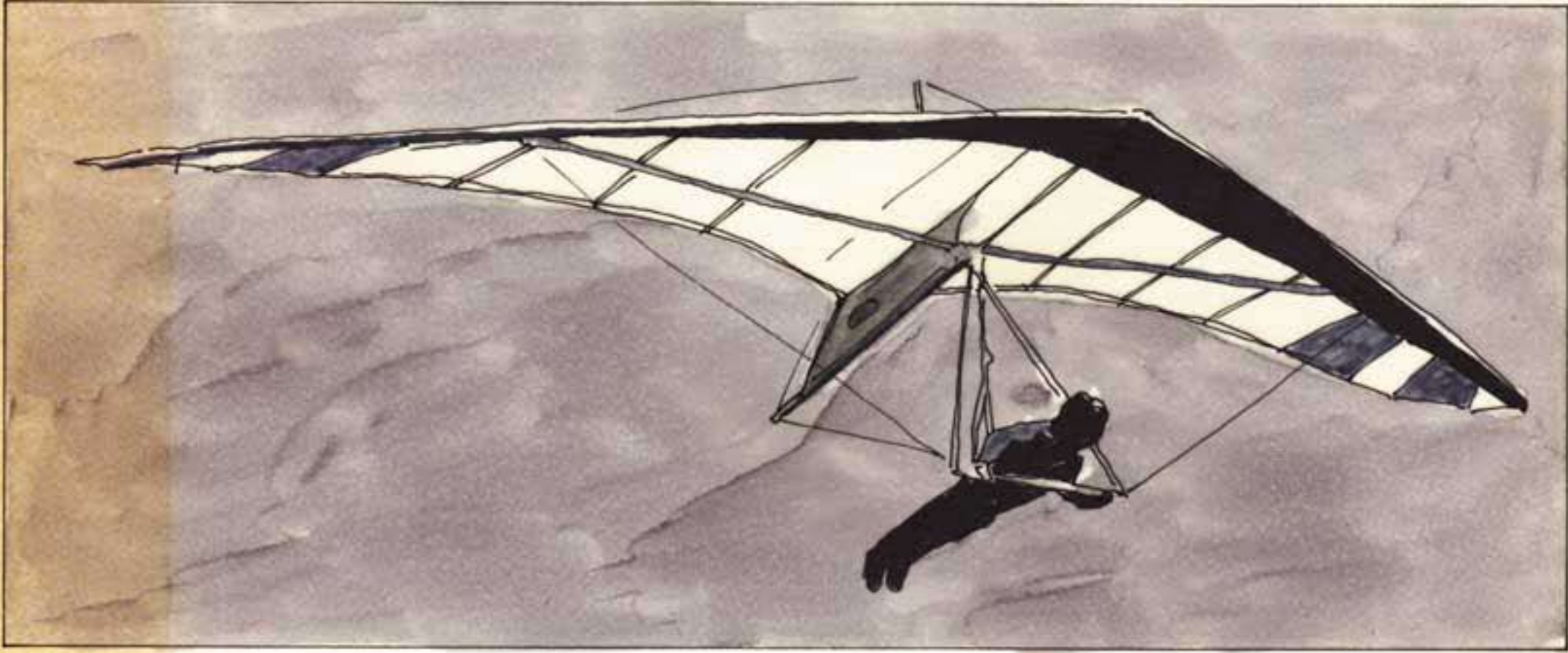


wings!

The Official Magazine of the BHGA
November '79



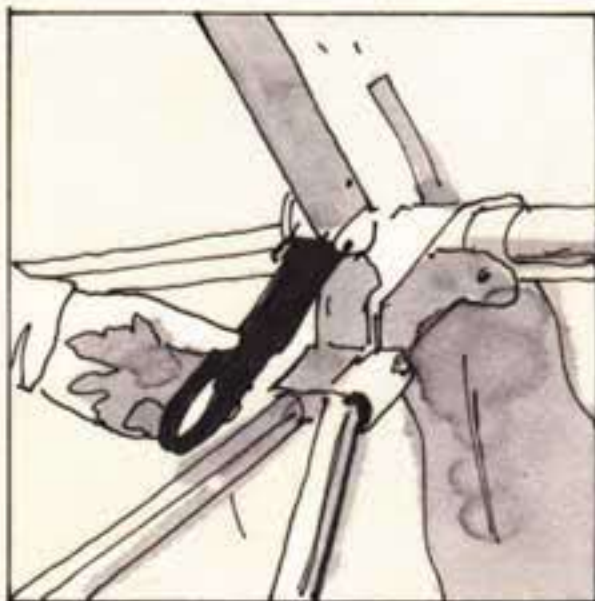
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EDITORIAL

A flyer sold his Gryphon at a tempting price to a pilot whose sole flying experience appears to have been seated, on a standard — and that some time ago.

The inevitable happened. The proud new owner of the black and purple gryphon turned up at a southern site intent on flying his new machine. After a couple of abortive take-offs, other pilots recognised his lack of experience on both the machine, and in the prone position.

The pilot was eventually persuaded to go to lower slopes and practice at a safer altitude.

He was given as much advice as possible under the circumstances, but decided that after a few low flights he was capable of taking off from the top. During that flight he stalled, impacted into the ground and broke his neck. He is, at the time of writing, in Stoke Mandeville hospital.

Conditions that day were good and the fault lies not only in pilot error during flight, but in the series of unwise decisions that led to the flight. Pilots anxious to sell their gliders are far from discriminating about potential purchasers. It often seems they will happily unload their latest machine on to a complete novice regardless of the consequences. It's one good reason why gliders, as well as pilots should be rated — if only as a guideline.

How often do we hammer home the dire consequences of combining more than one inexperience. Had the pilot in question taken heed of the warnings he would have bought a less ambitious machine that he was able to fly seated for a while, before converting to prone. Sadly, he was convinced that it was the ideal machine for him.

So, more doom and gloom without any apologies to John Storry (see Airmail). It must be pleasant to be an ostrich without any regard to consequences; though one does hope that the original owner of the Gryphon might just feel one twinge of conscience and think twice before he sells his next high performance machine to someone with so little flying experience.

JEANNIE KNIGHT

BOB CALVERT WINS LEAGUE

Bob Calvert won the last league and is now overall league champion. Bob Bailey came second overall and Lester Cruse third.

Bob and Brian Milton on right Photo: Eddie Horsfield



WINGS!

The money problems mentioned in our last issue have hit us hard. There is little left in the *Wings!* budget for 1979 and the best we can do with the money available is to provide two small issues before the end of the year.

Problems have arisen from increased postage rates, higher printing costs and a drop in advertising revenue caused by the ban on non C of A gliders in *Wings!* advertisements. Additionally it has cost more than anticipated to produce what we hope have been good quality issues.

However, we intend to keep a tight rein on expenditure next year and things should be back to normal on January 1st when the first of our regular 28 page issues comes out. Advertising may be limited in each issue, but where necessary manufacturers can have inserts in the magazine. Rates are being increased to reflect the cost of production of the advertising space and new rates plus schedule of deadlines for copy and adverts for 1980 will be published in our next issue.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Rob Stokes and Jeff Marvin have recently resigned and David Squires and Percy Moss have been appointed to Council to replace them. Just as we go to press we hear that Mike Caston has sent in his resignation. Rob and Mike have had to give up because the amount of work involved with their special areas of responsibility, took up too much of their time. The AGM will be held on 1st and 2nd of March, at Warwick University. We will be electing at least three Council Members, a new Chairman and a new Treasurer. The BHGA must be run and led by enthusiasts who can cope with the work and responsibility otherwise things will increasingly stagnate.

The answer is for each Council Member to share the work by forming a team, Group or Committee to run his/her area of responsibility. The Competitions Committee is a good example and with a similar set up in each area the load on any one person becomes manageable. Those who wish to stand for election to Council are asked to contact the Secretary. Others prepared to help are also asked to make contact and specify what they would like to help with.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

At last it seems there may be some hang gliding Christmas Cards. Paul Bennett, a hang glider pilot from 9, Woodfield Road, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicester, is hoping to produce some this year.

Even better, the cards will be in aid of charity and anyone interested can find out more from Paul either by writing (send s.a.e. please) or ringing him on Hinckley 32526 — evenings.

Hopefully, there will be more about the cards in the next edition of *Wings!* due out at the beginning of December.

THAMES VALLEY CHARITY FLY-IN

Around mid July I thought it might be a good idea to have a charity fly-in, thus giving Hang Gliding a better image. In particular the Thames Valley H.G.C.

