

NEWSLETTER OF THE NENE VALLEY GLIDING CLUB

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Soaring Times



April 2024

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1. Editorial

It's Spring again, the airfield is drying out and we are all looking forward to a great soaring season. Like many other clubs, our numbers went down due to Covid, but now we have attracted several new members and they are most welcome.

One subject which the BGA are encouraging is 'asset sharing; between clubs. For clubs in the same area, the idea of not only sharing assets, but members visiting the other clubs is a good idea. Welland G.C. and Crowland have been visiting us to fly whilst their airfields were completely flooded and it was good for all concerned. In fact, Welland have offered to lend us their newly acquired Blanik two-seater for our Task Week in August. Of course, we have accepted and it will be interesting to fly in an all-aluminium glider. This is what 'asset-sharing' is about.

In fact, the subject of greater inter-club interaction has been in discussion and I believe that one or more social events are also being planned with the two clubs mentioned above. More on this soon. Let's all do everything we can to make it a really good Spring, Summer and Autumn for our club.

2. Chairman's Chat

Well, following the AGM I now find myself doing my third stint as Chairman; the first time started 31 years ago! Many thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Michael Muir, for all his hard work over the last 13 years and I wish him well in his "retirement" from committee work. I know that he will still be available to assist the club in obtaining any grants required using his extensive knowledge on the subject and network of contacts.

As stated at the AGM, my primary aim is to continue safe operations at the club and ask that everyone not only uses the correct procedures but also look out for other members to ensure they are being kept safe. If you are undertaking a specific job don't allow yourself to be distracted from the task in hand. Also, please treat all club equipment with respect and operate it correctly. There's nothing worse than having to use the club's funds to needlessly repair or replace items that have been incorrectly used or abused.

I also asked that members take ownership of the club and help out in whatever area of the club's running that they feel able to contribute to, or if they wish to learn a new skill, contact the

relevant committee member and join their team. The new Vice-Chairman, Tim Ward is currently constructing (with assistance from a few of our Junior members) a photo board, displaying all the various Committee members and Instructors of the club. These will be on display in the clubhouse, so you'll know who is responsible for each area.

There will be a number of events over the coming months that will need your support and I hope you will all help make them a success. The first is 'Women Go Gliding' over the weekend of the 27/28 April. This event is being conducted by the majority of gliding clubs over this weekend and is aimed at trying to promote gliding as a pastime to be enjoyed by all genders. Hopefully this will generate additional female members for the club.

There are also a number of group flying events over the summer months which help provide vital funds for the running of the club. This is a very valuable income stream and allows us to keep the membership and flying fees as low as possible. Peter Valentine is responsible for co-ordinating these group events, so please speak to him if you are able to help with any of the ground operation jobs.

It finally looks as though the weather has decided to behave itself, having had the wettest winter/spring that I can remember since I started flying at Upwood in 1992! I've never known the airfield to become so waterlogged and for so long.

Hopefully this will mean that we now have the best soaring season ever – we can but hope! Have some enjoyable and safe flying and always remember that both myself and Tim Ward are always happy to listen to any complaints or ways in which the club can be improved. At the end of day it's your club – so let's make it the best !!

3. CFI's Section

Looking Back:

We have had a mixed season. There was a lot happening & who can forget that open day Sunday where the weather gods showed their strength. I know Ian will never forget that flight with a climb rate bending the vario needle. He had never experienced a climb rate like it. On a serious note, we were lucky not to lose any aircraft.

The season for the weekend flyers was quite poor & resulted in very little cross country flying. As a club we are growing in strength.

Looking Forward:

Flying for the past few months has been limited to launch & landing from the peri-track. This has its limit with only 1 glider able to fly safely at a time. However, speaking to pilots they have found it useful in honing their approach & landing skills which they have found to be valuable.

