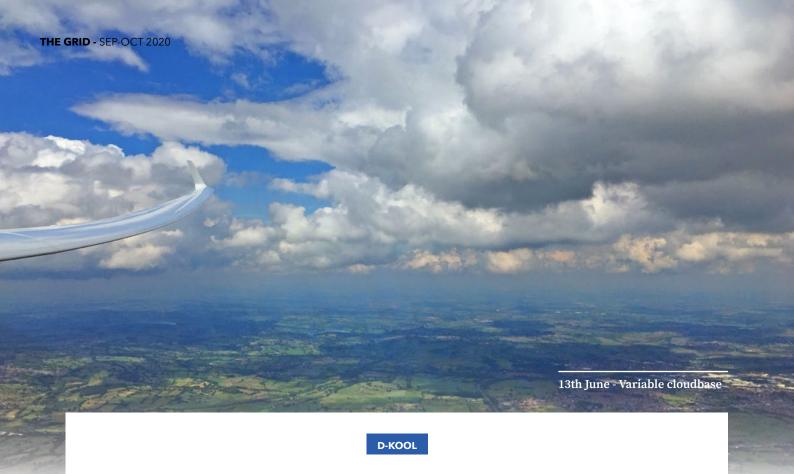
Dunstable Radio: "charlie alpha, Dunstable Radio"

G-LGCA: "Dunstable Radio, charlie alpha, pass your message"

Dunstable Radio: "Charlie alpha your next glider is 527"

Remember your callsign is Dunstable Radio, not Dunstable Tower. (If it were, you'd be a qualified air traffic controller, probably sitting in front of a radar screen – somewhat overkill for a gliding club!)

David Starer



BACK IN THE SKY - PART II

BY ED DOWNHAM

EDITOR'S NOTE

Ed ended June at the top of the open, weekend and distance ladders. So I asked him if he would be happy to share a summary of his season so far, which he did.

As an avid cross-country pilot, Ed shared enough flights for me to split into two parts. Here is Part II, with his best flights during June.

5[™] JUNE: MAKING THE MOST OF IT

A showery airmass in a strong NW flow on the charts, but with the possibility of some drying downwind of the Welsh mountains. Full of hope and optimism, as ever, I set a 600km triangle, Plymouth - Mynd. It was touch and go getting away as a shower line was sliding past the Club from the NNW, and I just managed to nip the start line in the edge of the rain before setting off down the ridges.

The wind was a solid 25kts+, and I glid out to Chinnor ridge, where it was starting to recycle. After a few false starts, a cloud climb to 5,000' allowed me to leave the ridge behind. Looking down the planned track from on high, there was 7/8ths Cu and mid-level overcast, which translated to difficult/impossible in that wind. After deciding to scrub the task, I made my new goal to get to the Cotswold edge and soar that.

Once past the Oxford/Brize area, the sky opened up a bit, and some runs started forming; the wind was still fierce, but the lift was strong, and you could climb without circling on the good bits, so I arrived at Cheltenham at 5,000'. Diving down onto the ridge didn't attract, and it looked OK ahead, so I changed the goal to the Mynd. There were showers, but as the base was well over 5k, they were of snow at that level

and mostly benign. Overflying the Mynd at 5,000', I had a good peer around, and although there were large showers blocking access to central Wales, it still looked reasonably open in the direction of Lleweni Parc, so I set off in that direction. There was some wave around which I worked up to 7,500', but being constrained by the airway and showers, I couldn't do much with it, so I dived into the Clywd valley near Corwen.

A couple of guys soaring the NW side of Snowdonia from Lleweni told me there was just a bit too much N in the wind for the local ridge to be reliable, so I turned Ruthin instead. Apart from a few wrong turns to start with, it was a straight run back to LGC of 230km at >170kph - as it was still soarable, I added on an O/R to Northampton to total 623km on OLC. I didn't do much of my original task, but it was certainly worth flying!



