

### Chairman's Update

Firstly, I would like to thank Geoff Davey who has kindly offered to produce our club magazine. Geoff has done this in the past and I hope that everyone appreciates how much hard work it takes to produce a quality item. We can all help Geoff by sending him articles, so don't be shy. Every member has something worthwhile to say so please have a go at making a contribution.

For this first in a new series of magazine I thought I would look back at the trials and tribulations we have had with the sale of the airfield and then bring you up to date with where we are with it.

The club had been aware that the airfield would be sold for some time before it went on the market in July 2014. Vin had had a number of meetings with officers of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) who assured him that TVGC would be sold a runway at a price that we could afford but we were advised that we must partner with

Limestone Farms. During a number of meetings with Limestone we were told that they could not possibly farm the airfield economically with the two runways we currently have.

**“Our lease stipulated a rent review in April 2015. This was carried out and our rent was increased from £11.5k to £13.5k per year. We were however able to negotiate use of the airfield on any flyable day. A fair exchange I think.”**

They also told us that our lease does not include the runways, only our clubhouse and hangar area, therefore they could plough up our runways if they chose to! We were informed that we would have to buy a runway from them though they would prefer to rent us the land year by year as Limestone do not grant leases.

It didn't feel like a partnership to me!

(continued overleaf...)



Dave Bieniasz and Barry Pridgeon fly towards the 9,000ft Pic du Bure in the Alps, some 10km ahead. They were flying in a Duo Discus 40km out of Sisteron Airfield in June this year. Dave and Barry share their adventure in the Alps with us on pages 6 & 7 inside.

Fortunately Liam drinks in all the right places and met Cllr Neil Poole, who owns Pooley's Bar in Messingham. Neil informed Liam that North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) wanted to buy the whole airfield and that TVGC would be welcome tenants. I met with Neil and following positive discussions reported back to the Committee who decided that we would partner with NLC.



Shortly after this the DIO withdrew our agreement to fly on every day and restricted us to Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday flying. Whilst it sounds bad the terms of our lease were worse as it only included Wednesday afternoon and weekends!

NLC made an extremely competitive bid for the airfield but, as you will be aware, that bid was narrowly beaten by Green Meadow who now own the whole site. At this point the Committee, whilst bitterly disappointed, decided to engage fully with Brown and Co, the agents who manage the airfield. We have built a good relationship with their local agent who has, I believe, acted with integrity in his dealings with us.

We were assured that Green Meadow had no firm plans for the airfield grassland and that we would continue to fly for the duration of our lease. As events have turned out it appears that this is the case. So where are we now?

Our lease stipulated a rent review in April 2015. This was carried out and our rent was increased from £11.5k to £13.5k per year. We were however able to negotiate use of the airfield on any flyable day. A fair exchange I think.

We were asked to submit plans to reduce our footprint and we offered an interim plan within two weeks to reduce the width of our runways and after three months we submitted a definitive

plan to totally change the layout of the airfield. Many thanks to John Williams for his hard work on this.

Browns then informed us that they would let the parts of the airfield not currently occupied by us, first for grazing and then for the taking of grass. None of the subsequent bids were accepted. During this time we had been asking for a meeting to discuss the plans we had submitted but no meeting was arranged. We also asked to meet with the owners to discuss their long-term plans for the airfield but so far they have not agreed to meet us.

During the summer a riding school took out a lease on the paddock and grassland previously occupied by an earlier riding school. The land which they leased includes the threshold to runway 13. We were however able to negotiate a reduction in the land they occupy though their fence line does shorten that runway slightly.

In the last few weeks the remainder of the airfield has been leased to a local farmer who is in the process of ploughing the land for agriculture. We have had a number of meetings to agree our boundaries and he has been very willing to work with us. The runways are slightly wider than we originally had to help us to avoid putting a wing over crops. Runway 20/02 will be lengthened when the humps at the threshold of runway 20 are removed. We will be provided with a track alongside the paddock to access runway 13 and along the hedge line to access runway 31.