Annual flight reviews have been adjusted to relieve the pressure on the instructor team, rather than have a deadline when all needed to be completed (currently difficult with a water-logged airfield)

The requirements going forward will be every solo pilot will need to complete at least 1 simulated launch failure within a 12 month period from their previous one. A monthly list will be printed highlighting a pilot's last SLF. So please check when you are required to have that check & please don't leave it until the last minute. These checks are for your own safety & the safety of other pilots .

Rigging:

It may have been sometime since we have put our gliders together, so please take your time & recheck every step. For new member please do not approach a pilot who is rigging a glider as this causes a distraction & may lead to something being missed or overlooked. Please do not take offence if you are asked to go away.

Training:

It's looking like another busy year for the instructors. We have just about a fully booked Group Flying Evenings.

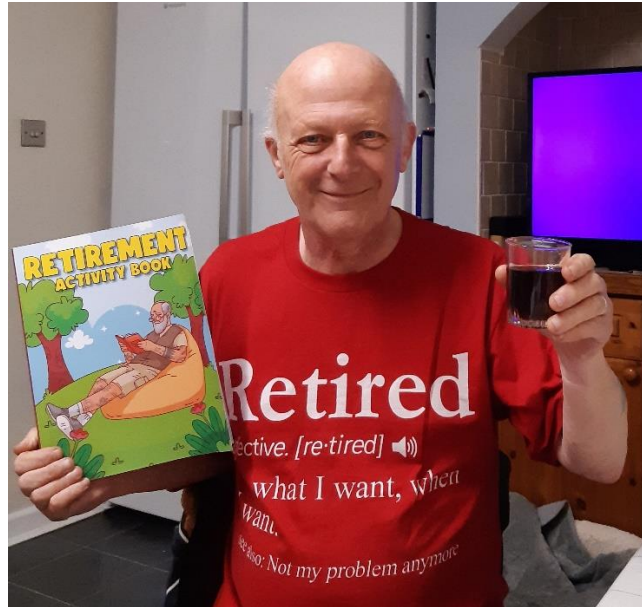
I'm hoping to offer some cross country training this year for pilots who are approaching this stage

A new advanced training scheme has been produced for early solo pilot working towards their Bronze

Start of the Day:

I would like to support our new Chairman's (Martin) comments on the start of the day. Daily briefing starts at 09-30. However, we seem to have fallen behind from what we use to do. We need to arrive no later than 09-00 to start getting the kit out. This will really benefit everybody, as flying could start earlier & reduce the pressure on the instructors. At present the first launch starts anywhere up to 11-30. If we could be efficient & arrive early flying, I believe, could start as soon as 10.00 am. This would be a great advantage to all members & increase the flying day by 90 minutes.

I include a photo of me on the day I recently retired, (please note I'm not 65)



Let's have a safe & enjoyable season

Steve Jarvis, CFI

4. Annual General Meeting

The A,G,M, was held on Saturday 23rd March and was well attended. Thanks to the circulation of the reports from the specific committee members, it was a short meeting with there being only one major change. Our Chairman for the last 12 years, Michael Muir stood down and our new Chairman, Martin Reynolds was elected unopposed. Tim Ward has been voted in as Vice-Chairman. Michael was thanked for all that he achieved during his tenure. All other Committee Members remained in their posts for a further year.

5. A Cautionary Tale by David Mansfield

Many years ago, at one of our Open days, I decided, as it was going to be a warm, humid day to wear a pair of green and blue shorts. The grass on the field was not that short, but as the day proceeded to bring in more members of the public, we were running around trying to keep the launch rate up. It was a sweaty job, then someone noticed my legs had changed to a motley greeny-blue colour. At the time we thought I had been running through some of the longer grass at the edge of the runway. It transpired that the colour in the cheap (now you know why they called me Squeaky) had run, in fact it has coloured my whole lower half in a nice mosaic pattern of green and blue.

My wife said she would sort it and boiled said shorts. The colour did run, luckily no whites were in the same boiling water.

