



Soaring Times



NEWSLETTER OF THE NENE VALLEY GLIDING CLUB

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1. EDITORIAL

As most will know by now we have leased a Grob Twin Acro from a syndicate put together by some of our members and purchased in Germany. It means that we still have 2 serviceable 2-seat aircraft despite 'CFG' being in long-term overhaul as a result of the Schleicher glue issues and 'DOX' being currently off-line for its annual inspection. Those of us who have had the pleasure of flying in the Grob have enjoyed the smoothness, the relative quiet and the 'luxury' of the seating. It launches well from both of our winches and will be popular with everyone this Summer. The club now has a strategy, as agreed by the committee, to move towards a 50% glass-fibre fleet within a year or so. Read the minutes of the last meetings for more details of how this will be achieved. Suffice to say that the reliance on older Schleicher wood is to be reduced. The soaring season is now well-and-truly with us and already there have been some great flying days. The expedition to Eden was enjoyed by all who went and Steve's report on it is below, plus one from Richard & Tony.

One thing we really need is more help with our Friday evening flying. It is these visitor flying evenings which help us to keep our launch rates so low by comparison with most other clubs, so please don't leave it to the 'usual suspects' to make these evenings a success. Even if you can only come along after work it will help.

2. CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We have grown our flying membership from about 35 to 60 over the last few years with the help of our new young pilots.

Now we need to look at our membership of those aged 30 to 50 years plus, to take over the running of the club from our 'flying pensioners' over the future years, as we pop off for a flying visit to see the great architect of the universe.

How do we do this?

- (1) If every middle-aged member introduces one new member in their own age group that would help.
- (2) We fly many visitors of that age group and it will help if the instructors, and indeed all members who speak to our visitors, try to convince them that gliding is the best sport for middle-aged people who want to unwind and enjoy a less stressful sport.

I would like to congratulate all those who have recently gone solo or achieved any other goal - well done.

3. CFI's SECTION

EDEN EXPEDITION 2015

SATURDAY

Arrived at Eden with only one minor hiccup on the way. Ask our chairman about his attachment to a fuel hose at the services! (*Less said about that the better! – Ed.*)

SUNDAY

Flying commenced with only experienced pilots allowed to fly due to 25/30 kt cross winds, launches proved exciting due to shadow from trees upwind & instructions were to launch from the north field & land in the south field (less turbulence) with a strong westerly wind. Once on the ridge the lift was good, however I was finding that speed to fly in the DG300 was 60-70 kts. My thoughts turned to Richard in the L-Spatz; glad I was in a glass ship. Had a good 2½ hours on the ridge & time to return to Skelling. With 70 kts IAS the GPS was showing a ground speed of 22 kts, umm strong head wind! All pilots, SJ, MM, TW, RA returned home safely.

MONDAY

The same conditions continued, ridge lift & wave was present. I managed a wave climb to 6,000 ft, keeping a good look out to make sure the cloud didn't close in underneath. But the cloud did, so a 2,000 ft cloud decent was made - another 2hrs 24 min flight.

TUESDAY

Today we did not rig, but enjoyed mutual flying in Eden's K13, a shared flight with Tony clocking up a 54 min most enjoyable flight on the ridge. Then I flew as P1 with Colin from Gransden in the K13. The ridge was working well. However, looking out into the valley, rain approaching made the decision to return to Skelling with rain on the return, rain in the circuit, rain on the approach/landing, rain on the outside of the canopy misting up inside the canopy and the sloping airfield was, umm, 'interesting'

WEDNESDAY

The ridge not working resulted in a weak thermal day. However, enjoyable 54 min flight in the DG300

THURSDAY

Arrived on site to an easterly wind. Helm wind day. This was briefed in the morning and you could see a mass of cloud the other side of the ridge might be a gold/diamond height day. Nobody rigged, however my plan was to have a check flight with their instructor in the Helm wind then rig the DG if conditions deemed suitable. So a k13 day as the helm wind did not produce as it should have done. A mutual in the k13 with Tom using thermals produced a 54 min flight. Then another mutual with Tony. The brief was that I was to do the launch & Tony the landing. Off the top of the launch 1,100 into 8kts of sink & turning produced 10 kts of sink. Getting low, so the words were "Tony you have control" to which the response was "What"! However, with Tony now low in the downwind leg with still a large amount of sink we turn in early & land. Well done Tony (3min flight from launch to landing).