8[™] JUNE: CONVERGENCES PART II

With a light NNE flow, there were again promises from the oracles of sea breezes along the south coast. It was 8/8ths at LGC, but there were signs of convection underneath, so I set off on Axminster, Lewes, Havant, to maximise exposure to the convergences.

It was working, just, so it was survival mode over the Chilterns until past Benson, where the sun started reaching the ground. I negotiated my way through the Boscombe area and was rewarded by an improvement in conditions,

'Full of hope and optimism, as ever, I set a 600km triangle, Plymouth - Mynd.'

with base rising and thermals becoming more reliable. There was still a lot of clouds around but enough sunshine to be reliable and turning Axminster, signs of a bit of sea air were showing, but it was still spotty.

Looking SE, good runs were forming in the Bournemouth and Southampton zones parallel with the coast, so I called them up some way out for clearance.

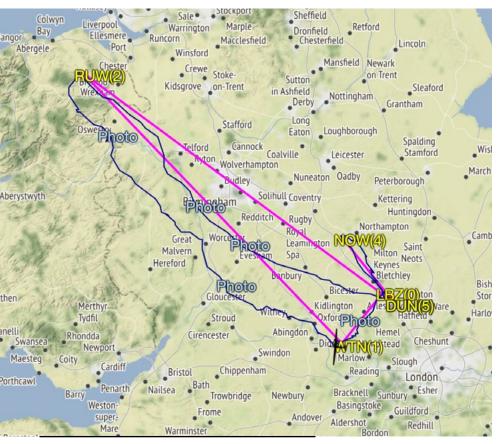
Bournemouth were dropping parachutes and Southampton were closed to all comers due to a calibration flight. Damn! I routed to the north of both zones, but the task was now unachievable, so I turned for LGC instead.

The route home was unclear, as a large area to the north had gone to 8/8 with not many signs of convection. I hung on in weak lift over some watery sunshine near Rivar Hill while the overcast dissipated, then a long glide out into the sun past Didcot, for a climb just short of Benson, then not too bad after that. 450km on OLC.

13[™] JUNE: MIXED BAG

We were in the southeasterly flow around a filling low, with bands of air of different moisture content circulating around it. A task Telford, Wragby (NE of Lincoln) seemed to fit the bill, with the drier air forecast to arrive on the crosswind leg early afternoon. With a 15kt tailwind, the leg up to Telford went quite quickly, but the thermals were somewhat random in position and strength, plus wider and wider spaced as the cloud depth increased going NW.

Running behind Birmingham and East Midlands, it became apparent that I'd cut it pretty fine with the dry air, but there was good energy at the boundary, even though there was a lot of cloud cover, with one climb giving a 9kt average. To the north, the base fell rapidly, and the ground rose to almost meet it. I got a clearance from



5th June - LBZ - WTN - RUW - DUN - NOW - DUN

E Mids through their airspace, then fell into a bit of a blue hole around Mansfield, finally connecting with some clouds near Retford. From there in and out of the turn, it went a bit soft, with medium and high cloud dulling the sun, and I didn't find much to enthuse about until south of Cranwell, where there was a step-change to 5,000' + cloud base, and 4-5kts climbs in much better air. Apart from the wind picking up in the last 50km and there being a teensy bit too much cloud, it was a nice run home for 503km at 100kph.

14TH JUNE: FALLING OFF THE EDGE (REPEATEDLY)

Another day of wet/dry interfacing. TJ and I looked at the weather independently and came up with similar tasks so agreed on a joint Deddington, Tibenham, Tiptree, Swainsthorpe (NE of Tibenham) and home, 534km. The weather window was really only 400km, so we were going to have to dip in and out at the corners. From the launch point, it looked OK to Deddington, but it got lower and murkier with the base at not much more than 2,000' AGL and

raining in and out of the turn. I survived with the first foray into cloud of the day, followed by an epic grovel at Newport Pagnell.