I proudly wore the shorts the following Saturday, another warm day. I took one of the K7's up for a thermic flight, hot and sweaty I landed. Back at the launch point, I was greeted by much laughter. Yes, I had green and blue legs again.

Those shorts were thrown into the bin.

Memories are made of this.....

6. Roger Emms – an Appreciation

Roger Emms' recent decision to step down from regular instructing and from his current position as Deputy C.F.I. is understandable, as he has been heavily involved with Nene Valley G.C. for over 38 years. This is a good time, therefore, to place on record his achievements and highlights during those years

It was as a result of his fear of flying, which his job required him to do a lot of, that he took a couple of launches with Nene Valley Gliding Club (NVGC) back in June 1986. One of Roger's neighbours, who was an RAF person, suggested that this might be the way forward. After initially saying "No, thanks" he went to NVGC in order to determine that it 'wasn't for him'. After 2 flights in a K7 totalling 27 minutes and at the age of 42 he was 'hooked'.

Immediately joining the club, he did his first solo on 25th April 1987 after 75 launches. Progression was in the usual way with Bronze being achieved in 1988 and Silver following in August 1989, this being flown in an L-Spatz, the fuselage frame of which still hangs in the NVGC hangar.

For Roger instructing came naturally, as part of his job involved teaching. Thus, after obtaining Bronze and Silver, learning how to pass on his flying skills to others was straightforward. He became an Assistant Category Instructor in 1990 on a course at Lasham, with Full Category being achieved in 1993. From mid-1993 until 2000 he was CFI, and Deputy CFI from 2001 until the present, with a couple of breaks to fulfil other roles in the club.

That is far from the total of involvement with NVGC as at various times he was Club Secretary and Club Chairman, attending many BGA conferences whilst in those positions.

Whilst that is a brief synopsis of Roger's history in gliding with NVGC it does not give any insight into 'Roger, the man'.

Many have remarked on the ability of Roger as an instructor to put his student pilots at ease and to give confidence to them when, perhaps, they doubted themselves. He has lost count of the number of trainees he has sent on their first solos and after over 10,000 launches and 2,200 hours (NVGC is a winch-only club) it's not surprising really.

Roger's commitment to the progress of the NVGC has been remarkable. When a move from the original site on Upwood airfield to a new area, still on the original airfield but onto land owned by the farmer Marshal Papworth, Roger was one of the four members who handled the negotiations. It's interesting that Mr. Papworth wanted some club members as guarantors of the rent and Roger and the three others put their personal assets 'on the line' for the good of the club. That was, indeed, a brave move since had the club failed, Roger could have lost his house to pay the debt. He was then physically involved in the preparation of the runways, erecting buildings, building the club-house, installing the services and putting up fencing together with myriad other tasks. The club was successfully re-located within Upwood during 1995 and 29 years later it's in the same location with a long lease from the current owners.

Over the years, Roger has been one of the members who have loaned money to the club to ensure that growth could happen. In the early days of the club, it was necessary to rig and de-rig the gliders on every flying day and he recalls that it took 15 to 20 minutes to fully rig a K7 and 10 to 15 minutes to de-rig.

When asked for some specific recollections, he mentioned several:

Teaching the totally deaf wife of a club-member to glide using specially created mini-screens in the cockpits to enable pre-arranged instructions to be given.



With the deaf student pilot, Joan Hartley



Another day, another trainee

- Towing the L-Spatz from Upwood to the Long Mynd in thick fog; the journey taking around 12 hours.
- After a 3-hour flight at Aboyne to 10,000 ft in a Discus, the undercarriage lowered but would not lock down and the wheel self-retracted on touch-down, fortunately with minimal damage.
- Flying at a club in the USA where he achieved Silver-height in a K23. The club was run by a couple who came from Surrey and the local FAA representatives honoured his UK qualifications with the issue of a USA Pilots Licence, (or should that be License?).