FRIDAY

Light winds & the ridge only working in places. OK take a launch, head to the ridge where I could see Michael in the Junior on the ridge and joined him. Neither of us could really make any use of it, so return to the

airfield & land b By now the sky over cast, sod it, it's the last day let's take one more launch. Felt a thermal on the top of the launch, turn ED 180 degrees & straight into it. 4 kts climb to cloud base 1,600 ft, head to explore the ridge and made more use of the ridge. Great fun with a bit more height under your belt & interesting, with the wind direction as it was, working out what parts were working - a good exercise. Cloud base still 1,600 when a radio call was given by Martin (a local) in wave at 10,000 ft. So leave the ridge & into the valley, umm over cast no thermal activity when a half-kt registered. Turn into it and it seemed it took ages to climb 200 ft to just under cloud base. Move out to edge of cloud and no lift, but then i found my ½ kt again. OK, turn again nothing ok let's think about this. My decision was find the ½ kt then don't turn, fly straight. Wow, 6kts in smooth wave climbing like a homesick eagle. Vario now pinned on 10 kts for about 30 seconds then reducing to 8 kts. Reached the top of the climb 8,000 feet - was a gold height on? Misty conditions above me and not willing to disappear into cloud, I called Tony who was also up here for his advice which was to keep with it as it might clear. Hang around at 8k, push up to a wispy cloud and start climbing again at 6 kts. Look down, where is the ground gone? Start to think about my situation. Decision was to turn back into clear air & get sight of the ground time to descend with full airbrake. Land back at Skelling to a cold grey windy airfield but that didn't matter as just had my best height gain. What a last flight of the week, most enjoyable, 2hrs 53 min.

Most enjoyable bits? All of it, good company, good food, good flying.
Less enjoyable? No cross country (sad). For sale: ½ mill northern chart 1 owner unused.
This is my own personal account of a really enjoyable trip up north

Steve

4. AIRCRAFT NOTES

It's been a very busy couple of months since the last Aircraft Report so here's an update.

The new Grob Twin II Acro 2-seater leased from the GROB Syndicate

Collected by Michael and Brian (see below for the stories of the trip to and from Germany), much has had to happen to bring the glider into service with the club. In addition to wading through reams of documents in German, re-registering it and completing all of the BGA and CAA requirements, we also had to de-rig it after our initial rigging, to carry out a new EASA PAD (Provisional Airworthiness Directive) on the airbrake system. Setting up the new aircraft records has taken more time than I anticipated as all of the previous records were in German and so could not simply be continued in English. All necessary documents had to be recreated as new. So, by the time you read this we expect to have finally flight-tested it and signed off the Release to Service for club use. Please respect the weight limitations which cannot be relaxed by the BGA Weight Concession – this would be illegal on this glider as it has not been in the BGA system prior to 2008 – Transition Date. Also the glider has to be classified as 'Non-Aerobatic' as it does not have an accelerometer (G-meter) fitted. I do hope that you all enjoy flying our new glider despite the limitations that have to be observed.

The K13 CFG.

Work on the wings is progressing slowly by Trevor Nash, and we are not expecting completion until towards the end of this year. In the meantime the new lower rudder hinge bracket has been fitted, the fin re-fitted, and the fuselage stored in the K13 trailer to await the return of the wings.

The K6 BTM.

Although the K6's Annual Inspection and ARC were completed before Christmas initial, external inspection of the wings for the structural inspection has indicated the likelihood of internal problems. Consequently the decision was made to take the glider off-line, de-rig it and store it in the K8 trailer pending full investigation when other aircraft priorities have been met. No change here yet.

The K8 FHN.

Happily this glider has passed its Structural Inspection, and work is now under way to complete the re-fabric work on the tail end of the fuselage, and the rest of its Annual Inspection. It should be back in service in a few weeks time, hopefully.

The K7/13 DOX.

DOX has now been taken off-line as its ARC has expired, and awaits completion of the K8 before we can start its own Structural and Annual Inspections. *(Editor's note; this has now been changed by Alan to give total priority to 'DOX' which is needed in service as soon as possible).*

The Junior KHN.