**“We are therefore as secure as we could hope to be. We set out to keep two runways and we have achieved that.”**

During this period of uncertainty we took independent legal advice which confirmed that we have a right to use our existing runways. They are effectively part of the area we lease. We also have a protected lease which means that the owner is obliged to offer us another lease when ours expires in April 2021.

The other businesses using the airfield also have leases due to expire in April 2021 which provides the opportunity for us to make joint representations to the owners for the issue of a new lease when the time comes.

# Airfield Changes

You will probably be aware of the changes to the airfield that have occurred in the last few weeks.

The areas to the sides of the runways have been ploughed up. This is a case of “Swings and Roundabouts” so to speak, as the club has gained a bit here and lost a bit there.

We have gained some length on runways 02/20, lost some parking on runway 31, and had to change the side that we launch on at runway 13. (Or at least this is what is envisioned at the time of writing) There is no change at the launch point on runway 02.

On the launch point for 20, there are mounds to be removed, cars and glider trailers can now be parked against the airfield boundary fence, and we'll have to figure out the rest as we go.

At the launch point for runway 31, the parking area has moved back towards the airfield fence. We may have to stop the rigging of gliders there, and the aircraft will need to be parked against the fence as much as they can. The track to the launch point has been moved to against the fence also.

The biggest change will be at the launch point for runway 13. Because the parking area has been ploughed up, we'll be operating from the right hand side of the runway. This has been done before, on some open days. It is safer in as much as people/visitors will not driving be driving across an active runway anymore. The track to the launch point has also been moved to right up against the fence. Fortunately, there should be enough room for all the cars, gliders and aircraft to park. The powered aircraft will as before, be furthest away from the launch point. In the short term, to save unnecessary damage to the runway we may continue to operate from the left hand side as before.

**Rob Parker, CFI.**

The airfield is now fully utilised and bringing in a return for the owner who is planning to develop the brownfield site as a waste transfer station and possible industrial use. It is unlikely that planning permission will be sought or granted to build anything on the airfield. NLC have recently changed their solar panel planning criteria and this excludes grade 2 agricultural land such as Kirton Airfield.

We are therefore as secure as we could hope to be. We set out to keep two runways and we have achieved that. We would like a longer lease and will continue to seek a meeting with the owners to discuss that. Our membership continues to increase steadily, so much so that the BGA have asked how we are achieving that and want to use us as an example of good practice at their conference later this month!

Our financial position is sound though we would like to continue to build reserves to help us deal with any unpleasant surprises!

## **ANNUAL DINNER**

The date has been set for the most important event in the Club's social calendar:

### ***The Annual Dinner***

As last year, it is being organised by Pete Dixon.

The White Heather at Caenby Corner will once again host the event on **Friday 19th March 2016.**

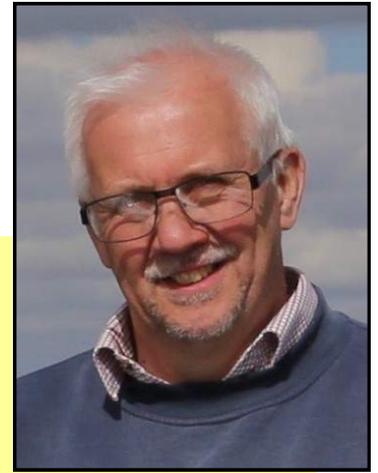
*More details to follow, but please put the date in your diary!*

What we have achieved is down to your hard work. We have a great gliding club made up of good people. Please keep coming to the airfield over the winter and keep current. If there is something you would like to do or to learn, ask any instructor, they will help you to achieve your aim.

And finally, enjoy your flying, that's what we are here for.

**Richard Hannigan.**

# ROBIN'S TWEET



**It's usually about this time that I think about what has happened at the club during the year and consider who will be given the awards at the forthcoming Dinner and Dance!**

You may recall that earlier in the year, soaring conditions were good. John Caldwell flew the club Astir to over 9000' in a thermal, clear of cloud, for example. And we've been able to fly any day of the week. This has enabled some to take advantage of the best of the days, days that would otherwise have been missed.