Roger looking pensive in a K7



In the Astir being 'advised' by then CFI Horace Bryant

- Giving the legendary glider pilot Derek Piggott a site-check when he visited NVGC on the condition that "he taught me something about flying that I didn't know". "If you want to know what he taught me, you'll have to ask me".
- Aerotowing the Upwood resident T21b, DAR, to Bassingbourn for a week's flying. Cleared to overfly RAF Wyton at below 2000ft, he and David Bourne later had a message from Wyton ATC saying "If we had known you were going to be that low, we'd have handed you cups of tea as you passed the tower"!
- With his late wife Janet and a couple of other members, preparing breakfast on the temporary club-house, a single-decker bus. One day 25 breakfasts were served.
- When asked what his greatest achievement, he replied "Staying alive, I'm an old pilot, not a bold pilot".
- He persuaded the Club to purchase parachutes for Club gliders several years before the BGA made the recommendation.
- Over the last couple of years he has persuaded our Aircraft Member to agree to his recommendation of 'proven-design' Hangar Packing Equipment, due to various incidents causing damage to aircraft when using our current yellow trollies.
- He recently initiated a sit-down discussion with some experienced Club Members, to establish, using facts and data, the Pros and Cons of trialling Dyneema on our SupaCat Winch, which resulted in the agreement and support of our Ground Equipment member.

Roger's wit and wisdom is appreciated both on the airfield and in the club-house. Although a very senior member, he is always ready to help with even mundane tasks like cleaning canopies, sweeping the hangar and tidying the club-house.

His decision to step down, at the age of 80, from regular instructing and enjoy flying for his own pleasure is easy to understand, but it will seem strange not to see Roger in the back seat of one of the 2-seaters on a regular basis, although he has said that he is not giving up his instructor rating and will be happy to carry out things such as check-flights when necessary.

During his flying career, he has flown 48 different types and flown from 24 sites. The aircraft in which he has owned syndicate shares include L-Spatz, ASW15b, DG300 and MiniLAK FES. Several members have offered to let Roger fly their own gliders whenever he wishes.

All at NVGC have much to thank Roger for, although newer members didn't know just how much. We all thank you for your help and friendship over many years.

(All the photographs are from the Roger Emms Collection)

7. An Interview with Michael Muir by Olivia Jones

A true Inspiration to the Nene Valley Gliding Club, Michael has brought so much positivity to the Gliding Club over his 13 years as Chairman.

Michael started his career in Aviation in 1972 at RAF Henlow, where he was taught to fly with the 616 Air Cadet Gliding school. Michael met with the Officer-in-Charge at the Henlow school and advised him that he had always wanted to fly, so he went along and carried out a few launches with the Officer who then offered him a position as a staff member where they would also teach him how to fly.

Due to a previous fall in a snow drift at the age of 18 resulting in Michael only having half a skull, learning to fly took him about 9 months. He had to go to the RAF Hospital in London for various tests to ensure he was fit to fly and luckily enough he was deemed fit and started his aviation career. During Michael's 6 years at Henlow he became a civilian instructor for the ATC and taught many others how to fly gliders. Michael flew T31's and T21 Sedburghs where the flight times were only 3 to 5 minutes, this resulted in a low amount of hours being accrued throughout Michaels early career in gliding. He goes on to say he was very lucky to stay on with the ATC due to Henlow getting Motorised gliders in 1978. This resulted in him changing location but staying with the ATC. Michael carried on his career with the ATC at RAD Halton RAF. He was lucky enough to be chosen to stay on with the ATC as only 10 staff members stayed on and all C-Cat instructors were 'given the elbow'. The Squadron leader that ran the RAF Halton and White Waltham Gliding school came over and interviewed the 20 C-Cat's that wanted to stay on and Michael was chosen as one of the 2 he decided to keep on. After a short 2 years, in 1980 at RAF Halton, they also unfortunately got Motorised gliders, resulting in the 'the end' of Michael with the ATC. NVGC have a motor glider also and that is an ex-ATC glider.