The Annual Inspection and ARC for this glider have been completed satisfactorily, and it should remain in service for the rest of the year.

Finally, the K13 CEX.

This glider will continue in service until DOX has been completed, at the earliest. New harnesses to replace its ageing originals have been fitted, and other items requiring attention have already been identified, but as these do not restrict our use of the glider we will 'live with them' until more time is available to rectify them.

Do let me know if you have any questions about the above, and I will try to provide a better explanation if one is needed.

5. GROUND EQUIPMENT STUFF

Work is progressing slowly on the 3rd Discovery (Disco 3) and this should be in operation in about 3 to 4 weeks time. It will be used as necessary and will reduce the overall wear rate on our Discos. Thanks again to all who have been helping with this.

It appears that the higher weight of the Grob has caused some of the cable joints to fail and we will use the heavier duty crimping tool for cable joints. If the smaller crimping tool has to be used, a reef knot should be tied in the cable prior to crimping. To launch the Grob requires full throttle for around 70% of the launch, a bit more in very low wind conditions. Full power must be established early in the launch without 'snatching' the aircraft.

6. WHAT DOES YOUR LOG BOOK MEAN TO YOU? by John Young

Flight Number 60, 4/09/82 Winch Launch at Winwick

Fairly good day in terms of launches. I managed 4 in the T21 and at the time we were using Piano Wire and were suffering lots of launch failures.

When in good condition this would give an additional 2-300ft when compared to multi-strand (4.5mm if I remember correctly), but as often happened, we gave the wire a hard time through our home built winch gear (Old BRS delivery wagon with twin drum axis) and often kept the wire in service well beyond the point where work hardening limited its usefulness and increased the frequency of cable breaks to a frustrating level.

On the list to fly again, expecting a short flight, Peter George, a founder member, one of the major motivators and fixers in the club, shouted over to me, "come on master (he tended to call everybody that if he wanted to sound official) get over there", arms waving like he wanted to take off, "a stubble fire just started". Yep, I could see the smoke a couple of fields outside my normally comfortable circuit zone of the already large enough boundary of Listers grassed area at Winwick that we called home. Peter was a blur, running about, pulling the cable, shouting at others, arms still fluttering like autumn leaves flaying in the wind trying to get me in the air like now, his advice was hitting me at lightning speed and the bits that sunk in made sense. "Off the launch, head straight for the stubble fire master, you'll go up like a dingbat"

A word on Stubble Fires - they are no longer legal, there are agricultural arguments for and environmental reasons against, I could be drawn, but not here. At the time there were no restrictions against the control of burning and the practice was to use a number of people, start the burn at the centre of the upwind face of the field moving to the edges (two or more burners) lighting the into wind edges whilst walking towards the

upwind boundary, across the upwind edge, all meeting in the middle of this whilst the fire moved rapidly towards the centre of the field and the crew probably retiring to the local pub.

A number of variations developed over the years trying to reduce the safety and environmental risks of burning so I will leave comments open to debate as to the benefits....apart from I miss them all.

So, off the wire and head for the fire as instructed, (I think?), a bit longer in a straight line than I usually do, but I am getting there, then, almighty sink. The Variometer in the T21 at that time was a Cosim, the display consisted of two tubes with coloured balls responding to the minute airflow of pressure changes from a capacity (flask), red for sink, green for lift, rising or descending in their corresponding tubes to show up or down - but -these instruments needed a bit of input in the shape of a "gentle" tap on the panel to settle the balls for a more accurate reading. I had been tapping like a demented woodpecker trying to defy the gravity that had overcome the red ball's determination to fall through the bottom of the tube when I was surprised, first of all with what felt like I was on the winch again (going up) then a feeling of going down like the proverbial Grand Piano in free fall, didn't have time to monitor the Cosim, but at the other end of the excitement I was roughly the same height as when I entered. Not having the experience (or ability) to work out what just happened I decided -

1. I am too far away from the field for comfort.
2. I had assumed Peter's excitement meant that I shouldn't miss the chance of something special.
3. I did not really have a plan "B".