Once I had sorted that out, conditions improved rapidly towards the east, with 4,000' at Cambridge and 5,000' + at Newmarket. Tibenham looked like it was under a shower, so I took a cloud climb 15km short and Approaching the last TP at Swainsthorpe, it was obvious that it was still in the murk, but as the base was 5,000' + 20km away, it wasn't too much of a problem, in fact, I on the way in I hit 6kts in the side of a cloud and used it for a fast run back to the good conditions. Apart from messing up the final glide under the airspace, it was fairly normal from then on.

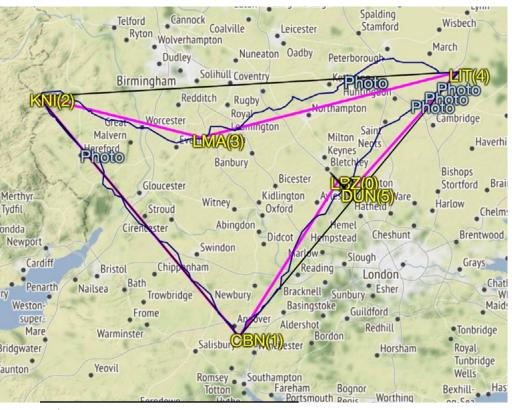
'Finally, NE of Daventry, I found something that went all the way up under a line of dark clouds, to 6,000', no less.'

gritted my teeth: luckily the CB was bigger than I thought, therefore further away and I managed to go round the turn without getting wet again. Once reestablished in the dry air, it was an average kind of run to Tiptree, with nice looking streets but not much in the way of decent climbs, so I gave up with circling and tried to husband the height by wobbling from one side to the other. It looked worse on the way out, having gone in at 2,500' but out of nowhere, I cleaned 7kts, which just goes to show.

15[™] JUNE: PERSEVERANCE PAYS

Another day in the filling low (although it was technically not low pressure any more at 1014, 1mb above standard). Showers forecast but the BBC animation in the morning showed very few central to the east until late, with west Wales getting the worst of them from early on. I planned SW-NW then back to the E, using Chilbolton (S of Andover), Knighton (west of Shobdon) and Littleport (near Ely). There was a thin layer of medium cloud coming and going when I launched, but the air underneath was nicely unstable, so there were climbs underneath it.

The initial run out under the LTMA was very buoyant, with the first proper climb near Aldermaston. After that, the cloud lowered a bit and required a change of gear, but it was still perfectly soarable. Heading NW, base rose to 4,000' with a reasonable amount of sun on the ground and 3kt climbs, although it did get a bit soft again after Swindon. There was a minor convergence near Nympsfield which gave me enough altitude to cross the Severn and contact again over the Forest of Dean. Large clouds were building on track, although no rain was evident, and I managed to locate a good climb on the edge of the black stuff near Hereford and run out the back end with no ill effects.



15th June - LBZ - CBN - KNI - LMA - LIT - DUN



The sky into Knighton looked a bit ragged, but there was a rough climb on the way that saw me in and out without issue. Deviation to the north was required to get out of the shadow of the now-CB that I had originally used, and for the next 100km, the thermals seemed to get more difficult to centre, and the cloud base was a distant dream. It all came apart near Stratford when I had to run downwind towards the Birmingham airspace in a last-ditch attempt to stay in the air in what was the only obvious lift in sight, as mediumlevel clouds had spread to cover almost everywhere. Then followed

45mins of glides between patches of scrappy lift that gave out early.

Finally, NE of Daventry, I found something that went all the way up under a line of dark clouds, to 6,000', no less. That was excellent, but the view ahead wasn't: 8/8ths with a few dead clouds, although in the far distance there was a hint of a lighter patch. I throttled back a bit then glid out 50km to the next lift at Peterborough, under a crack in the overcast. The base was 3,000' lower here, but there were thermals, which is what mattered. I nipped in and out of the turn, then went under

a building cell over Ely which had full sunshine; it was a decent 4kts to begin with, then accelerated as I went into cloud, eventually peaking at 14kts. I left at 9,500' as I was well over glide by then and didn't want to ice up. There was a bit of uncertainty as to whether a huge Cb was over LGC, but it was a couple of miles away and receding, so I was a bit cautious up to that point with the margin, but it was nice to have plenty of energy in the can for a relaxing fast glide in. 28% 604km triangle at 98kph.