Whilst at Henlow, Michael wanted to fly something a little bit 'better' than what Henlow could offer, so he decided to join Cambridge University Gliding Club from 1974 -1980, which had aero-tows at Marshalls Airfield and Winching at Duxford Airfield. This club is now the club at Gransden, but they no longer call themselves Cambridge University Gliding Club.

In 1974 Michael started to learn how to fly powered aircraft at Marshall's, where he passed his GFT (General Flying Test), but failed by 1 question on one of the written papers that he had to sit. He only had to go back and pass that 1 exam and he would have had his PPL. However, he didn't go back to pass the exam because he has 3 daughters and at the time he was paying for them all to be privately educated.

In 1976 Michael went back to learning to fly powered aircraft in Luton, however his 3rd daughter was going to private school so he stopped flying there and he only had to sit a GFT. This never bothered him though as he was gliding so was still experiencing the thrill of flying. When he finished gliding at RAF Halton in 1980, the CFI at Halton was also the CFI at Booker on powered aircraft, so he took him over to Booker and helped guide him to completing his PPL.

As far as power flying is concerned, Michael has flown from Denmark to Gibraltar, all over Europe.

He has flown from Sydney, Australia to Cairns, He has flown in New Zealand, Spain, America, Hawaii and Carson City. One key memory he has from his power flying days was in Hawaii, where there was an active Volcano that he flew at an angle over the top of, looking into the Volcano. He also had this amazing experience on an Island off of New Zealand where a volcano had erupted (where a lot of people were sadly killed), but he managed to fly over the top of it and see the volcano up close which he said was mesmerising. Another key story Michael went on to tell was his time flying a Cherokee140 with a

friend who is also a member of the NVGC and who had only just passed his PPL on the Thursday. On the following Saturday they decided to fly round Europe together. When they landed in Gibraltar, they didn't realise that although the road had been opened up between them and Spain, the Airspace hadn't. This meant he had to fly to North Africa, fly up the coast of North Africa and then across the Med to Spain. After his career in Aviation, Michael focused on his family life with his three daughters with a few flights here and there when he was on holiday or near a gliding club.

Before he started his flying he had a passion for photography, so started his own business where he photographed commercial settings, weddings, industrial settings and portraits, which he carried on whilst learning and teaching people to fly.

Retiring at 65 years old, 14 years ago, in 2010 Michael joined the Nene Valley Gliding Club. At that time, he still had his PPL. However, he let it lapse because he couldn't do both Gliding and Power Flying, which he said he does regret a little now.

A year after joining the club Michael became chairman. Michael has spent 13 years as chairman and has recently decided to step down from that position.

When Michael stopped flying in May 1980, whenever he went on holiday or anywhere near a gliding club he would always pay a visit and have a few flights. Before joining the NVGC he went to Dunstable Gliding Club, which was a very big club, After Dunstable he joined the Gransden Gliding Club which was also a very big club. He then visited NVGC which was a lot smaller and a lot friendlier and he found he suited NVGC more and decided to join permanently (a lot of ex-616 Henlow 'refugees' were/are there). After an enjoyable year of getting his feet under the table with the club, Michael had the fantastic opportunity of becoming Chairman where he has had many positive influences on the club and its successes.

Michael's proudest moment of being chairman at the Club is starting the Scholarships it offers with Ramsey Abbey College. He advised there was a little apprehension about starting the Scholarships at First. However, both he and Peter Valentine the Vice Chairman were very keen on the idea. Peter and Michael went to see the Head Teacher of the Abbey and with great success they took on 12 students in the first year of offering the Scholarship. This ended up proving too many, so they decided to take on 6 students a year and this has carried on since then. Each year Students come to the club and start their journey in gliding and there have been some amazing success stories from the early days. Some still fly at the club today and some have even become instructors, meaning they can help teach the next generations and get them into gliding just like they did.