Straight through the middle again and by now the fire was growing quickly, this time the edge of the thermal was violent, tipping one wing past 45deg regardless of the full opposite aileron input with the nose rising and the old girl racing heavenwards like a homesick angel. The major thought at this point, which should have been just a distraction, was 'Why can I hear the voices of the farmhands so clearly, just like they

were right outside the cockpit'? But I quickly re focused on a panic as glowing embers of straw started to flutter past the open cockpit in an angry un-coordinated swarm, we were all going up but I wasn't happy as one of the dying embers had just wafted right in front of me like a hummingbird about to feed from my nose before losing all signs of life.

That was enough, thinking process was clouded, comfort was non-existent, whatever the plan was it had to change and change now as it was clearly not "a normal flight" - head for home young man.

Instant realisation -I am not getting back to the Launch point and I swear I just heard the red ball crash onto the bottom of the Cosim tube.

Winwick was a very large grass area, probably as big, (or bigger for those that remember) as Swanton Morley, but for the first time for me, it was a snooker table and the boundary hedge was getting bigger. I had no thoughts of those watching from the Launch point seeing me disappearing below the hedge, no praying for miracle lift to get me home, just one overpowering focus on extra speed driving me through the sink in the hope of at least getting onto home grass.

The de-brief was interesting. A fatherly chat with Jo Seitz, our CFI, on the long tow back during which he covered a number of things I had missed (including the hedge), failed to recognise, ignored or was just unable to analyse due to inexperience and they all made sense but, longer term, he had more of an on-going impact on my pre-flight planning and personal discipline that a plan "B" is always a must.

For me, in later years, Jo's "out of earshot" fatherly approach to "sensitive" de briefings was clearly effective and was always used as my first choice as an Instructor for important corrective action.

After many mental replays of the flight over the following days and rewinding Jo's voice to add facts to the bits that I missed, I had a clearer picture of what actually happened and the flight definitely provided me with my first major, self-fault finding flight.

Oh -And I really, really miss Stubble Fires.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations are due to:

Ollie Wilson for completing his 'Bronze' badge qualification.

Tim Williamson for a 120 km cross-country in the K6 'DEV'.

Lewis Smith for his Silver Height

Rod Izatt for his first solo (in difficult conditions). *(Ed's note: Rod's email to all members shows how pleased he was and it was great to see the results and the pleasure he has got from his efforts).*

Chris Barrott for his R.Ae.S. award to help him to fund his on-going training.

8. QUIZ NIGHT

Our quiz night was a very successful and fun evening, raising around £200 and providing a win for the visitors in the form of Welland Gliding Club's team. The other award for 'best team name' went to the team calling themselves 'We're not gynaecologists, but we're willing to take a look'!

All our thanks to Roger, who proved to be an excellent quizmaster, Di, John, Ron & Jane who organised the super food, my wife and daughter who did the raffle and to everyone who attended including the teams from Welland & Crowland.

9. MISSION TO MUNICH or TARGET FOR TONIGHT, MITTENWALD

This is the story of the epic journey made by our esteemed Chairman together with Brian 'Farmer' Palmer to collect the newly acquired Grob on behalf of the owning syndicate who have agreed to lease it to our club as told to the Editor by Brian.

We collected the trailer, which had been kindly loaned by our friends at Crowland, fuelled up the Honda and arrived at Dover at 18-00 hours. After getting in line for boarding the ferry we were moved on-board at about 18-30 hours. However, after parking as signalled we were asked to reverse off because the long trailer was sticking out too far. Reversing off of a ship with that size trailer is not easy, but it was accomplished without any problems, much to Michael's mild surprise. A bit later we were re-boarded onto the outer deck with the big trucks, but by the time we had got sorted out and out of the car we couldn't get into the ship because where we were parked was the wrong side of the big watertight doors. So we had to sit in the car for the entire voyage.

After arriving at Calais and disembarking there were no problems with the French border control, so we pressed on with the journey whilst it was still daylight. On passing through an Autoroute 'Peage' near the Belgian border we were pulled aside by French Customs officers who asked the purpose of our visit. Michael told them we were going to Germany to buy & collect a glider. They asked how we intended paying for it and Michael said that we were going to pay cash, 20.000 Euros, for it. It then transpired that any amounts of cash over 10,000 Euros must be declared on entering France and we had broken the rules which are intended prevent money-laundering. A customs form was produced and the official proceeded to take down Michaels details in a very official manner. He asked Michael's occupation and when he replied 'Politician' the attitude of the official changed and after asking Michael if he had been a regional Mayor, to which the answer was "Yes", we were sent on our way. One might suppose that in France it is expected that politicians will be carrying large amounts of cash, probably in large brown envelopes!