The rest of the committee were sounded out and the majority verdict was a most definite yes. The first hurdle was which charity to donate the proceeds to. We needed to choose one which would appeal to most people, and also one that had not already been thrashed to death — but most important, one that would likely give us most publicity. We finally chose the Speech Therapy Unit of Thames Valley Hospitals. We then had sponsor forms printed, and sent one to each of the club members. Then we informed all the local papers in Berkshire and got in touch with Radio 210, most of whom responded magnificently by giving us advance publicity. One of our more adventurous members then sent an appeal to local firms, clubs and pubs. Of the 50 or so letters sent out we were promised around £125. The Fly in took place over the two middle weekends in September, but we won't know how much exactly we've raised for some weeks. I feel confident we shall top £600 (in the beginning the aim was £300).

The final number of pilots taking part totalled 31 (we should have had more considering we are 114 strong). We are pleased to say that we had one of the few female flyers taking part. The flyers had to take 5 flights and land on a target, scoring anything from 2 to 10 points each flight. Conditions were far from ideal on any of the chosen days, but we battled on. The only pilot scoring maximum points was our 16-year-old, Andrew Hill. In fact he landed on the bull not 5 but 7 times — just to prove that it was no fluke. Well done, Andrew, I'll buy you a pint (when you're old enough!).

The average pilot score was about 36 points from 50 max, which considering conditions, was pretty good really.

Just 3 days after the event we were able to present to the Speech Therapy Unit a machine desperately needed to aid patients with Speech impediments following a stroke. The cost was our original aim of £300, and since the Fly-in was still news, the press were invited along to conclude their coverage.

To sum up, I feel that this whole event was a shot in the arm for the T.V.H.G.C. It makes a nice change to get good reports for once. We have learnt a lot from this little exercise, and if we happen to have another in the future then we will have a better idea and should improve our sponsorship money by 50%.

As and when the remainder of the cash flows in we shall purchase another machine. Should any Club decide to do a similar Charity "do", we would be only too happy to guide them to a financially successful event.

RON JEROME
Club Chairman

AIRMAIL

COMMENTS ON THE BRIFORGE SYSTEM

Dear Editor,

When I read Jim Taggart's 'design considerations' in the September issue of *Wings!* I thought to myself — 'Oh well, it's a free country . . .' but then I turned the page and could not believe my eyes for a page plus of character assassinations, bitching and sheer ignorance!

I still would not have written except that it's clear there are more than one, in fact at least 20, of these units. Now, I don't know any of the personalities on either side of the bitching side of this argument, but I'll make an educated guess that Bill Cavell's wooden legged master rigger has to be Albert Hooker, ex-rigger to the Red Devil's Display Team etc., and the parachute club, RAPA Bad Lippe Springs, Germany. I am therefore sure that the motives and intentions of everyone involved with the Briforge rig are of the highest order.

Nevertheless the end result is wrong.

From a hang gliding reserve point of view, just about every point to do with the rig is wrong or debateable. As I would like this letter published, if only for the information of the 20 owners, I will stick to the main points and, I think, some constructive suggestions.

Jim Taggart's 'Design Considerations' — spring drogue, point number 4. There is no way 'G' forces are going to play any part in breaking the 400lb. bridle. I would suggest that all Briforge owners, indeed every parachute owner, get and wear a hook knife (those in Germany should be able to get them from Albert Hooker). The pilot in distress should not be afraid to cut away half a dozen suspension lines if it is clear they are preventing the deployment of the parachute.

Note: Locate the hook knife where you can find it when you need it — when the pack is open and you may be shrouded in canopy — i.e. not on the parachute container. Tie the knife to its picket by a three or four foot line, in case it is dropped.

The bridle may also be tied with special slip knots which allow normal function but provide a 'cut away' option on malfunction. I hope the Briforge owners have the solid vane, tall spring MA-1 pilot 'chute, or modern equivalent, and not the net vane, short spring variety.

On the cosmetic side of the considerations — weight and bulk. For hang gliding use the continuous 'suspension' lines may be removed from the canopy part of the parachute — and the only reason not to 'cascade' the suspension lines as suggested under 'canopy mods' is that as a reserve system they add a snagging risk. Personally I have made about 100 free fall jumps on a similar parachute used as a main parachute — the

strength of the modification is beyond question in hang gliding terms.

The three items in the magazine are full of contradictions and double standards. For example, again in 'Design Considerations — Spring Drogue', Point One is contradicted by Point Two (not that there is any way of 'aiming' a drogue — they rarely go away straight). This Point Two is contradicted by Point one of 'Bagged' 'chute deployed by hand' — and so on.

From Bill Cowell's letter: "Our master rigger made test rigs for three months, drew charts, studied airflows . . ." — I hope Hudson doesn't take up Taggart's challenge on test programmes because 'Briforge' haven't got a player — because we are then told all this happened not full time, but in "spare time, evenings and weekends".

From Jim Taggart's letter "The truth about . . ."

The Pennine pilot upside down with a Briforge would, if he was lucky, duplicate a five foot clearance of the drogue as you sometimes get in bench tests, and exactly like the bench tests see the drogue come **straight back down again!** Upside down there would be no relative wind going past the glider and the poor sucker would not even have the option of "lobbing 6lb. or even 9lb. weight upwards. Please, Please, ask Albert Hooker about pilot 'chute hesitations, about jumpers using twin drogues, about current trends for hand deployed drogues!

"Ours have no sign on them saying — 'Don't open above 100mph' ". It should say 'Low Speed Parachute — Limited to use under 150mph' as do most military spec. man dropper and sport reserves. As far as hang gliding use is concerned, the question is irrelevant.

To clarify: hang gliding parachutes have come about through the participation in the sport of Californian skydivers who, probably urged by early structural failures, such as UP Dragonfly crossbars, made early rigs. The likes of Bennett and UP then commercialised these. The 'pop top' design, which the Briforge follows, is an American sport parachute rig. The reason there are no test programmes on drogue 'chute applications to reserves is that they have been discounted pre-drawing board stage by front line parachutists/flyers. 'Hang Gliding specials' are mainly manufactured by a tight community of parachutists/flyers/manufacturers in the Elsinore area around Los Angeles — that is not to say it will always be so. But future developments can never take place in isolation as has obviously happened at Briforge. Why did they not ask around, write to hang gliding special manufacturers? I am not guaranteeing answers, but they are good people and would have provided definite feedback on the spring drogue for example . . .

The problem here is that skydivers know what to do with parachutes, usually, and will ACT until impact to open a reserve, not sit back on initial failure or as I read reported of Brian Milton's Nationwide drama "it would probably not have opened anyway". (If that is factually wrong, I read it in a national newspaper — apologies to Brian Milton. But that attitude prevails with all types of flyers who do not know parachutes.)

There are ways and means of getting parachutes more cheaply. At the risk of stepping on dealers' toes I would suggest that the Briforge Hang Gliding Club could have got dealer prices direct from the US and shipped through the forces as they do their 124's or T10 reserves anyway. Here in the UK, I think I am right in saying, recognised clubs and associations can be exempted from import duties on sporting goods and this plus their dealer prices would enable clubs to 'loan' parachutes to their members for 'deposits' nearer £100 than £200.

My motive? SAFETY!!

U. Cotano
25 Hayburn Road
Southampton

Afterthought: How to get 'value for money' from a Briforge hang gliding reserve parachute. (a) Reduce the bulk and weight of the 124 or T10 army surplus reserve by: 1. removing completely or 'gutting' the suspension line in the canopy. 2. 'Gutting' and shortening the suspension lines.

'Gutting' — most surplus US military parachute suspension lines are of the tubular or sheath type rather than braided — that is like electrical flex, a number of strands (in this case seven) inside an outer sleeve. The inner strands are easily removed — man hours are the only requirement.

The parachute may no longer stop and lower a Cessna and occupants, but it will do nicely for hang gliding.

(b) Duplicate the most convincing of the hang gliding specials deployment sequences and containers.

REPLY FROM JOHN HUDSON

Dear Jeannie,

I would like to reply to the letters from Jim Taggart and Bill Cowell in the last *Wings!* for two reasons.

The prime one is to try to convince people that spring drogue deployment in present hang glider reserve configurations is most unsatisfactory. The second is to hotly deny the inferred charge that as one of the major suppliers of hang gliding accessories I am guilty of "ripping people off".

Firstly I am fully aware of how a spring drogue deployment works. The problems with it are as I stated in my first letter — One has no control over the direction of deployment and as Bert Tyrell pointed out, "hesitation" (when the drogue fails to penetrate out of the low pressure area behind a falling body) is a major cause for concern. The low pressure area above an inverted hang-glider could be huge and if the drogue does fail, the pilot is faced

with 270 sq. feet of soft loose ripstop and 280 feet of nylon cord to somehow get into clear air.

The potential for entanglement is immense. In addition, a spring drogue "blasting" away from the pilot would be great if you could guarantee it was flying into clear space.

If a wire, thimble end, bolt tube or any other snags happened to be on the way it is entirely possible that it would become caught up.