Ed Downham







WITH CLEMENT ALLEN

ue to the growing popularity of Glide and Seek as a live tracking application, we interviewed the founder and developer of the platform, Clement Allen, who is also a former cadet and member of the London Gliding Club.

Tell us a bit more about you. When did you discover your passion for gliding, and what are your most memorable moments?

I first tried gliding in the Air Cadets and caught the bug pretty quickly. I then joined the LGC Cadets in 2013 and went solo later in the year. I now have around 400 hours, have been flying competitions for the last five years and was British Team reserve for the Junior World Gliding Championships held in Hungary in 2019. Some of my most memorable moments include flying around the summit of Snowdon during the LGC Llanbedr expeditions and coming second in the 2018 Junior Nationals at Lasham.

How is your 2020 season going so far?

Could be better! Sadly the competitions I was planning to fly in the UK and France this year were all cancelled, but I did manage to make the most of several weekends of outstanding weather at the start of the season. I also crewed for my friend Finn Sleigh at the Czech National Championships in July/ August which was a lot of fun.

What glider do you currently fly?

I fly a Standard Cirrus, 822, that I have been the proud owner of since 2018. Before that, I was lucky enough to fly the LGC Cadets ASW19, HCV, for a number of years and competitions. Having HCV available to fly at almost any opportunity really helped me to get to grips with flying competitively in a short space of time.

Now let's talk about Glide and Seek. How and when did you first come up with the idea that became this great tool? As ground tracking during competitions became more common, I got increasingly frustrated with the amount of effort required to display tasks on the map. In November 2018, I initially tried modifying a version of the well-known Spot the Gliders (the source code of which is publicly available) but quickly found I was making so many adjustments it made more sense to start from scratch, so Glide and Seek was born.

Were you the sole developer and how many people are involved in the maintenance and evolution of the platform?

I am the sole developer, but these days a lot of my todo list is driven by feedback from users and friends. I used up a lot of my own ideas for features and changes a while back, so this feedback is invaluable to help me make Glide and Seek what people want to use. If you have any feedback or ideas for features, I would love to hear them. My email address is clement@glideandseek.com

That's quite impressive! What would you consider the most significant achievement of Glide and Seek so far?

I was excited in 2019 to discover that the Junior World Gliding Championships in Hungary decided to use Glide and Seek to track the competition. I was in Hungary for the last week of the competition, and it was great to walk through the campsite and see almost all the teams from around the world using Glide and Seek to track the pilots each day.

This summer I also developed a special version of Glide and Seek for two young pilots from France, Clément and Ludo, who flew the Schempp Hirth factory Discus 2 FES around France for a few weeks in an expedition called the Tour de France en Planeur (https://www.facebook.com/TDFenPlaneur/). They were alternating between

'I was excited in 2019 to discover that the Junior World Gliding Championships in Hungary decided to use Glide and Seek to track the competition.'

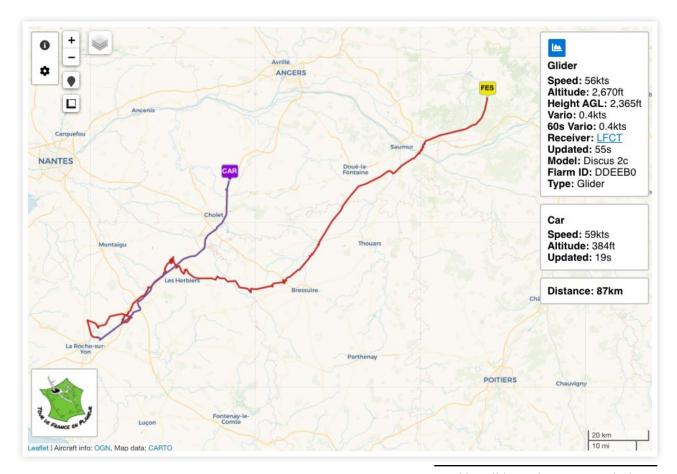
flying the glider and driving the support car, and the special version of Glide and Seek was able to show both on the map. This received a lot of positive feedback from glider pilots around the world who followed the expedition!