"Vous avez 'ow much cash, Monsieur. Oh, vous ete un Politician – c'est bien!!"

It was then dark and we were in Belgium. Eventually we pulled off the motorway in order to find a hotel, but this proved impossible, so it was decided to sleep in the trailer. There were plenty of cushions. Michael was at one end snoring and was lying under the vent. It rained and he got wet, which serves him right for snoring. Not much sleep was had by either of us.



At 05-00 next morning the journey continued and onto the wonderful German Autobahns. As we couldn't match the speed of the BMWs, Mercs and Porsches, cruising at a completely legal 120 mph to 130 mph, we stayed in the right-hand lane most of the time. We arrived in the Munich area at about 18-00 hours, but we missed the turning which would have allowed us to by-pass Munich. The Sat-Nav, known as the 'Map Bitch', had stopped talking to us by then and was obviously sulking, so we had to revert to using a map, ending up on the Munich inner ring road at going-home time with the navigator/our Chairman, declaring us 'lost' ("you might wonder how he would have got on navigating a Lancaster" – BP). A stop was made at a fuel station for instructions, but after another 45 minutes travelling it seemed we were too far to the east. Another garage stop was made and more instructions obtained. By then the gliding club's CFI, Jan, had phoned the UK to ask where we were and Michael was contacted with a suggestion that he call them. Arrival in the village where the gliding club was situated was achieved, but as the signs were missed the help from two German 'Politzei' who had happened to turn up was well received. Turning round in the dark was carried out with the help of blue flashing lights.

Eventual arrival at the club was at 21-30 hours which had made it a long day. We were made most welcome by Jan who provided supper – typically German fare – and we slept in their clubhouse which was a lot more comfortable than a glider trailer.

In the morning we had breakfast at the club. Then we pulled the Grob out of the hangar, de-rigged it and loaded it into the trailer. Our German friends were most impressed with the belly dolly. Departure for home was late morning. However, shortly after leaving a 'small lapse' from the navigation department meant a need to turn round in a village, successful completion of which again surprised Michael and impressed the locals.

Eventually the Autobahn was reached and the long trek started in earnest. Now Michael has a friend who is the Mayor of Baldock's twin-town of Eisenberg so Michael called him up and Adolf, for that is the Mayor's name, arranged a hotel in his town where we got good company at dinner, a good nights sleep and a really excellent breakfast.

The following morning we said our goodbyes to Adolf, pressed on across Germany and Belgium and into France arriving at Calais in late afternoon. Between passport control and the ferry we were stopped by the Gendarmes who wanted to check for illegal migrants. But they didn't ask us to pull the fuselage out and there could easily have been two migrants in the cockpit (think how much we could have made for the club if we had done that!). At Dover there were absolutely no checks whatsoever. We arrived back at Upwood at 22-00 hours having covered over 1800 miles.

Editor's note: A truly epic journey for which we all thank you both. It sounds as though you had some fun as well. Well done.

10 MORE ABOUT the EDEN EXPEDITION by Richard & Tony

Saturday. Once again some intrepid members of NVGC made the trek to the Eden Valley this May. There were seven Club members with six gliders plus a guest from Gransden Lodge. On route most of us

stopped for fuel just before leaving the A1 at Scotch Corner just before turning onto the A66. One of our party managed to collect both fuel and a gun from a fuelling pump on his way out. Despite this, we arrived early afternoon at Skelling farm for a refreshing walk around the field before setting up shop in our two cottages.

Sunday. Flying, after gang rigging, was with a boisterous Westerly under cloudy skies, which gave us an opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with the 'Hill' in conditions rather akin to being in a washing machine – excellent fun for everyone. Dinner that evening was at The Shepard at Langwathby, now much improved. We catered for ourselves on most nights eating out only on two occasions.

Monday. We had a similar westerly with a few upper breaks that enabled climbs to 5,000ft in the embedded wave. Landings in the cross winds were challenging with curl-over from the trees so most landings were long into the Southern field with marginally tamer conditions near the ground. The resident instructor passed a view that he would not have let the locals fly in their wooden gliders in those conditions but Richard seemed to manage (to stay in one place pointing into wind!)