Our John Williams, for example, now leads the National BGA club Ladder. I note that of the 6 flights that count towards John's score, some were flown on a Monday, Thursday and a Friday. I can recall one Friday where 7 gliders launched, 3 of the gliders flew 300kms plus, and the other 3 flew 500kms! (With Dave B gaining his 3rd Diamond.) This was some serious cross country flying, and I'm sure it's unprecedented at our club.

Looking at the statistics for the year, hours flown by private aircraft are up by 50% on the previous year. There was of course the " Aim Higher " course, which may well of been a factor, and the much lower cost of aerotows by the Eurofox may well have helped.

Then of course there was the Open Day, and all the flying evenings. Thanks to Mark Gradley for organising these, and of course, thanks to all of those who contributed in other ways. The number of members at the club is the highest that I can recall for a very long time. Some 90 " on the books" and around 80 if all the social, honorary etc members are excluded.

We had at least two first solos this year ,Simon Maddison and Simon Leach. Geoff Lloyd has rejoined the club and has since gone solo in the motorglider. Rob Harkness and Andy Wilmot both passed their Bronze Exams, Rob has since gone on to pass his Bronze Flying test and Cross Country Endorsement, Andy should soon follow. Well done all...

## **Instructors**

We should soon have 20 instructors for the first time at the club. Tony Mawer and Brian Griffin have retired from instructing this year. Tony was our Wednesday instructor and he'd been instructing for nearly 50 years! Many thanks to him, who now has a chance to fly his Discus T and Libelle. Brian has retired so he can spend more time with his wife Christine, who I'm told is on her way to recovery from an illness. Many thanks to Brian for all of his instructing and tugging over the many years. And best wishes to Christine.

We've been fortunate, as Steve Wilkinson has rejoined the club and has taken over from Tony on Wednesday's (and has saved the club a small fortune by working on the club's gliders too!). Other additions to the instructor team are Larry Lawes and Richard Mallam. Richard has also started training as a tug pilot and has recently converted to the Pawnee.

Steve Nock has become the clubs first " F.I." (Flight Instructor ) under the new BGA System. Dave Plumb and Pete Dixon have jstarted their training towards their F.I. Rating.

Barry Pridgeon, Rick Ballard (who completed his Silver badge and 100km Diploma flight this year) and Pete Rocks are training for their B.I. Rating.

## Motor Glider

The Motor Glider syndicate has proved to be a useful source of tug pilots, 3 up to now and hopefully a 4 to follow. Alan Spencer gained his NPPL some time ago on WL, he's now had a season as a tug pilot flying the Eurofox, and has recently converted to the Pawnee. Nick Gensler and Gary Southcott are both tugging with the Pawnee now, and Rik Nadin has converted to the Pawnee. The Eurofox has proved to be a great asset as a training vehicle for tug pilots. The motorglider syndicate currently has 6 members training to get their NPPL's. (Or training to revive their PPL's). We now have 3 CAA Motorglider instructors at the club. Richard Hannigan, Steve Wilkinson and Richard Mallam. We also have a CAA Motorglider Examiner at the club, Dave Cockburn, (who also happens to be Waddington Aero Club CFI and is one of our tug pilots also.) He is currently helping the syndicate members with their classroom studies towards their exams. Thanks Dave.

Sorry if I've missed out anyone's achievement. So what about next year. If you're interested in getting your R. T. License, Cloud Flying Rating or BGA Aerobatics Badge, there are notices in the club house.

The BGA has issued a new "Recommended Practise". As a club we cannot ignore what has been undoubtedly well considered by the BGA as a Recommended Practise. As part of improving gliding safety they recommend that "Mirror Circuits" are not flown. They cite many accidents over the years where gliders/glidings and motorglidings/glidings and tugs have collided on the base leg when flying opposing circuits. This will obviously require some extra training and supervision on our part and a change in our operation. The duty instructor of the day will inform pilots which circuit direction is in use. In some runway directions the powered aircraft have to avoid flying over the "Married Quarters" and other built up area's for example, so as to avoid any noise complaints.

So their circuit direction is dictated by that, and therefore any glider circuits must be in the same direction. For example: when launching on runway 13. A right hand circuit will be recommended. It is normal aviation practise to fly left hand circuits unless there's a reason.