It is misleading to suggest that a 400 lb. breaking strain line between the pilot drogue and canopy would save all. Owing to the length of bridal tape, rigging lines and gore length — some 60 feet — a drogue entanglement would probably result in a reverse streaming canopy, the total drag of which would barely reach 30 lbs. never mind 400.

It takes very little force to prevent a canopy opening. Any snag problems at all are extremely hazardous.

Jim has obviously not examined the Windhaven, Advanced Air and Bennett parachutes which have been on sale for the last year. It is untrue to say that deployment requires 4 actions — Each system is deployed in a single action "grab and throw".

The parachute is contained in a cloverleaf or sewn bag deployment cover, and this minimises the major risk of entanglement. The contained parachute is thrown out clear of any wreckage and the deployment sequence starts at bridal stretch which is about 20 feet away from the pilot.

In order to straighten the financial side of things one must compare like with like. Bill accuses me and others of "doubling" the price of parachutes on sale. Bill, I didn't even imply you were a fool in my letter — read it again — However, you must have very little grasp of the financial state of the world if you think parachute manufacturers are ripping people off, because you can buy a certain type of canopy for £55.00 when the makers charge £200. The fact is that the military reserve canopies you are buying are *surplus* — they may well be new units but are sold because they are no longer required, primarily because their "shelf life" has expired. Be sensible — how can you expect a manufacturer to produce a new canopy for the price you pay for these.

I too can buy these canopies and would only have to pay £42.00 each — if I was the profit hungry, hard selling, subtle rip off merchant I seem to be being made out to be I would be buying and selling these at a far greater profit than I make on the new American systems I do sell.

I do not sell them because as yet I do not have any faith in them for current hang gliding use. The more lines a canopy has the cleaner it will open. All manufacturers of hang gliding reserves fit 20 lines and gores on 24 foot canopies and 22 on 26 foot canopies — these surplus reserves have 14 lines. They are also heavier, bulkier and to my mind unproven for the use to which you are putting them. I do not want any of my customers to be para-

chute test pilots when success or failure may mean life or death — that's why I sell *tested* parachutes.

Bill mentions the death of Paul Maratos, my friend and close business colleague.

Five days after this tragic event I approached a professional parachute company and paid for unbiased and skilled advice. I took three types of parachute and seven harnesses for evaluation. We examined each parachute canopy, each deployment system and each harness thoroughly. We static tested deployment, and discussed and examined both soft and spring drogue extraction.

Before the weekend I had carried out simultaneous triple static deployment, using high speed line to evaluate the opening sequence. I also carried out air deployment from my glider, releasing the canopies as they opened. This was all very enlightening and vastly increased my knowledge and experience.

I am not an expert on parachutes, but yes Jim, I have carried out a test programme of sorts — I have made 7 air deployments and have discussed the problems with anyone who knows anything at all about 'chutes' as well as lots of pilots who know little.

I object to Jim's accusation that we sell 'cheapo' parachute systems. None of our current systems are limited to 100 mph. The only one that was limited in this way was displayed at the AGM as being not for sale and was there to illustrate deployment sequences. I've thought very hard about parachute systems since Paul's death — all the systems we sell have been very carefully considered.

Now I think it is time to be constructive and carry out a project I've talked about for some time.

Mainair Sports are going to hold an **open parachute seminar** on **Saturday December 15th** John Hunter, accident investigator for the BHGA will lecture on parachute deployment techniques and we hope his colleague Ray Blackman will give us an insight into his 20 years of parachute involvement. In addition we will hold static test deployments and repacking instructions. Everyone is invited and I hope Briforge can be represented. Anyone who owns, would like to own, or just interested in parachutes should come along.

Let me remind you of the only other deployment in the UK that I have heard off — the pilot was flying a Lancer over a cliff site — he was doing 'hoolies' and after a hand standing dive pulled out with such force that the right hand upright tube bent in a huge arc. One wing bent completely up and the glider ended up with about 4° of billow on one side and zero on the other — it was uncontrollable and the pilot deployed his early Bennett parachute which was packed in a Steinbach container — he deployed to save his life, and that it did, depositing him back on top of the cliff unharmed. The site was only two-hundred feet high.

If you think you never fly high enough to use a parachute, think again

and be at the Seminar in Hall No. 1, Royal Agricultural Showground, Stoneleigh, Coventry at 1.00 p.m. on Saturday, December 15th.

**John Hudson,
Mainair Sports**

Editor's comment: More details of the seminar, which has BHGA backing, in next Wings!

REPLY FROM SIMON MURPHY

Dear Jeannie,

One of the less well-known sections of Murphy's Law states that "Anyone who opens his mouth in public is liable to get it filled with rip-stop nylon". This has been proven to my satisfaction.

I humbly apologise to Bill Cowell, Jim Taggart and everyone in Briforge for my inference that their parachutes were subsidised by the tax-payers. I accept that this was not the case, and hope you will forgive my unjustified cynicism.

I do not accept any of Jim Taggart's attacks upon my wisdom or my character. Once convinced that a parachute was worthwhile (and there are those who think I am an idiot for this decision), I approached a dealer whom I trusted and asked his advice. He had three different makes in stock, and did not use pressure sales techniques. Next time I flew a 'chute was fitted to my harness. I do not resent my supplier making a profit; he has thousands of pounds invested, and deserves a return for his excellent service. Had I chosen to design and build my own system it would have taken months, which *could* have been too long.

I have never made any criticism of the Briforge system, because I know nothing about it. I do know something about marketing, and do not believe that a parachute can be marketed for £95. The Briforge system is not being marketed. If it were available, and an independent authority of the calibre of Chris Price were to declare it superior to my own 'chute, I would buy one. Does that make me an idiot? Eighty per cent of our club pilots fly without 'chutes, so there must be a market for this £95 system.

If my parachute is stolen tomorrow what shall I do? Spend months making my own, or pick up a phone and order a new one from stock? Chris Price tells me to do the latter. Jim says I am an idiot. What if the same burglar takes my glider, helmet and instruments? Perhaps I should take up sky-diving.

**Simon Murphy
Honiton, Devon**

Editors Comment: This closes correspondence on this particular parachute argument.

THANKS FOR THE COMP

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank everybody concerned with organising and running of the South Downs Open Championship at Steyning in making my first attempt in competition enjoyable. My full admiration goes to those marshalls

standing out in pouring rain, doing their part in running the event.

**Dan Clark,
Herne Bay, Kent**

ANOTHER NAIL IN OUR COFFIN? IT'S BEING LOWERED INTO THE GROUND

Dear Madam,

Desist, fellow members, I beg you before it is too late. September *Wings!* contained sufficient innuendos of doubtful trading practices and rip-offs to encourage an Edinburgh solicitor to speculate a few bawbees on a journey southwards. When, in addition, choice personal insults begin to fly about — liars, thieves and twerps to name a few — I am prompted to ask how long will it be before the protagonists tie themselves together at the left wrist in pairs and proceed to bludgeon each other to death with A-frame sides. Finally, when Big Brother Corston sharpens his quill and stirs the Potage au Rhossili with a vigour not seen since Malcolm Hawksworth's chiding of the membership way back in '75, I begin to ask questions about the direction being taken by the BHGA.

I was disturbed at the alacrity with which the BHGA took sides against Gerry Breen some time ago on reading "Another Nail In Our Coffin" I am seriously alarmed at the instant publication of what should initially be private and personal correspondence. Sub judice as it were. To bar a flier from any site on the basis of one unauthorised take-off without giving him an opportunity to state his case is just not on and one wonders at the quality of the leadership, or lack of it (?), which allows and accepts this hysterical approach to a simple disciplinary matter. Worse follows. What started out as a private 'thing' between a member and the SWWHGC swiftly escalates into an official BHGA threat to consider applying sanctions against the member in his professional capacity, his employer and presumably their other employees. All this taking place publicly without any apparent attempt being made to uphold the simple principles of justice, or even to conform to BHGA policy concerning site rule infringements. The policy is, or at least was . . . "if a club feels that it must formally ask a member of the BHGA to refrain from jeopardising a site by his behaviour and finds that the member concerned *continues* (my italics) to behave in an irresponsible manner, then if the club writes to the BHGA with a copy of the initial warning, the BHGA will investigate the matter . . ."

Over the last few months I have read enough doom and gloom editorials and contentious personal opinions to last me two lifetimes, none of which, in my view, lends credibility to the idea that the BHGA is an effective controlling body for the sport. From the very beginning, the BHGA officers have prattled on about the need to present

the association as a responsible body to the CAA, Local Authorities, Landowners, Old Uncle Tom Cobleigh and All; they have loaded me up with insurance, airworthiness certificates, a pilot rating scheme et al; and now, almost five years later, they have the effrontery to tell me that, quote . . . "if anything we are in a worse situation than before with many local authorities waiting to pounce with prohibitive bye-laws . . ."