Tuesday. The same but less windy westerly allowed tuition in gully flying and transitioning from and to different parts on the hill for those less acquainted with the geography.

Wednesday. We had an ESE wind which gave unexpected pockets of rotor and lift from the hill and some severe downdrafts. We moved all the cars behind the winch and set off. Steve and Tony flew together in the K13 and had the shortest full launch flight either of them could remember. Steve did the launch to 1,200ft and after a minute of 10 down shouted "You have". Tony landed across the field in front on the winch, having watched the cable landing in front of them, total time airborne - three minutes. Conditions moderated later in the day and some good flights were had.

Thursday. Cannot remember much but I think it was quieter with W winds and I gave some further tuition on the ridge now in marginal conditions. we persuaded Derek Coker from Hus Bos to try and get out to Pooley Bridge, and then get back. Well done him because he did! We all went to the Bikers Cafe as we were cold.

Friday. Arrived with a very light Westerly wind, thin high top cover and a scattering of small grey cu. Tony and John Castle took a 'weather check' flight and managed to get away in a mix of thermal and ridge but it was very difficult. Several people followed, mostly landing back. Richard had a couple of tries then de-rigged his glider. One or two did get away. Tom climbed in a thermal and managed to stay up. Tony got a weak thermal which drifted him onto the ridge. Steve and Michael were both successful. Over the next couple of hours, conditions improved and about 15.00hrs it became clear that there was wave suppressing both the thermals and some of the ridge lift. Those still flying went looking for a way aloft and contacted climbs up to 8,000ft.

We flew every day in all sorts of conditions, ate well, broke nothing (petrol pump excluded), spent a little and travelled home Friday evening and Saturday morning. Not sure what the total hours were but typical hours were in the region of ten to fifteen.

In conclusion, once again Eden proved to be challenging, exciting and completely different from conditions of previous years. Will be taking bookings for next year in due course. If you fancy trying it out, talk to Tony, Steve or Richard.

Tony Walker and Richard Aylesbury

Here are two super photos taken by Tom from his K6CR which show some of the wonders of Eden Soaring.



11 'BRONZE' LECTURES

The series of Bronze lectures has started, but have, in the main, been poorly attended. Still to come is the big one on Meteorology plus the one covering aircraft structure. Date is to be advised later.

12. BADGE CLAIMS by Dave Mansfield

With the Soaring Season now upon us, there are days when it is good and days when it is not good. Using the Boy Scouts motto "Be Prepared" it is wise for anyone looking at Badge Claims to sort out when and how to carry an approved logger.

The Club owns two EW-D loggers and GPSs which members can use for the purpose of Badge Claims up to Gold. They are locked away for safe keeping and can be obtained from the Instructor of the day at the morning briefing.

Many members have purchased their own loggers which they will use for their own Badge Claims.

Now the important bit. For any Badge Claim you will require the services of a BGA Official Observer. The Club has several of these. You will also require the necessary paperwork for the Badge Claim, downloaded and printed from the BGA website preferably before your flight especially so for Silver Distance.

The logger/GPS has to be seen and secured in the glider by an Official Observer before the flight. It may also require details of your task/Badge Claim setting into the logger before this. After your flight it is only an Official Observer (OO) who should remove it from the aircraft (it does not have to be the same Official Observer who put it into the glider). The Official Observer will then download the information from the logger to see if the Badge Claim has been met.

WARNING: If you have one of the BGA sold and Approved FR300 logger's which come with a lanyard to hang round your neck DO NOT just get in the glider with it round your neck, do your Badge Flight then hand it to an Official Observer to verify. You will have broken the Rules and the Official Observer will inform you that your Claim is invalid.

Always be prepared, make sure you know who the Official Observers are in the Club and use them. They will all help and advise you preferably before your flight.

David Mansfield, One of Nene Valley Gliding Club's Official Observers.

13. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Task week is the first full week in August

14. AND FINALLY

If at first you don't succeed, Skydiving is not for you.

We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse.

Red meat is not bad for you. Fuzzy green meat *is* bad for you.

It's just the ninety-nine per-cent of all lawyers who give the rest a bad name.

Last of all, our Chairman organising things at Eden Soaring:

"I say chaps, wake me up when the cables arrive"