The recommended practise ref circuits, comes "into force" 1 January 2016.

This gives pilots and the club 3 months to get their aircraft set up, radio wise.

One reason for the radio requirement is as follows. The Recommended Practise allows for pilots to use their own discretion as to their circuit direction for safety reasons, in a situation where they don't have enough height to fly a circuit in the the correct direction , for example. It will now be much more important for a radio call downwind, as the circuit will be now be in an unexpected direction. And when everyone is calling downwind, it should improve everyone's situational awareness.

Fortunately, the CAA has now decided to allow handheld 8.33mhz radios to be used in EASA gliders. All radios have to be 8.33 compliant from 2018 anyway, (though that could change. ) Handheld 8.33 radios are available for £200 ish. Panel mounted 8.33 radios are much more expensive. In the short term, other older handhelds can be of use. Training in the use of radio will be included in normal flying training. A typical Downwind Call would be "Kirton Base, Hotel Foxtrot Hotel, Downwind Runway 13 Righthand, Kirton Base." We intend to use 130.1 as the frequency as a start, if we find it's unsuitable we may change it.

## Morning Briefings

So, as of 1 January 2016, there will be a morning briefing in the clubhouse before flying. The time, 09.30hrs Summertime and 10.00hrs Wintertime. This is just a guideline.

The Briefing would include: The Circuit Direction, Notams, Soaring Possibilities, Weather, Glider Availability,/Equipment serviceability, Pilot's Goals for the day, Badge Flights etc.

**Cheers, Robin.**

# Dave and Barry's Alpine Adventure

***In June this year, Dave Bieniasz and Barry Pridgeon took their Discus and ASW 20, respectively, to fly in the French Alps. Dave gives us an insight into the trip...***

**After** a false start the year before due to LAPL medical papers, 2015 was the year Barry and I booked our first trip to fly in the Southern French Alps at Sisteron. There's a reasonable amount of planning to be done, sorting licences, medicals etc. and ensuring that the gliders meet European specification with Flarm and anti-collision markings, but generally nothing too onerous.

**It's** a two day trip from Kirton to Sisteron and around eight hundred miles. The airfield is located at Vaumeilh, which is approximately 10km north of the very picturesque town of Sisteron and lies in the Durance valley. There is a large grass airstrip and a tarmac runway, both running north to South. Generally take-off and landing is to the North due to the prevailing Mistral wind which blows through the Alps and into Provence. It's all aero tow, no winching.

**We** arrived in the evening on Saturday 6th June, slightly later than planned as we had got hopelessly lost in the centre of Grenoble, Paperwork was completed on the Sunday morning, briefing at 10am then we were ready to go. Interestingly enough no one looked at our medicals, insurance, log books or anything to do with the gliders. They did however show a lot of interest in credit cards and taking a hefty deposit towards the flying fees!

**Barry** had his check flight, which lasted around an hour and then landed back. I was hoping to get in next but the instructor decided that his decorating at home was more important. After a quick chat it was decided that we could both fly in the Duo Discus and Barry was P1. The briefing was "don't go too far away". So away we went, slightly sceptical as to what the fees are to fly their best 2 seater with all the top kit in it. We flew around the local area, not venturing too far into the mountains and landed after an hour.



# Gliding from Sisteron

**The** next day there was a lack of instructors again so we were told that we could both fly in the Duo if we wanted. We felt happy doing that as we could get used to the area, sharing the flying and trying to make sense of the compulsory maps and book that showed the land out sites that we had bought. We towed out to the local hot spot and Barry demonstrated to me just how close you can get to a ridge without hitting it! Such fun... We climbed away and pressed on into the mountains. The scenery is absolutely stunning.



**If** you have ever been to the Alps you will know how beautiful the area is. To look down on it while flying a glider going up at 10kts is just awesome! We flew along various ridges, scraped over some of the lower peaks and made our way past Gap Tallard and on to the highest mountain in the local area, Pic de Bure. The summit of this mountain is just under 9000 ft. Cloud base is typically around 10,000 ft. above sea level so enough separation between mountains and cloud to get over the top.