If this is true, the BHGA has failed and failed dismally. Do the horse-riders, the climbers, the cavers, the rambles, the model fliers and the picknickers put up with all this bumf and bullshine? Of course not! Because, instead of filling their collective trousers with terror that some nasty man in a uniform might come up and shout "HOY" in their ear, they get out there and get on with whatever they wish to do. The conclusion is obvious; to me at any rate. If our organisation continues to behave like a fawning hound, it will continue to be kicked about like one. If the BHGA's official statements are to be believed their panderings to Authority have led nowhere and as far as I am concerned, the membership is now entitled to hear a load roar or two.

May I conclude by reminding you all that, in the days before the moors were opened to the public, rambles frequently had loaded twelve-bores stuffed up their nostrils by irate game-keepers. It seems obvious that the future of hang gliding now rests with those fliers who are prepared to stand up and be counted, as the political approach has manifestly failed.

**John B. Storry
Sheffield.**

Reply from Chris Corston

O.K. Perhaps I shouldn't have asked the Editor to publish the letters, but after a lot of thought I did and they highlighted problems which seriously threaten our use of sites in a way that no theoretical article could have done. Had the South West Wales Club pressed the council to take disciplinary action, the letter from me showed what *could* have been the result.

The BHGA is nowhere near as effective as it ought to be because we just don't have enough talented people prepared to lead us or share the work load. I know that John's views would change if he saw all the problems we have in keeping the land owning establishment happy. The climbers, horse riders and potholers have similar ones. The bureaucracy facing all outdoor pursuits has increased alarmingly.

We need members with John Storry's views, enthusiasm and obvious ability on council. Better still, we need many John Storrys fighting to get elected. Please John, stand for election to council!

COMMENT FROM ISLE OF MAN

Dear Editor,

I am sorry to read in *Wings!* about the

problems you, on the mainland, are having with the 'Anti-hang gliding brigade' and the necessity to raise a 'Central Fighting Fund'.

Here, on the Isle of Man, we have only co-operation, help and encouragement from our authorities, a fact we appreciate and respect and our club has been in existence for over five years. This pleasant relationship could come to a sudden and abrupt end if the

following occurrence were to be repeated.

Last July, I was visited by the local police who demanded to know who in our club possessed a powered hang glider. No one does. Then, could I inform them who was "LOW FLYING OVER DOUGLAS"! (Douglas is our biggest town, the home of our parliament and very much in the C.A.A.'s controlled zone). The culprit was even-

tually traced to one Mr. James Potts of Kilmarnock, Scotland, who had written to me last December enquiring about flying prospects on the Isle of Man. I answered him giving details and offering him every help and co-operation within our power on his arrival here. This help he chose to ignore completely, although we contacted him again on his arrival here. (I am told that Mr. Potts collected a gentle

raspberry from our peace maintainers for his efforts). In any other country he would have been incarcerated and his equipment confiscated, especially had he flown over Westminster!!

I am not surprised you need a Central Fighting Fund!

Bill Roberts
Secretary
Manx Hang Gliding Club

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS BY MIKE COLLIS, CHAIRMAN BHGA ACCIDENT COMMITTEE

LORRAINE EVANS

Further to the report on page 19 of Issue 7/79:

The French Civil Aviation Authority Accident Report states:-

Pilot: Lorraine Evans.

Experience: 2 years. Pilot Badge, working for Pilot Two.

Glider: Chargus Vega II. (Flying position not stated).

Date: 18 June 1979.

Site: 'Les Maitres', Montaud, Isere.

The pilot was warned of turbulence. After take-off on her first flight at this site she cleared some trees by about 60ft., turned right, then left (in difficulties) then made a very steep right turn, crashing into the hill, where she died. Hang Gliding was banned on the site in December 1978, a little-known decision. The French draw no conclusions.

Comment: Insufficient airspeed appears to be the cause of the accident.

FRANK CAVE

Paul Baker's Report states:

Pilot: Frank Cave, Northampton HGC.

Experience: Self-taught, inexperienced. BHGA member since December 1978.

Glider: Spirit, seated.

Date: Not given.

Site: Sloping village recreation ground 200 x 100 yards.

Injuries: Right leg amputated below the knee.

The Pilot and a friend were experimenting with non-bridle, fixed-length car towing, the line being passed through the harness karabiner and wrapped round the bar. On the second launch the glider rose very rapidly at about 30ft. The Pilot released under tension, stalled, turned uncontrollably, flew out of the field and hit a house. His leg broke a window and the glass nearly severed it.

Comment: A perfect example of how not to tow.

MIKE ROBINSON

The AIB Bulletin states:

Pilot: Mike Robinson.

Experience: 6 years hang gliding, nil power.

Glider: Olympus 180, prone.

Date: 6 May 1979.

Site: Laythorpe House Farm, East Kirby, Spilsby, Lincs.

Injuries: Severe.

The Pilot, with two others of similar experience flew from a flat field, in a light wind. After successful flights by the others and a good briefing he took off, yawed and banked to the left, recovered, and tried to go prone at about 70ft. He had difficulty in controlling pitch. After some seven oscillations he was 30-40 degrees nose-high at about 45ft. The glider dived into the ground, still at high power.

Comment: The Pilot seems to have frozen on his mouth throttle. "When in doubt, spit it out".

INCIDENT REPORT

Pilot: David Taylor.

Experience: 3 years. Pilot 1, working for Pilot 2.

Glider: Chargus Cyclone 180, probably seated.

Date: Recent.

Site: Tegelberg Mountain, 6,000 feet agl.

Injuries: Nil.

The Pilot waited for wind for his first flight at site, but took off from a ramp in nil wind to join others thermalling. He took off nose high and too slow, stalled a wing, pulled up under cable car cables and struck them. The glider dropped vertically, facing towards the mountain, recovered and hit a fir tree. He attributes the incident to flying in a routine manner with insufficient mental preparation and flight planning.

Comment: Modern gliders tend to raise the nose strongly on take-off. The frame-on-shoulder technique helps to counter this. Practicing stalls is time well spent.

INCIDENT REPORT — SAIL SECURITY

A report from Lanarkshire states that the rope securing the tip of the sail to the leading edge of an Avon Hustler came adrift. The precise failure is not yet known. It could have led to a serious accident. Members are advised to check gliders with cord or tape fastenings NOW and periodically.

HANG GLIDER PILOT CATCHES THIEVES



Hang gliding instructor Ken Prydderch has won police praise for his part in the search for a gang of thieves. Thirty-two year-old Ken, chairman of the North Wales Hang Gliding Club, took to the skies to try to pick up the trail of a gang who had robbed a Ruithin hotel. Police had lost trace of the thieves after they abandoned their car and fled into the hills.

Armed with a radio, Ken took off on a flight lasting 45 minutes and covered an area it would have taken six hours to search on foot. He spotted the thieves hiding amongst trees and bracken behind a radio mast and was able to direct the police to the spot. The three men later appeared in court.

The police said afterwards they thought it was the first time a hang glider had been used in a search. Not only was it cheaper than hiring a helicopter, but it had the advantage of being a silent method of detection, they said.

Meanwhile the police have withdrawn their objection to the club using a long ridge in the area and it seems that Ken's success has won the club a long awaited site. Well done Ken!

I agreed to be the pilot on one condition and that was I and nobody else would decide when to fly, regardless of other pressures. As a result we passed over one or two possible dates and ironically the best forecast came up for Monday, August 27th, two days after Gerry Breen had started his own trip.

The forecast for the Saturday and Sunday was for very bad weather with strong South Easterly winds reaching gale force. As it happened, the forecast was wrong and we were otherwise engaged at the Little Snoring Tow meet when we heard that Gerry had flown to Dover. The following day we heard that he had reached Le Touquet.

Then we got the forecast for Monday and it was good. Although we were two days behind Gerry we had always intended doing it in one day and now seemed like a good time to go. So we left the tow meet early and drove to St. Albans, where we stayed overnight. We got up early the following morning and arrived at the take off site in the dark. This was a large sports field near Hatfield.

We chose to take off North of London rather than from the South or East of it because this way we could cross the city and truthfully say that we had flown from London and not just from somewhere near it. Right until the end we hoped to land in Paris for the same reason. Permission was given by the CAA and CATO for the chosen route across Enfield, down the Lea Valley to the Thames, then Eastward across Greenwich, and south of Canterbury to Dover.

Came the dawn, but not the wind which had been promised. We wanted to get away as soon as it was light enough so we had to make an absolutely still air take off. The time was 07.31. We just made it, with Terry and Mark Silvester assisting on the side wires. Because Mark is considerably smaller than Terry, the launch was quite a bit lopsided and, as shown on the TV news, the glider sank to the ground and skimmed along on one wheel and almost on a wing tip. After what seemed like ages, it unstuck and climbed away. Thank heavens for those wheels!