Michael also went on to mention that several of the scholarship trainees have successfully gone on to University, have gone into be the RAF or have succeeded in other aviation careers.

NVGC is the only Gliding Club in the country that have such a scholarship scheme and it is a huge achievement and one of Michael's proudest as Chairman.

Michael has had some amazing experiences in his aviation life, including soaring with Sea Eagles in Australia, flying across the whole of Europe, flying over the top of burning corn fields resulting in burning his hair and as NVGC Chairman, helping influence the next generations to learn to fly. He has had some amazing flights throughout his life and has flown from 31 Gliding Sites, has flown 25 different types of glider and carried out 3757 launches.

Michael has thoroughly enjoyed his time as chairman and will continue to be part of the club helping influence and help out where needed. I think it's safe to say Michael has had a fantastic aviation career and is a true inspiration to the Nene Valley Gliding Club.



Editor's Note. As our newest member, it seemed appropriate to ask Olivia if she would be prepared to do an interview with Micheal. Thank you, Liv, for this insight into Michael's background. I would like to add the thanks of all our members for your outstanding contribution to our club and for your leadership over all those years.

8. Cotswold Soaring Championship by Tim Williamson

The Cotswold Soaring Championships held at Aston Down on the edge of Gloucestershire from the 17-25th June 2023. We flew a total of 5 competition days with tasks ranging from 83km through to 225km in my class and over 300km in the open class. The first competition day saw almost everyone land out including myself. I was lucky enough to land with 5 other Std Cirrus's at an airfield called Hullavington, just off the M4.

After landing, it turned out that this is where Mr Dyson has his special test facility and photos were strictly forbidden, so no photos for this land-out. The rest of the week progressed reasonably well with a couple of tough days and some entertaining evening activities including a game of rounders which, having been prized away from my beer, turned out to be something I was really good at. I think they are still in shock at how fast I can run when I want to.

Soon we arrived at the big one on Wednesday the 21st. This task was the biggest yet at 223km going from Aston Down to Morton in Marsh, over to Northampton south, down to Newport Pagnell and finally into the finish via Elkstone South as a control point. Only 4 of the pilots in my class finished that day due to the day shutting off earlier than forecast, I would have been in second that day but a GPS error in the Oudie landed me 30ft inside a penalty box and I ended up in 4th for the day. Oh well, lesson well and truly learned. A retrieve later that day finished up at Mr Clarkson's farm shop as it was just around the corner but, sadly, he wasn't in, probably just as well given his comments about Subaru's in the past (Haha). The last couple of days were short 100km tasks in weaker conditions which turned out to be perfect for the cirrus which finished up the competition with Anthony Landau in first place with his Cirrus, myself in second place with 211 and Harriet Gamble in third place with her shiny new LS8. It Just goes to show, it's not the plane, it's the pilot.

Overall, it was a fantastic competition with lots of great people having a good time and enjoying all the beautiful scenery the Cotswolds and surrounding areas have to offer. An important lesson for me after several years of competition flying, was to just relax, stop taking things so seriously and for heaven's sake, stop flying so damn slowly!

If anyone at Upwood is thinking about doing competitive flying in the future, come and talk to me and give it a try. It will be some of the most fun flying you can do and you get to meet some excellent pilots with some incredible stories to tell.



9. News of Our Members

As most will already know, Jasmine is due to become a mother in a few months time. We all wish her the very best.

Lewis Smith is now working in Formula One for Aston Martin.

Rob Richards is, as many know, a competitive rally driver at National and International level. He drives a Peugeot 106 – in fact he has two of them, one for gravel and one for tarmac surfaces. Here he is driving the course-opening car on a recent national Rally.



A group of our members are off to the Long Mynd in May for a week's flying. Please take lots of photos and we look forward to seeing them, with a report on the action there.