**The** following day I finally got a check flight. My instructor's English was poor at best, similar to my French. This led to a few misunderstandings but I did grasp that he wanted me to follow a cloud street that was giving off the clock lift all the way to Lac Poncon! This is a large Y shaped lake, 35 km from the airfield with turquoise coloured water, common in the area due to the mineral deposits apparently. We then turned West to head into the larger mountains but the cloud street we had followed was now rapidly turning into a massive Cumulonimbus, so he decided a straight line dash back to the airfield was the best option.

**Some** of the mountain tops that we went over seemed scarily close! We landed and put the glider away just as the heavens opened. He duly signed me off for solo and again the brief was "don't go too far away". Thunderstorms seemed to plague us for the next few days giving opportunity to gather a few brownie points taking the girls sight-seeing. We just happened to stumble across La Motte du Caire. There is a small, very friendly gliding club there so we stopped and had a tour of the place with "JR", the founder member. It's a winch only site and quite possibly where we will go to fly next time.

**So** we eventually got to fly our own gliders. My first flight lasted four and a half hours and was a truly memorable experience. I stayed local for a short while then ventured north to Lac Poncon, west to Pic de Bure and then south past Sisteron to the Lure ridge. When I downloaded the logger it showed that the last glide without thermalling lasted just over an hour and covered around 120kms! We had several other flights, getting more daring each time, heading deeper into the gnarly stuff with the occasional wakeup call having to climb out of a hole we'd dug for ourselves! Exciting and scary flying at times.

**The** last flight we had there was one of the best. The wind had freshened from the North so we headed to the Lure. This is a 22km long ridge at the foot of the Alps, 20km south of the airfield. Mike Tomlinson and John Clark who we know from Talgarth, were there and agreed to do a "lead and follow" with us. We all launched onto the local north facing ridge, topped up then made the jump across the valley to a ridge just south of Sisteron. A climb there and then a jump south onto the Lure. We had a steady glide along the ridge and eventually reached the summit.



**There** is a weather station positioned at this point and it's a popular destination for hikers, so a few beat ups were in order! We then pushed north over the ridges topping up when necessary to clear the next ridge. We headed north for around 50km and eventually gave up following John and Mike and headed home. We needed to derig the gliders and get ready for the journey home the next day. There was some frustration though when they landed and informed us that they had encountered wave a little further north after we left them, and climbed to just over 19,000 ft. !

**Our** first trip to Sisteron was a huge success. We only managed around 24hrs flying time each which sounds poor, but it was quality rather than quantity. We were told on several occasions that they had never had such bad weather at that time of year and not to let it put us off going again. It won't!

One big surprise was the flying fees. It turned out that the cost of flying their Duo Discus was actually very cheap, only 30 Euros an hour! We'd have stayed up a lot longer if we'd known that! The aero tows are also quite reasonable, they charge by the minute and tow quite fast so it's



equivalent to what we pay at Kirton behind the Pawnee.

It looks like the South of France may well become a regular slot on the calendar for us. The flying is challenging but highly rewarding and when you don't fly it's not a bad part of the world to be in!

Anyone fancy coming to join us?

**Dave Bieniasz.**

# FLAPS AND VIOLINS

Simon Grant and Ian Hall's year-long search for a two-seater is over. On Tuesday 24 November Ian and I flew to Italy to have a close look at a Janus 'B'. Simon was working (poor bugger), and asked me to go in his place. I thought about it for about two minutes and said "I'll pack a bag".

We were met at Milan-Bergamo airport by Raimondo Dellasalda, who was selling the Janus on behalf of his syndicate and kindly took us to Cremona. After a pizza and a couple of beers Ian and I retired to the local Ibis hotel.

The following day we both flew the Janus from Cremona airport, where it was based. With power traffic and military aircraft practising touch and goes, it was a busy place. This little regional airport is owned by a sky-diving club but fortunately they weren't jumping whilst we were there! They also have an airway above them at 1,000 metres so we towed to 900 metres, as high as they can operate.