A few minutes later after circling over the field to gain height, I headed off in the right direction, with the ground crew and helicopter in hot pursuit. The chopper took off as I left and by prearrangement remained a few hundred feet to the rear or the sides, never below or above or in front. I was soon at 2000 ft. We were to remain between 1500 and 2500 ft over the city and were cleared to 3500 ft elsewhere. Near the city we were allowed to use the helicopter route passing about 3 miles east of the Tower of London.

Going South East, I arrived at my first turning point at the reservoirs of the Lea Valley, and turned South. Navigation was made easy by a "roll on" map device clamped to my control frame under my eyes. It was easy to follow the route by using this and at about 20 miles I turned East above the Thames towards Greenwich and the A2 motorway.

Just before this point, the view of the city was breathtaking with Tower Bridge, the Post Office Tower and other well known landmarks poking up out of the light ground mist.

Soon after turning Eastwards I found my way blocked by cloud and had to descend and deviate South to avoid it. This took me away from my original flight path and more towards the South and as a result I could not pick up the A2 motorway which I had intended to be my guide to Canterbury. However, there was enough hazy sun to enable me to navigate in the right direction. The compass could back this up to some extent, but, because wind strength and direction could never be known accurately, an exact compass course could not be followed. By now I was flying well off the edge of my map, so it really was a case of aiming for the coast this side of Dover, intending to follow it along to Dover.

The miles droned by and the chopper left me to

Flying a powered hang glider from London to Paris was an idea that Brian Milton fostered from a dream into a reality. For over two years he worked on the idea, gaining permission for the venture from the English authorities, and as far as was possible from the French ones who were more vague.

There followed his teaming with the famous Skyhook Bluebird glider, which crashed before television cameras. The Bluebird sponsors wanted to continue with the project — but with Brian still not fully recovered, another pilot had to be found.

The obvious person was Len Gabriels himself, who had developed the machine. Sadly for the team, Gerry Breen got to Paris before him — but the Bluebird run was defeated only by red tape and could have proved a sensational achievement. Gerry had gone about his permissions a different way — through the military air attache — and had his hang glider registered as a normal aircraft.

LONDON (ALMOST) BY LEN GABRIEL

Photo by B. Milton

refuel about half way and I didn't see it until Dover again. At one or two points I came down low enough to read the large road signs and these are surprisingly easy to read even from a good height. These removed any doubts I may have had that I was on the correct course.

After 1¼ hours after take off, I saw the sea about 20 miles ahead near Folkestone, but before getting near enough to see Dover, the engine, which had run faultlessly, started to stutter. Assuming that the fuel was about to run out, I continued but made sure that I had a landing point in view which was also O.K. for taking off again.

The engine finally stopped altogether and I glided down and landed on a huge field just west of Folkestone which was surrounded by army buildings. It turned out to be Sharncliffe regimental barracks. The time was 10.15 and the flight time was 2 hrs 44 mins.

I got a lift to Dover and drove up to the site — Farthingloe Farm — to see everyone anxiously scanning the sky. We made a quick dash back to the glider with fuel and ground crew and refuelled. I took off again, this time easily in the very light wind. Once again I used the huge field to gain height over, then set off for Dover to land for the benefit of the cameramen at the landing site.

The extra time due to this diversion, having no wind assistance and landing in the wrong place, upset the early plans which would have had me away again by 11.00. Now the ground crew had missed the earlier ferry and booked for the 13.30 one. This meant that my take off would be 2½ hours late.

A further complication was that they had to board the ferry earlier than expected, so I had to be in the air by 13.10. This accomplished, the ground crew then left me all alone, flying about to pass the time whilst the helicopter returned from customs clearance at Lydd. It returned at 13.30 and of course was now not allowed to land again in England. If I relanded I would be on my own. The conditions over land in the hot sunshine, with strong thermals popping off the many cornfields, were very bumpy, even at times quite violent. The constant throttling back which this entailed meant that I wasn't gaining

height very quickly so I moved out to sea a few hundred yards. The air became smooth but the climb rate was non-existent due to sinking air as it replaced the rising air just on shore. I didn't want to go further out just yet.

My original plan had been to climb to 3500 ft and then go from this height. I could have glided say 8 miles down wind or 2½ miles up wind, so that half the channel width could have been flown without engine. This left the other half. However one looked at it, the engine had to run for at least 20 minutes for safety. That was if I had climbed to 3500 ft which was now not possible. So I had to decide whether to go or not at my present height of about 1500 ft.

I listened to the engine carefully and it still seemed to be thrumming away as usual. I thought I detected a different note but decided this was my saner half trying to stop me going. I couldn't honestly think of a good reason for not doing, so off I went into the wild wet yonder, simultaneously with the departure of the hovercraft to Boulogne. I headed to Cap Gris Nez, just visible as a smudge in the distance. The hovercraft left me as our routes diverged. The chopper was following. I had calculated that the glider was bouyant enough to float but just to be sure had added an inflatable float on the keel. I wore a life vest (cork type) under my prone harness and this would look after me, as I can swim. The boat which was supposed to follow me across didn't turn up as it was locked in its harbour by low tide. Even so, I can honestly say that I never worried for a moment about the crossing. I had the confidence of a lot of running of the engine without problems and the glider was trimmed perfectly with all torque cancelled out. It was restful to fly and I was comfortable in my harness and entirely at ease. The air was smooth and visibility good and I was glad we had waited for the right weather.

Half way across, both sides now looked a long way away but as I had been gaining height all the way my chances of a long glide were improving. The engine was not on full throttle as I felt that this would lessen the risk of anything going wrong.

The point came when I knew I could glide to land and from then on I started to turn South a bit to save

TO PARIS

LS



miles. Soon I was flying over the seashore and followed it to Boulogne where the hovercraft and ground crew had arrived. As I flew over at 3500 ft the ground crew were quick to point out to the Customs that they were associated with the glider and they were given priority clearance.

I carried on down the coast and turned in to the river estuary that leads up to Le Touquet airport, which had been alerted to my arrival. I glided down and landed near the chopper, hitting hot air and turbulence over the airport which caused me to stumble on landing and drop the nose not very elegantly.

Customs and passport formalities were completed. The chopper went back to England. We went to clear ourselves for take off as I felt reasonably fresh and not in the least tired even after 5 hours flying. I now felt that I could manage another 4 hours or so without trouble.

This was where the first sour note crept in. We learned to our surprise that Gerry was only about 12 miles in front of us, after a break down. It looked as if we were now part of a race although originally we were less concerned about being first and more interested in doing it in one day. Now it looked as if we might do both.

However, we soon found out that this was not to be. The airport commandant refused to let us go on without more paper work, in spite of the fact that everything had been cleared through over a long period beforehand, at least as far as this was possible for a powered hang glider.

Hours passed and we gave up temporarily when the airport closed down for the day. Brian and Fiona had spent hours telephoning just about everyone who might have helped but to no avail. We found a hotel, had a good meal and drowned our sorrows and went off to bed.

Early next morning, we were at the airport before it opened and when the staff arrived the argument continued. This time we were successful although it took some time to get permission to leave after contacting the British Air Attache in Paris.

At 09.57 our time (we hadn't changed our watches to French time) I got a beautiful, absolutely still-air

take off, assisted by Terry and Mark, and off I droned. I headed to the coast intending to fly outside the land thermals which were already popping off but as it happened the beach was so wide, about a mile at a guess, that conditions were thermally all the way to Abbeville. All I got was extra miles by this deviation from the straight line.

Just past Abbeyville I met up with the ground crew and vehicle as prearranged and we travelled along together. I was doing 30×32 mph in still air according to the speedo. Now going through the Somme, with its patchwork quilt of cornfields interspersed with dark green crops, the thermals were really strong and close together with lots of sink in between.

After 2 hrs 8 minutes I decided to land to refuel and so that everyone could rest. It took me ages to get down — especially the last 100 ft where I had to pass over a hot thermally cornfield in order to line up on my chosen landing strip and as there were very few uncultivated strips all along this route I couldn't use any other. Every time I came around over the corn, the glider would go up again but eventually I got it down and because of the still air, decided to land on wheels, still prone.

The gendarmes arrived and took particulars but were otherwise very helpful. Two hours later their attitude changed and they informed us that we were not allowed to fly and we, Fiona and myself were driven away to their headquarters for interrogation.

Eventually they asked us to sign a statement agreeing to dismantle the glider and take it back to England. Regardless of the legalities we decided that we weren't going to get any further so we signed and were driven back to the glider.