Friday, 26th April was Roger Emm's 80th birthday. A Happy Birthday from all members.

It seems that Graham Hayes has acquired a Slingsby Dart. Currently it is awaiting having some work done at Roger Gates's where it sits with Roger's Dart.

James Erskine has bought a Super-Spatz ready for when he gets to solo and beyond.

Several of us have been to visit Brian Palmer who is now out of hospital and in his sheltered accommodation in Fordham.

John Bennett decided to cease flying at the end of last year. We all have a lot to thank John for and it was good to see him return on the 25th after flying to share in 'cakes and tea' to celebrate Roger's birthday. Sharon's cakes were super as well.

10. HFG Goes on Holiday, a T21b Story by Graham Hayes.

I thought I would tell you the tale about my recent holiday. I was happily sleeping in the back of my nice warm hanger when some big men came and plucked my wings off and stuffed me in a small claustrophobic box called a glider trailer. They were very rough with me, my tailplane was put in a sort of crate, my wings were stood on end along the side of the 'shed' and my mainwheel was dropped into a hole in the floor with me being kept upright by two stays to my pylon. After I was loaded, they shut the doors on me and I was left in the dark. Next thing I knew I was being swayed from side to side as the trailer moved off, those thumps as we went over the speed bumps on camp went right through me, nobody told me the trailer had no suspension to talk of. In fact I learned later that the trailer had been built by Mr Slingsby for the RAF to transport my fellow gliders around it could take me or two Mk III's (T31). as it is very big inside.

I was going for a brief stopover at a nice gliding club at Upwood, but the nasty Highways Agency had closed the A14 at the A11 junction so I finished up at Royston for the night. Very early the next morning (I didn't know there were two 8 o'clocks in a day) I was on the road again, this time I was on my way to Husbands Bosworth a nice gliding club where Uncle Steve flies from. I arrived there early morning and was put in one of their trailer bays until I could be rigged.

Friday afternoon the doors were opened on the trailer and I could see daylight again, Uncle Terry and Uncle Graham wanted to get me out and rigged but there seemed to be few people around to help, though there was a lot of old fogies around for their annual dinner. Eventually some nice people came along and helped to get me out of the trailer, soon my wings were on and I was looking forward to fly, but then somebody noticed a problem, a hole had been punctured in my tailplane close to a previous repair that I had had. By this time uncle Steve had joined the group, he had been busy sorting out the anniversary do, that will teach him not to volunteer in future. He knew some friendly people on the club, one called Poo (don't ask) came to have a look at me, he kindly offered to fix me but said my covering is in a bad state and will have to be seen to very soon. He took my tailplane away and started a repair, this involved cutting out a whole panel and recovering. It took some time for the cement (glue) to set and the surface to be stretched,

it's surprising how the Ceconite gets tight when you put some heat on it. As I had to dry and be painted I could not fly on the Friday but the kind people at Hus Bos allowed me to be stored in their nice cozy hanger for the night.

On Saturday I had to wait some time as layers of paint were applied to my tailplane, first was the dope (not marijuana) then anti UV paint and finally red paint to make me look a little like the rest of the colouring, I now have a bright red patch on my tail which is a lot stronger than the rest of me.

Late afternoon I was finally ready to go to the launch point, but when I got there another problem arose, they did not have a white weak link strop, Uncle Graham had some spare weak links so he made a new strop for me, this is now in my cockpit for use later. I had ten launches with Uncle Terry, Steve and Graham. It was wonderful to be in the air and flying free as a bird. At the end of flying I was put in another hanger this time with another Slingsby aircraft, he was much older than me, a Tutor, we had a good chat overnight.