Raimondo gave us a briefing on the use of the flaps. I had flown the Janus we had at

Kirton some years ago but haven't used flaps since, and Ian has never flown a flapped glider. In the event we managed comfortably, Raimondo insisting that we each did the launch and landing.

We were both suitably impressed with the performance of the glider and its condition and opened negotiations on price. It transpired that one of the syndicate was holding out for the asking price so we agreed to sleep on it and continue discussions the following day.

Raimondo took us out for meal at a lovely family-run trattoria after which we had some beers, some more beers and some night caps.

With time to kill the following morning, we had half a day sightseeing in beautiful Cremona, home of Stradivarius violins, where I exposed Ian to some culture, dragging him through the Violin Museum.

I had strict instructions from Simon to get the best deal possible and hung out for a 2,000 euro reduction, which was eventually granted! Result.

Contracts signed and deposit paid, our new friends, who had extended wonderful hospitality to us, drove us back to the airport for the Ryanair flight home.

I had the easy bit. Ian and Simon have to fetch the glider back - a two thousand mile round trip. Simon asked me if I wanted to go with them. I thought about it for a couple of minutes and said "Have a good trip".

With luck they should just about be home by the time you read this!

**Geoff Davey**



About to fly the Janus at Cremona Airport

# MID-WEEK FLYING SUCCESS

## Taking advantage of the best soaring weather

One major benefit to the club since the airfield was acquired by our new landlords Green Meadow has been an agreement for us to fly on days other than Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday. ('Any day but not everyday' I believe is the phrase.)

A number of members have taken advantage throughout 2015 with the outcome being some great flying that would not have happened otherwise. The arrangement has effectively extended the soaring season for those who have been able to fly midweek, including for pre and post solo pilots. But things really came together for the cross country pundits on Friday 31st July.

The forecast had been for favourable conditions if varying daily. Nevertheless some ambitious tasks were set on the previous evening. As it turned out, the day was better and lasted longer than predicted with quite astonishing results including three 500km's, three 300km's and a Club 100 by Kirton pilots.

The airfield was a hive of activity by 8am with eager pilots gridded up and ready to go at the first sign of a thermal. Graham Withers and Simon Grant had all them all launched well before 11.30 am.

In total seven TVGC gliders flew a total of 2,654 cross country kilometres, clocking up over 41 hours between them on this day. Incidentally, a better performance than by any other club in the UK for this particular day!

Midweek flying has become a feature of our operations, opening up opportunities for all members. It has also generated good revenues for the club, making up for those non-flying weekends. Here's to much more of it in 2016!

Details of those seven flights on 31st July follow:

### John Williams (Libelle '253')

KIR—THAME AIRFIELD—MYND—KIR

532 km, flight time 6 hours 40 minutes. John's FAI 500km Triangle task was completed at a speed of 79.7 kph.

### Dave Bieniasz (Discus 'HB2')

KIR—CALVERT JCT—NWK—NASEBY EAST—KIR

503.5 km, flight time 6 hours 54 minutes at a speed of 74.5kph. Dave collected his (third) Diamond, a Distance badge for this flight.

### Steve Nock (Jantar 'FTJ')

KIR—CALVERT JCT—NWK—NASEBY EAST—KIR

503.5km, flight time 5 hours 59 minutes.

Steve opted for this task intending to complete 500km in less than six hours. He did it with one minute to spare!

### Pete Dixon (LS4 '692')

KIR—TOW—BUS—KIR

341 km, flight time 4 hours 28 minutes, speed 74kph.

### Colin Metcalfe/Geoff Davey (Marianne 'Z35')

KIR—TOW—BUS—KIR

341 km, flight time 5 hrs 33 minutes. This was the second 300 for the Marianne crew after a 'first' two weeks previously. Handicapped speed 68.1kph.

### Dave Plumb (Libelle 'GEE')

KIR—SBY—MARCH -PITSFORD RES-KIR

333 km, flight time 5 hours 42 minutes. Dave only does 300km flights (minimum). Handicapped speed 68.8kph.