The waiting crowd who had been there for 4 hours were very annoyed at the news and turned on the police and shouted and gesticulated at them. One Frenchwoman said to us "I am ashamed to be French. This is not sporting and you should castrate the police." To be fair the police were also disappointed. So there we were virtually within sight of the Eiffel Tower, having to wrap up the glider and go home.

Although we hadn't got there, we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had had no problems

whatever of our own making. The glider, harness and engine had performed perfectly without tiring me. The engine never missed a beat, nor did any bits drop off.

For the moment all I can do is to say thanks to the hard working ground crew and everyone else who helped, including the CAA, who were absolutely marvellous and flexible — unlike their French counterparts. The total distance flown was about 203 miles. The flight terminated about 65 miles from St. Cyr airport, Paris.

Glider: Skyhook Safari, 200 sq ft.

Skyhook Power Pack with McCulloch 123 cc engine, oil bath, chain case speed reducer, shaft drive with needle bearings driving a 40" prop.

Ground Crew: B. Milton, Fiona Campbell (Flight Promotions), F. Walton, T. Silvester, M. Silvester (Skyhook Sailwings), M. Watson (Marketing manager, Bluebird Confectionery), P. Begin (TV cameraman), John James (helicopter pilot).

The disappointing end to the classic attempt to reach Paris from London in one day is described by BRIAN MILTON, who first thought of the whole idea over two years ago.

"We bought ham and pickled things and cheese and bagettes and soft drinks, the sun shone, bees buzzed, thermals popped off and died down and once or twice we thought Len might take off . . . and then the police got a bit harder, Len was arrested and the whole thing fell apart.

When I phoned the British Embassy and asked to speak to Group Captain Hastings (who had sorted out the Le Touquet problems), I got his deputy, a Wing Commander with an entirely different attitude. "Not a chance in a month of you getting into the air", he said crisply, "and anyway your friend in England (Tony Slow, the deputy director of CATO 6) has been misleading my boss about the *airworthiness of your hang glider*." I was totally flabbergasted. Who the hell was a wing commander in Paris to be going on about the airworthiness of Len's machine? Where did he get *that* idea from? And to talk about misleading his boss . . . what had happened was obvious, as our BBC cameraman reported later. We were cast to the dogs. If you had worked for six months, as that wing commander had done, to get Gerry his airworthiness certificates, what would your feelings be towards someone who hadn't gone through that peculiar form of purgatory?

Gerry is to be congratulated, not just on the quality of his flight, but on the quality of those who did the paperwork for him. It's a pity that wing commander wasn't around to examine the paperwork of Louis Bleriot when he crossed the Channel . . . after all, what's crossing the Channel to having the correct paperwork? . . . one must have a sense of priority . . . in triplicate . . .

We packed up and went home. Somehow we were not as gloomy as we might have been. It would have been nice to make Paris, even if we did it later than Gerry. I would personally be interested to know what prompted the wing commander to begin questioning Len's airworthiness. I heard later, from Len, through BHGA Chairman Reggie Spooner, that if we wanted to have another crack at Paris from London, we'd get all the help we needed . . . that's not the point, is it? Where was the help when we really needed it?

If Len hadn't been held up at Le Touquet, we could have caught up with Gerry, and that Tuesday there would have been a fascinating race to Paris. It's my belief Len would have won, but we'll never know. I have asked Gerry if he's interested in another race, this time confined to Britain, where we won't get screwed by paperwork. He's considering it.

As one French newspaper said about Bluebird's nobbling, and Len's involuntary failing . . . 'A pity, because it is this breed of mad flyer, with his obstinacy, courage and fearlessness, who has fostered aviation.'

ARGUMENT ON ISSUE OF PILOT ONE CERTIFICATES

The Midland Federation considered that, if a duly qualified club observer is deemed capable of observing Intermediate and Advanced pilot tasks, and can sign pilots on to Pilot Two and above, the same club observer should be capable of observing Pilot One tasks!

We have proposed that club observers should observe a standard of flying, and not, as was incorrectly suggested, get involved in novice training. This is quite a separate question. In any event, non-professionals could not possibly log the required training time to enable the Instructor's rating, once gained, to be retained. Nor, could any individual or club afford the capital equipment now mandatory.

Returning to the subject, there are club, and, therefore, BHGA members, of long standing who, although they may have been flying hang gliders since before the BHGA was formed, perhaps due to disillusionment with the shortcomings of the various pilot rating schemes, have not obtained their Pilot One certificates. These established flyers, if they now wish to enter the present rating scheme, are expected to travel to a registered school when it is flying to have their basic flying skills observed and recognised with a Pilot One certificate. From then on, their more advanced skills can be observed by their club observer; does this make sense?

Complete novices, when they approach clubs, are now being directed to the professional registered schools, for initial training, to Pilot One standard. However, we all know that due to weather problems, backlogs, difficulty in getting particular days of work, financial and other difficulties, the successful completion rate to Pilot One certificate is low. The very keen newcomer can and does shortcut the system, buy a glider and fly without having completed the full Pilot One tasks at the school. When these unqualified pilots enter the club ranks and turn up on the hills controlled by the clubs, they may well be demonstrating attainments above Pilot One standard.

The club officials can entreat the newcomer to go back to the school and complete the course, however, if the newcomer refuses, do we stop him flying when he can demonstrate his skills above Pilot One standard? If the newcomer is unjustifiably prevented from flying when club members are present, will he, being disillusioned with both schools and clubs, fly on his own, losing sites and maybe his life in the process?

It makes sense for the club observers to establish the newcomers abilities under safe conditions, and, given the required level of attainment, issue a Pilot One certificate as entrance to the rating scheme. The heavy hand should

be restricted to those who cannot demonstrate the required safety standard.

It was particularly upsetting to see in the article, the unfortunate inference that Midland Federation Club Officials, and, other club Officials "existed in name only". I would remind whoever wrote the article that the Midland Federated Mercian Club was commended by the BHGA Chairman on its organisation of this year's BHGA AGM and, he has requested that we repeat the exercise next year; it is strange that we can do this if we exist in name only!

On the other hand, the club coaching scheme has followed the normal pattern of events we have learned to expect from the BHGA organisation. A training session for coaches was announced, followed by a retraction and a change of plan, with the organisation of training being handed over to the clubs. It followed, from the Midland Federation initiative, that a number of schools were contacted with a request that they should undertake club coach training on a commercial basis. Negotiations are in an advanced state with Gerry Breen, who, to his great credit has agreed to run the first training course for Midland Federation coach's without financial advantage.

This last point demonstrates, happily, that commercial interests need not be a factor in hang-gliding issues. However, there are commercial pressures that need to be considered, particularly, when decisions are being made that affect us all and the future of the clubs. The BHGA recognise this by such activities as the inspection of registered schools to ensure that corners are not being cut and standards are maintained.

Commercial schools perform an essential role in the present hang-gliding community. This role does not, however, require the monopoly of the issuing of Pilot One certificates, in order that it remains financially viable.

This is one issue where the Midland Federation would welcome the BHGA Council thinking again and changing its mind.

**Robin Billington,
Midland Federation of Hang Gliding Clubs.**

.. AND THE REPLY

Oh dear! We have upset Robin Billington and the Midland Federation, haven't we? Perhaps a word of explanation may help to set the record straight.

The training policy is to insist that Pilot 1 rating is only issued by instructors because:-

(1) initial training is vitally important. A novice is at his most impressionable time and mistakes at this stage are difficult to rectify later.

(2) Many observers do not have the skills or knowledge to check basic training. They can, of course, witness tasks but can they honestly say 'hand on heart' from a brief observation that this pilot will not stall into the hill. Don't forget 75% of our fatalities and countless potential fatalities are caused through insufficient air speed.

(3) there is no restriction, and never will be, on clubs organising their own training and club members can obtain an instructor rating. The first Instructors Course will be at Plas-y-Brennan on 10th November. **Come on Midlands, don't complain, get organised!** You already have instructors in your area. Why not organise a Pilot One Fly-in and get your instructors to check out all these pilots that want a rating.

(4) you know as well as I do, and probably better, that clubs do not show the interest in training that they should. You have only to spend one day on the Malverns to know that; there is virtually no advice, guidance, checking of pilot skill, supervision of inexperienced pilots, etc., etc. Does the club have a duty coach? I've never met him. You are not unique, it is the same on 90% of the sites throughout the country.

We all owe it to those pilots that have died to provide the best training we can, and we must not let personal issues influence our decisions.

Of course the Midlands Federation organised a superb A.G.M. and Percy ran an excellent event at Mere. Please do it again — but what has it got to do with Pilot One rating? My comments about officials are concerned with (1) Flying Safety Officers: (2) Club Coaches: (3) Technical Safety Officers. What are they doing in your club? Do you know his name? Have you ever seen him? Have you got one? Less than half the member clubs have appointed a club coach.