Showing the support car can be very useful indeed, and hopefully, it will become a new permanent feature! How does Glide and Seek work under the hood, and what are the key features?

Glide and Seek wouldn't exist without the work of the Open Glider Network (OGN) which collects aircraft positions through a network of volunteer-run ground stations around the world and makes the data openly accessible.

Some of the key features include:

- Easy displaying of SoaringSpot tasks either by pasting the URL into the settings or by clicking the task links on a website called https://soarscore.com which integrated with Glide and Seek last year
- Mobile-friendly (around 65% of the website visits come from mobile devices, so a lot of time has gone into making it work well on them)
- A live barograph display similar to the one in SeeYou



Tracking glider and support car during the Tour de France en Planeur.

- Add aircraft to favourites and show only them on the map
- Rain radar and airspace overlays along with different map styles

Over last winter, I also worked with my friend Matt Page who developed Robocontrol, the competition management tool, to integrate Glide and Seek tracking as a feature. We were hoping to test this out over the season, but sadly that did not happen.

However, next year, any competitions using Robocontrol will have Glide and Seek integration showing the daily tasks, only competitors in the competition and extra data in the aircraft info box such as name, launch time, start time and hopefully not that often, landout location!

What were the biggest challenges you faced throughout its development?

When the weather is good in Europe and lots of aircraft are

online, the OGN data feed which Glide and Seek uses pushes several million position updates an hour and writing code that efficiently processes them while keeping the server costs to a minimum is one of the biggest challenges. A lot of time has been spent making small optimisations to this process!

Roughly how many people visit the website every month, and what are the top countries?

The visitor numbers are increasing week on week as the site gets more popular, so it's hard to put a number on it, but in July there were roughly 50,000 visits to Glide and Seek. The most popular countries are the UK, Czech Republic, Germany and France, but these often vary month on month depending on which competitions are using Glide and Seek for tracking.

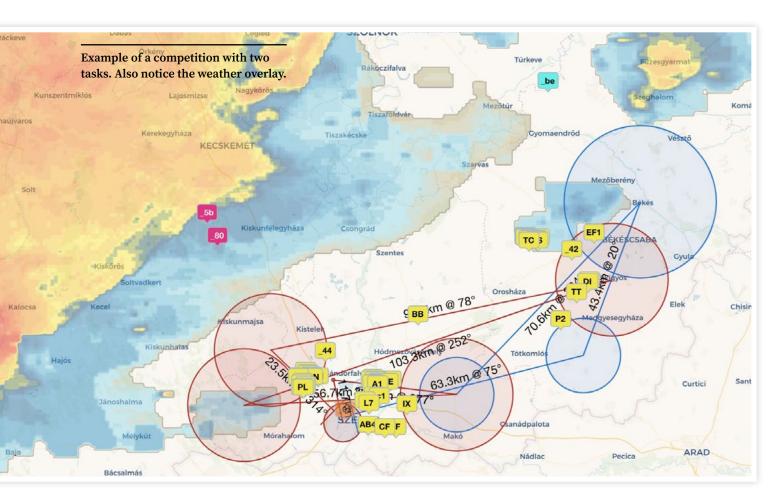
Glide and Seek was the official partner for live tracking of the Montluçon-Guéret International Glide

2020. Could you please share what were some of the challenges and maybe some numbers on the audience?

I have put a lot of effort into making it easy to share links to Glide and Seek that automatically show the latest tasks for a given competition for several classes at a time. All I had to do was create a custom link and share it with the organisers. It's hard to say an accurate number of visitors directly watching the competition on Glide and Seek but the custom links I created have had just over 1,000 clicks at the time of writing.