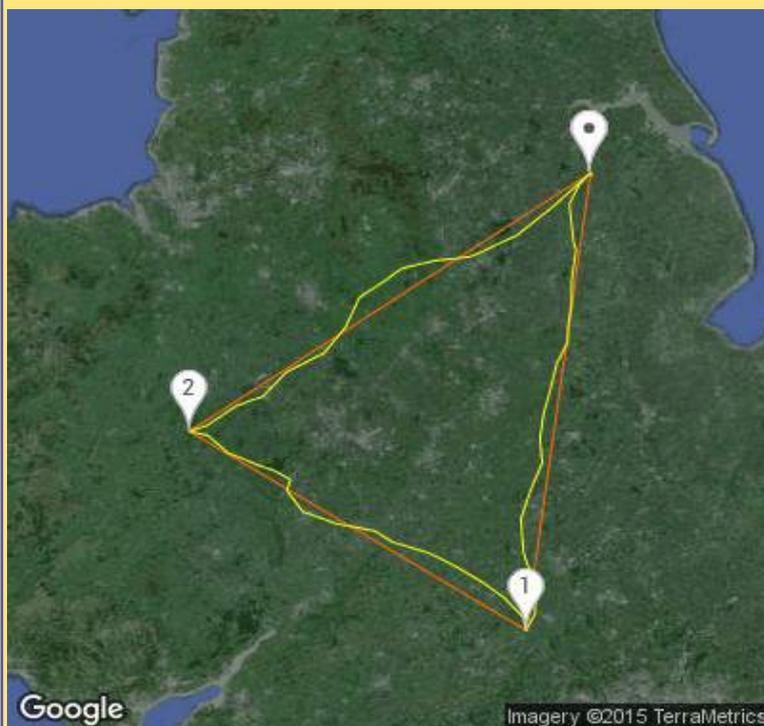
### John Caldwell (Astir 'HTG')

KIR—BUS—GAI 2—MRN—KIR

100 km, 7 hours 13 minutes. John decided not to venture too far but made up for it with a feat of endurance.

There were plenty of other flights, including some excellent soaring achievements on 31st July.

As there is no guarantee that we will have an instructor present on mid-week days, it is a bit 'suck it and see' for pre and post solo pilots. When the season gets underway we will be setting up a system of emailing members on what might be possible on days where the weather is expected to support cross country flying.



JW's 532km task:  
KIRTON - THAME AIRFIELD - LONG MYND - KIRTON

# GALLERY



SIMON LEACH is congratulated by instructor Rick Malham after his first solo flight on Saturday 17th October.  
(pic Geoff Lloyd)



Twenty club members had a night out in November, this time in Lincoln where, after a few social drinks, they enjoyed a meal at the Newport Arch Chinese Restaurant. Thanks to Andy J for organising it.



Geoff Lloyd rejoined the Club earlier this year (what, again? I hear you say), and has since joined club the Motor Falke syndicate. Geoff is pictured after going solo (at 72 years of age, he tells me). There's hope for us all!

## WE'RE BACK!

After an absence of a couple of years, the club magazine is back.

We'll publish four times a year, commencing with this winter edition. Magazine rather than Newsletter, because we can't compete with emails, web sites and social media, where news is peddled instantly. But we will endeavour to provide informative and interesting articles that reflect our activities and members' achievements.

In this first issue we're looking back at some of the high points of 2015, a year in which the club entered a new era. New landlords and a changing airfield landscape bring new challenges. On the other hand, advances have been made across the spectrum of club activities, as we hope to show in these pages.

Please do not hesitate to let me have your thoughts on what we should include in 'Kirton Wave'.

Articles and pictures will always be welcome.

Apologies for any typos and other errors in this my first attempt after a long lay off. I'd almost forgotten how to do it. Will improve as we go along!