The initiative for club coaches and courses did not come from the Federation. It is Training Committee Policy. Our time table for courses is 2 months behind. We are sorry. There are reasons, but if I am not careful, I shall go on for ever.

If any pilot, wishing to join the P.R.S., cannot find an instructor to check him out, he should contact me or Keith and we will personally arrange it.

Finally, think back to the good old days. Bog standards, teach yourself, glider for £150 — flight times measured in seconds, heights of 10 ft — 20 ft, parachuting stalls, every site with 2 or 3 people on crutches or in plaster. We didn't kill so many then but we did our best to.

We are in a different ball game, 18,000 ft at Bishop, 75 miles cross country. **Our training policies must be geared to today and tomorrow, not yesterday.**

Roy Hill

MERE 1979

The Clubman's Event at Mere drew almost 130 competitors from all parts of the country and the popular tasks of last year were repeated — timed precision, knockout distance, plus a free flying cross country event.

The large number of entries meant that the distance event was spread out over two days, beginning in the Rifle Range bowl with pairs of pilots taking off within one minute of each other to include one left-hand 360 turn over a marker.

By the time the precision flights were under way, events had moved round the bowl with the shifting wind and before the end of Saturday everything had moved to Coward's Bowl — where all competition flying took place on the Sunday.

Full results: Distance knockout:

1. Joe Binns. 2. Tony Richards.

Club Team Shield: Northumbria Hang Gliding Club.

Best Standard: Bunny Smith.

Time Precision Event: 1. M. Orr; 2. M. Brenchley; 3. D. Carson.

Cross country: 1. Sandy Fairgrieve, with a flight of 24 miles; 2. John Sharpe.

WE ALL HAVE TO LEARN

From an apprenticeship to the heavy engineering trade, I found myself involved in retail marketing through our hang gliding accessory business Mainair Sports. I admit I'm a little naive and green but at the Clubmans Mere, we displayed our wares for all to see, handle and try with little regard for security.

I was warned, but took the view that since it was a member's event, and everyone there was involved in this beautiful sport of ours, it was unlikely that we should suffer too seriously from thieving.

How wrong I was, for someone, somewhere has acquired, without charge, a Willis Variometer, Thommen Altimeter, Suunto Compass, Campri Ski Jacket and goodness knows what else.

If it was a pilot who enriched himself at our expense, remember that the stuff you casually leave on your glider while you shelter from the rain or have a bite to eat could just as easily disappear.

The Willis Variometer is one of the new single battery gold ones, Serial Number 146E and the Altimeter the standard wrist mounted Thommen, Serial Number 392095.

If the person who stole this equipment is reading this, then why not ease your conscience by returning it. If anyone else knows any information which will lead to the recovery of the instruments and prosecution of the thief, Mainair will pay a £100.00 reward.

Watch out — there's a thief about!

JOHN HUDSON

From time to time the subject arises of how best to crash. We do not dwell on it very much, because the art of not crashing is mainly by doing everything possible to avoid one. Nevertheless a hard landing comes to most of us occasionally, and the unavoidable problem then is how to avoid injury.



HARD LANDINGS / D. Hadley

I think that it is generally accepted that it is best to land on the feet, although there are other possibilities, and I recently consulted the experts at Farnborough to find out whether they agreed. Their views, briefly, are as follows:

(1) It is best to land on your feet if you can, the principle being to let the "Undercarriage" absorb as much energy as possible before the "Fuselage" gets damaged.

(2) If it is possible to climb up the frame, so that the glider hits before you do, then it may absorb a little energy. It may also make the landing more difficult.

(3) Folding the body into a ball is always bad except possibly when crashing into trees.

(4) Landing flat is too likely to be head first to be safe to attempt.

(5) Supine might be best choice occasionally, but probably feet are best always, with knees slightly bent and muscles firm but not rigid.

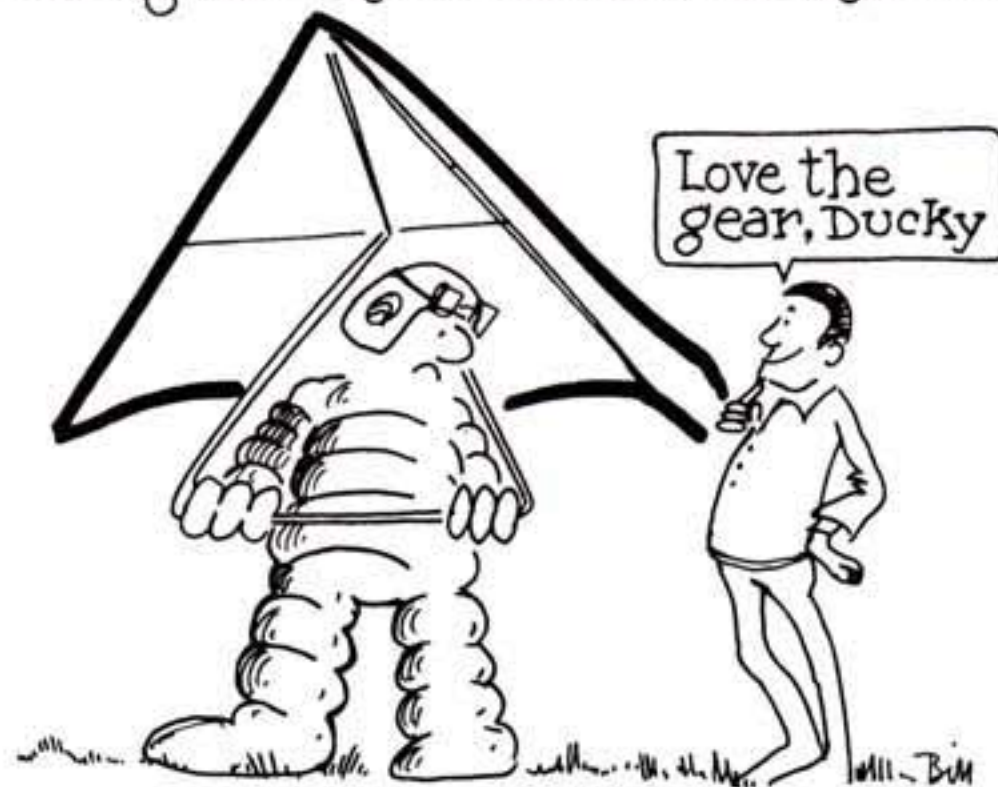
(6) Straight limbs and rigidly tightened muscles would be bad.

(7) Completely relaxed limbs will not absorb much energy.

(8) The fall is likely to be from higher than 20 feet and hang gliding impact speeds tend to be high. The shock absorbing powers of the limbs should be used to the maximum



Folding the body into a ball is always bad....



... Unless you can buy a Michelin suit... don't crash!

Parachutists usually land harder than do hang glider pilots, anything from 18-25 feet a second, depending on how much gear they are carrying and the wind speed. Skilful display parachutists can also land very lightly by judging correctly the moment to pull on the shroud lines. The average aircraft pilot, unskilled in parachuting, may easily break a leg. The parachute is designed to save life not limbs.

(The presence of the control bar may make this difficult and the fact that you are still attached to the glider, which is out of control, may make this difficult to achieve. The collapsing control bar does provide some useful deceleration).

(2) Always land with the feet in the direction of travel. If you are going fast, feet first and almost supine is best.

(3) For trees, cross legs and bend head forwards on to folded arms.

I would add to that, be prepared to hold on. A fall from a tree top is likely to be as bad as any other fall.

There you have it. Unless you can buy a "Michelin man" suit, don't crash. Sad to say, sometimes that will mean don't fly.