The integration with live weather information and airspace is very useful. How does the BGA or FAI see the potential use of Glide and Seek by teams to provide data to pilots? Is this a real issue or not really?

Tracking has become a large part of World and European



competitions in the last few years with most teams on the ground relaying tactical and weather information to pilots in the air. The rules around permitting information from the ground change often and vary from competition to competition with a lot of divided opinion on whether it is a good thing for the sport or not. Even where ground information is not allowed to be used by pilots, there is certainly still a place for Glide and Seek for spectators and teams to watch out the tasks unfold.

Do you see Glide and Seek expanding its target audience beyond Gliding towards

General Aviation?

There are already several sites dedicated to tracking General Aviation such as Flightradar24, and while Glide and Seek is still a spare-time hobby I am happy to let them keep the market!

What is your vision for the application, and what can we expect in short/medium term?

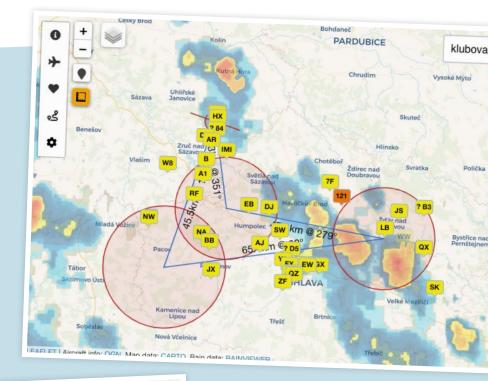
Right now, I am enjoying watching Glide and Seek grow in popularity and making small improvements based on user feedback along with helping competitions using it for custom tracking. I am looking to integrate with gliding weather forecast providers in the next year or so to enable overlays such as cloud cover, convergences, ridge lift and more which will be really exciting.

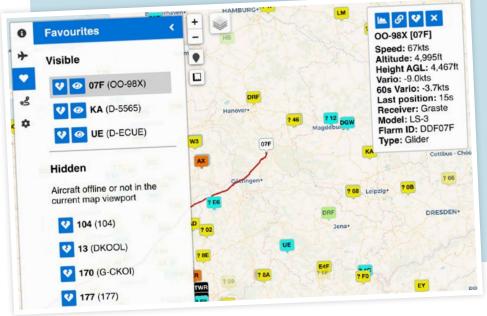
If anyone has any questions, feedback or comments about Glide and Seek they are more than welcome to contact me on clement@glideandseek.com

Facebook: https://facebook.com/glideandseek

Instagram: https://instagram.
com/glideandseek_

Example of competition tracking, showing task and participating gliders.





New feature: adding aircrafts to favourites and show only them on the map.



Glideandseek.com

WEDNESDAYS

SUMMER EVENINGS

BY ROGER LESLIE

here is something about
Wednesday evening summer
flying: the air is calm
(no pesky thermals to do battle
with), the often wonderful light,
constantly changing, fading as
the sun approaches the horizon,
casting orange, pink and scarlet
on the last of the day's clouds.

There is a serenity*, and a great sense of privilege, floating around, with the vario needle only just the wrong side of zero. With trim correctly set, there is no need for control inputs other than for gentle turns. It's an ideal time for ab-initios to gain coordination and speed control confidence. And take time to look, really look around.

Unfortunately, 2020 hasn't been the best year for Wednesday evening

'The final Wednesday evening flying of the year was probably the best one, and also my first of 2020.'

flying. Lockdown meant we were well into the season before we could get started. Several poor-weather Wednesdays knocked a few more of them off the calendar. But on August 26th, the last Wednesday evening of the season, it was nigh on perfect!

Silky smooth air, a hint of buoyancy, and an interesting cloudscape for the setting sun to paint vivid colours. Oh, and a light breeze onto the hill to delay that descent by just a few minutes. The final Wednesday evening flying of the year was probably the best one, and also my first of 2020.

I'm looking forward to next April. There is something about Wednesday evening summer flying.