In the morning I was taken out to the launch point again, The Tutor, myself and another T21 which lives at the club all on the launch point together, it was a wonderful sight. Aunty Amanda came to visit me as well, she and Dave both had a flight it was great to be able to take them up. But as time was getting on I had to be put back in the trailer, so late afternoon I was de-rigged and put in the box. After saying our goodbyes, we moved off to the next site at Camphill. It was a little frightening for me as we were going high up into the Peak District and we had to go along some very narrow roads, the vegetation on the side of the road was brushing along both sides of my trailer. I was kept up very late as we did not arrive until 9.30 in the evening, after pitching the caravan all Uncle Terry and Graham could do was go to the bar for a few well-earned pints of beer.

On Monday morning I was once again rigged for flight, a group of people from Kent gliding club and some others helped to rig me, but during this time somebody must have had something hard in their pockets (not what you are thinking) probably a map and the poor covering on my fuselage got torn again, after some discussion it was decided that I could be repaired with 'bodge' tape so I now have a not-so-pretty L shape of tape on my side by the inspection cover. However, the good news is that it held sound during the rest of the week and should last until we can recover the fuselage and tailplane. I was then taken to the launch point and met another T21 which belongs to the club, she was in a nice blue and yellow colour but I prefer my military colours. Uncle Nigel arrived shortly after my first flight and he had a go in me during the afternoon. More flying was carried out on Tuesday,

but as it was so hot and the thermals were not going to be so good Uncles Terry, Nigel and Graham decided to go and visit the historic 'Dambusters' Dams in the Derwent Valley so I could have a well-earned rest.

Thursday was another nice day but still poorish thermal weather, Uncle Graham only managed an hour and forty-five minutes in a single seater that belonged to the Kent crowd. Because of the poor conditions we entered a spot landing competition it was a little unfair as our main rival the Capstan had huge airbrakes and a wheel brake. We did not disgrace ourselves though Terry, Nigel and Graham all landed acceptably close, but the Capstan won.

All too soon I was put back in the trailer, this time it was going to be a long ride home. Once again, I was taken down narrow roads then once clear it was back to my home base. Again, it was a long journey taking over eight hours to get home with only a short stop on the way. I'm now parked up waiting to be rigged again outside the hanger at Wattisham, I hope somebody comes and rigs me soon.

In all the problems of rigging I lost a wing nut for my 'Turtle Deck' Uncle Graham has ordered a new one so once it arrives the two nuts that have been fitted to me can be replaced. Over the winter months I will need my fuselage and tailplane recovered, it is not a difficult job but will take some time as I will need to be stripped and re-painted I will need my friends to come and rub me down and do the work. Next year I will need my wings done as well, but they can wait.

HFG

PS. This was back in 2018, I have since been given a complete new coat (Ceconite) and paint job, I visited Tibbenham but this time I went by air, it was a long aerotow to and from Tibbenham but I made it without problems. I met Uncle John Bennett from Upwood whilst I was there and he was kind enough to put a hole in my wing with a pen, fortunately this was before I was recovered so it didn't cause me too many problems.



11. 'Mystery Man' Competition

Who can identify the intrepid aviating person in this photo. There is a prize of a free launch for the first person who emails me with the correct identity. The well-known member in the photograph is, of course, not eligible.



12. Odds and Ends...

We have had the following first solos during the past 12 months. Congratulations to you all and good wishes for your future flying:-

George Ponsonby, 26/08/2023
Roy Neesom, 14/05/2023

Natalya Atherton, 30/03/2024
Arran Lindsay, 10/08/2023
Doug Greenwell, 20/08/2023
Andre Metairie, 11/04/2024

Sharon (Cher) Wass is doing her training to become an Inspector. She has attended a course at Tibbenham and she is a real asset to our club. Her flying training is also progressing well.

Paul Daly has been doing a lot of welding to make the new system for getting our gliders into and out of the hangar. Hopefully this new kit should be complete soon.

We now have Dyneema rope fitted to the RH drum of the SupaCat winch. Assuming it performs as well as it's supposed to, the intention is to equip both drums of the SupaCat with it. There are certain operating instructions which must be followed with it. So please read them and ensure compliance.

13. And Finally.....