**Geoff**

# Coast to Coast in Scotland

*TVGC's John Williams relates the story of his ambitious and exciting coast to coast flight from Aboyne in September this year, involving crossing a significant stretch of water. (Lismore is an island lying in Loch Linnhe at the southern end of the great Glen).*

It was forecast to be a good wave day at Aboyne on the 5th September but overcast conditions and drizzle made for a slow start. I walked into the Clubhouse to find the "other" John Williams had made good use of the better conditions to the south and had turned the west coast of Mull and was on his way back east. Armed with this information I declared an ambitious 696 kms –Ballater, Lismore, Brechin, Connel, Aboyne. I towed down to the launch point and after waiting for a while I decided to take a 4000' tow to Ballater at 12.00 noon, hoping for the best.

I pushed west and was over Balmoral at 2500' before finding broken lift and eventually climbed through cloud into brilliant sunshine before making a start at 5000'. The wave looked good towards Braemar and a climb at 3000' got me established in reasonable conditions. The cloud thinned out rapidly to the west but there was enough to show the energy lines and this made for a good run to Glencoe via Loch Rannoch.

I heard John Williams struggling in weak thermals having got back to the west coast over Connel so I decided to be cautious, as conditions were virtually blue. Two very slow climbs to 7500' gave me some courage to set off for Lismore and as I crossed the coast I encountered "off the clock" sink and rapidly lost height. As the coast receded behind me with the altimeter winding down I felt a strong urge to turn round and get back over dry land.

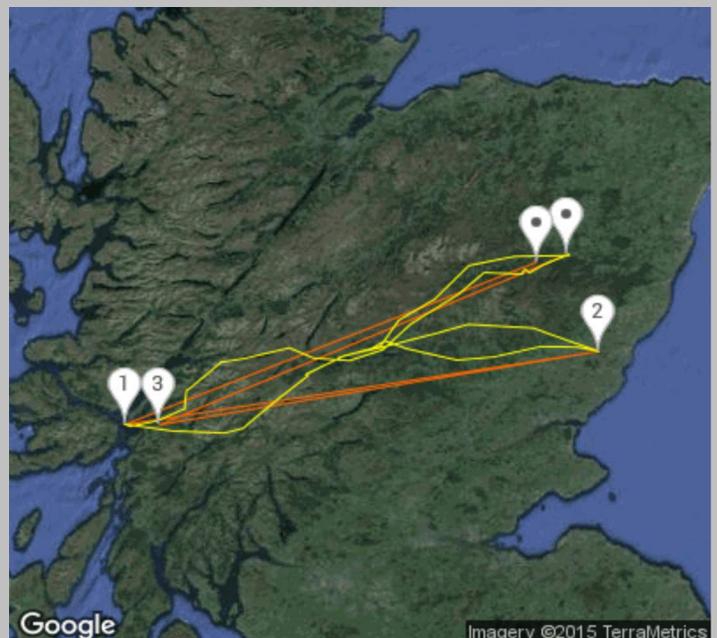
Either bravely, or foolishly, I decided to push on and after rounding the lighthouse at 4000' ran into 4 kts in the blue. Climbing to 10000' with stunning views was an absolute joy. Loch Linnhe and Ben Nevis to the north east, the Isle of Mull to the west, the Firth of Lorn to the south west and uninterrupted views looking down Loch Etive to the mountains in the east.

Conditions were quite weak going back east but good energy lines meant I could maintain 7-8000' for a start and then a gradual decent down to 3000' over Rannoch Moor with no landout options made things very tense for a while. Luckily a small cumulus formed and marked the wave to allow a climb back to 8000' and that allowed a run to Brechin without turning. Again stunning views of the east coast with very little cloud to spoil things.



What little cloud there was starting to disappear so finding a decent run back to the west got progressively harder. The wave started to die and so, at Loch Rannoch, I decided to abandon and go back to Aboyne whilst there was still sufficient lift and daylight. I landed after flying 550 kms in just over 7 hours. A failed task but the stunning views made it a flight that will live in the memory for a very long while. What a magical place Aboyne is. Can't wait for next year!

PS After putting on the covers I walked into the Clubhouse Bar to find John Williams drinking a pint. He had flown 750 kms, de-rigged his glider and driven from Portmoak to Aboyne. Must try harder next year!



*John's task, above, shows turnpoints: 1 Lismore, 2 Brechin & 3 Connel with start and finish points of Ballater and Aboyne to the north of turnpoint 2.*