Many thanks go to Phil Warner for organising these events, the instructors, and the friendly group of folks who come along to fly and to help each other get airborne.

Roger Leslie

*Serenity: I stole that word from Alex Horstmann's Facebook post because I could not think of a better one.

Pilatus afterburn
Photo: Roger Leslie

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G-FLKS

THE CONTINUING STORY OF THE TRAVELS OF KS

BY STEVE LYNN





GALLERY

GLIDING LIFE

CAPTURED BY THE LENSES OF OUR MEMBERS

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

Resumption of operations, with social distancing, at LGC. There have proved to be several regular volunteers, to whom we should be grateful for helping to get many of us back in the air; with special thanks to those who repeatedly offer their time but who are not yet able to fly solo themselves under Phase 1.

Photos by David A White

7S-GER

Waiting for the right time to launch.

Photo by David A White

TJ on final turn.

Photo by David A White

All smiles at LGC.

Photo by David A White



S&G CLUB NEWS: AN APPEAL

owards the back of every edition of the Sailplane & Gliding magazine, you will find the "Club News' section with a couple of paragraphs of news and maybe a photograph or two from every club.

I've now achieved ten years of writing the LGC report, and I think it's time to hang up my pen and hand over to someone new. Perhaps You? A typical entry is 95-120 words every other month, so it's not a hugely demanding task. It helps to know what's happening at the club.

I'd like to make the Dec 2020/Jan 2021 issue my last so please, if you are willing to help, do get in touch.

Andrew Sampson

PS That was 119 words!



SECRET DIARY OF AD NAUSEAM, AGE 47%

(apologies to Sue Townsend)

Chapter 56: Trick or Treat

in't it great how fings are getting back to normal, don't ya fink? At last, this Corona Beer craze is wearing off, and it's so good to see people around, some have even been across country!

Mind you, everybody seems to have picked up some strange habits. I've never seen so much wringing of hands, minimum 20 seconds a time they say. And they all have one of their granny's old headscarves to wear over their faces like they're in a cowboy film.

Ah! That's it - maybe it's because Trevor's back too, he's doing his cowboy burgers with Jenga chips - stack'em high, that's what I say! They're so good that we all have to sit 2 meters apart so the others can't reach over to nick one off yer plate.

But the weird thing about going to the rest'ront is the new NHS 'Trick or Treat' book. You have to put your name, phone number, blood type, allergies and menu preferences down on a bit of paper. Then if anyone blames you for a bad time you get carted off for some mystery treatment. For some, it means a fortnight in solitary confinement.

On the field, the old habits are back again too. We've already had the 'handbags at dawn' chorus: "I was here first, I'm flying the 24". "Oh no you're not, I booked it first". 'Oh yes I am'... the LGC pantomime is so refreshing.

As ever the best behaviour is to be seen at 'The Grid' (not this mag, I meen the other one). The ones at the front are waiting for it to get better. The ones at the back are complaining. The ones in the middle are sitting in their gliders. And absolutely nothing is happening, while everybody watches the K23 going round and round for no apparent reason. They just don't geddit. The tug pilots threaten to go to lunch. Then, as if by magic, the penny drops and suddenly everybody wants to launch - NOW!

You have to see it to believe it. To be continued...

Ad Nauseam

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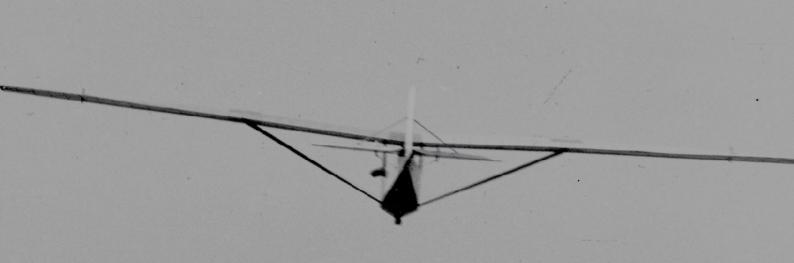
Newsletter

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