DUNSTAN HADLEY

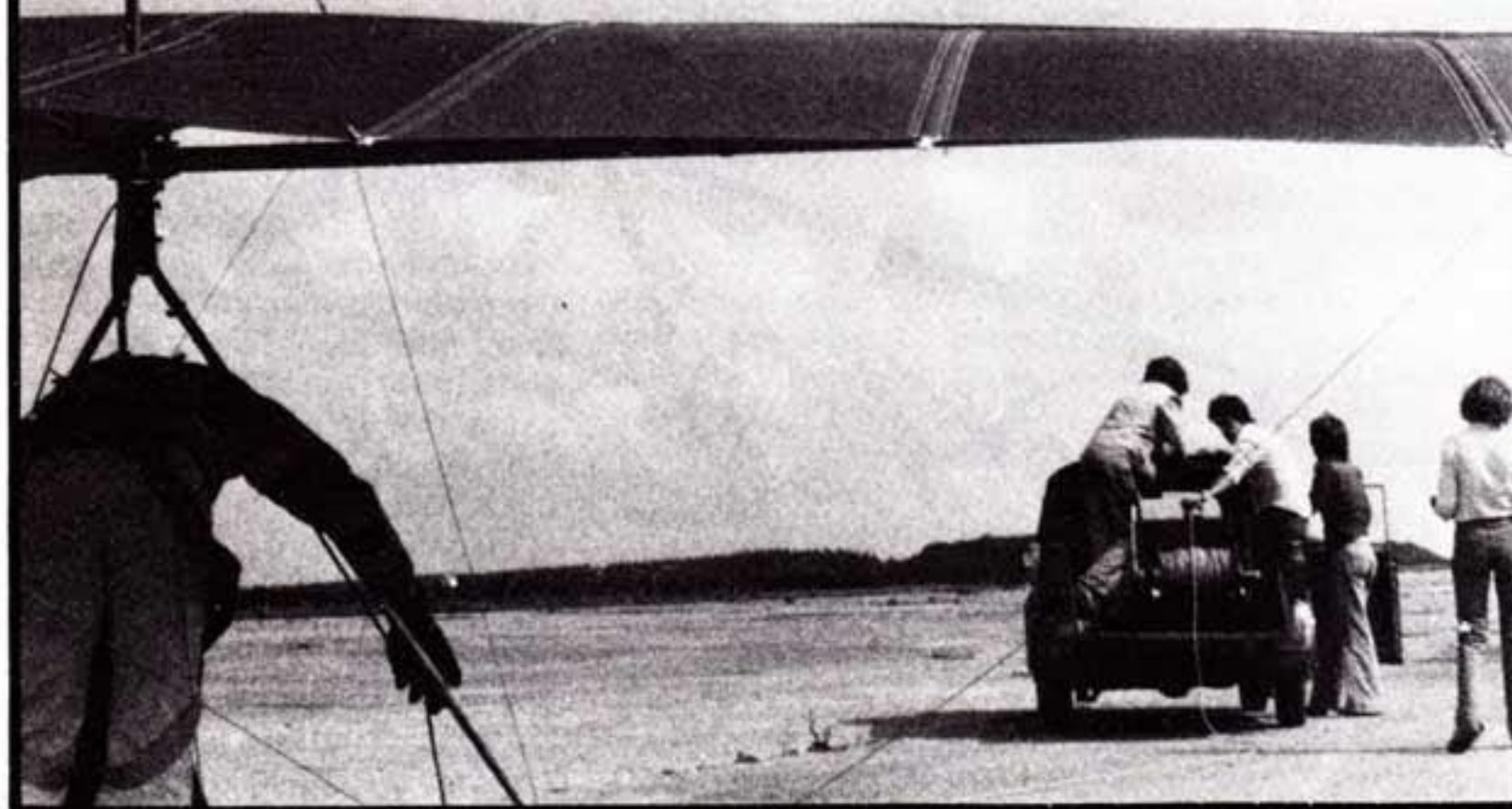
Personal Communication: Group Captain A.J.C. Balfour, M.A., M.B., B.Chir., F.R.C.Path., D.C.P., D.T.M. & H., L.M.S.S.A., R.A.F.

Paul Baker searches for thermals whilst ("Dunstable Team?") next pilot prepares for launch (Dave Simpson?)
Photo: Pete Osborn
Suffolk Coastal Floaters

The first National Tow Meet got underway in ideal conditions. Attendance at this non-public event was encouraging with quite a number of BHGA diehards travelling the length and breadth of the country, to converge on an unsuspecting Little Snoring near Fakenham, Norfolk, at the invitation of the Norfolk HGC. This sleepy little village has an active ex-wartime airfield, now in private possession and kind permission allowed the use of its more than adequate facilities for our humble, yet monumental purpose.

THE NATIONAL TOW MEET

BY BRIAN PATTENDEN & TERRY ASPINALL



The objectives of the meeting were, to demonstrate the current methods of tow launching hang gliders and expose the ideas to analysis and criticism. There was also the chance for competent pilots to try their first flights on a different kind of tether! Each system had the opportunity to show its potential and limitations to full advantage in the contrasting winds when the light Northerly of Saturday strengthened overnight to Force 5/6, giving extremes in which to prove the flexibility and integrity of towing.

Four systems were represented: three with professional backing and the other an amateur project. These were the Bakers system under development with the High School of Hang Gliding, the essentially similar Dunstable School system of Dave Simpson's, Len Gabriel's Skyhook system which proved a successful contrast of technique, although it was only demonstrated on Saturday, and Gary Philips demonstrated his home-developed system on Sunday.

The first off were the Bakers and Dunstable systems towing Super Scorpion and Cherokees. Both utilised a two lever/three release system, built-in on a special control frame constructed of steel. The bri-

dles, an integral part of the tow lines, were basically two-leg affairs with the first release extending the top leg. This arrangement ensured positive three-stage automatic control of angle of attack. The winches were truck-mounted, unpowered payout devices with ALTC (Auto Line Tension Control). Height gain was dependent on wind strength and the distance the tow truck could achieve between itself and the glider which requires a long runway and a sound vehicle driven fairly fast (50-60mph). The Dunstable truck proved the point by losing a wheel early on in the proceedings! Take-offs were snatchy at first but this was eliminated later. All Saturday launches were 45° crosswind.

Len Gabriel's standard production Safari was launched on a three-leg bridle with single release. Control over A/A was effected by a bungee tension system which also retrieved the bridle after release, keeping it out of the way of the pilot. His static ground winch, small and neat, dispensed with the sophistications of trucks and runways but T/Os had to be dead into wind. Height gain was limited by the amount of open space available in which to extend

the line and wind strength but the standard ratio of 1:3 was easily achieved (600ft. from 1800ft. of line). Gary Philip's system was a two-leg, nose-to-tail bridle passing through the harness karabiner with a single release, which had no automatic A/A control. Coupled with a car mounted fixed length line it all proved to be as highly unsatisfactory as the general consensus of opinion forewarned. Regrettably, it failed in flight leaving him very seriously injured. He was flying a Falcon IV.

Saturday had its teething troubles with winch hydraulics but an estimated forty to fifty launches were made. Late in the afternoon, the chance to 'participate' came and several pilots had their first attempts. Greg Thomson, the man to whom all credit is due for co-ordinating this event and providing the much appreciated refreshments van, had the enviable opportunity of four flights. Unfortunately the conditions on Sunday were considered too extreme for other lesser mortals to have a go, so we'll have to exercise some of the patience which East Anglian pilots are noted for!

In the evening, Brian Milton called everyone together to open a discussion on the history, merits and limitations of each system in turn. Angles of attack caused some heated debate and doubts were expressed about using winching as a means to teach novices, although the possibility of reintroducing dual prone instruction carried favour with some. It was generally agreed that the seated harness had no priority of place in tow tuition. Greg Thomson was invited to describe his experiences from the point of view of a 'local' first timer, his first two flights were "petrifying, waiting to go while the truck revved away", especially the second, "because I knew what was coming". But having been coached into relaxing and not trying to haul the bar in by Paul Baker's thorough pre-flight instruction, his last two were "fantastic, the most exhilarating experience in five years hang gliding and safer than the first attempts at ridge soaring". The evening ended with a video recording of the day's events.

The highlight came mid-afternoon Sunday when Paul established the potential for cross country. Although the weather seemed unlikely to produce strong thermal activity, with ragged three-quarter cumulus cloud cover at 1500-1800ft., a 1200ft. launch had him hanging in there for quite a while, just scraping cloud base. While he struggled to get down, there was frenzied activity on the ground to get witness papers sorted out and Brian Wood's Cherokee rigged up ready to go. Brian's attempt had him in lift not long after release, spiralling up and into a dirty grey cloud! Paul made several successive attempts but was unable to repeat his former success and had to content himself with ten minute 'top to bottoms', landing back at the launch point every time. Meanwhile Brian was suffering disorientation, his vario showing 'up' while his 360's were progressively tightening into a spiral dive! Eventually he managed to sort it out and he covered six miles landing between Guist and Twyford.

Although the emphasis of the weekend was on towing, there were moments of diversion. The inimitable Dave Cook was the first to provide a breathtaking display of superlative airmanship with his VJ23 extolling the virtues and vices of powered flight in full voice. Ashley Doubtfire was quick to follow with salvo for the powered flexies and the weekend ended with an impromptu display of aerobatics by an unknown Pitts Special who literally fell from the clouds to do his bit!

Coverage of the event by both local Press and TV was quite extensive and encouraging, underlining optimism for the future of our sport. Also, permission was provisionally granted for the meeting to be held annually at Little Snoring subject to complaints, none of which are anticipated. This could well be the beginning of Tow Championships and the radical change in hang gliding we are all anticipating.

INTERNATIONALS DRAW 2

A great response to this draw produced takings of over £2,650 and a profit for the competition fund of around £1,800. The American Cup trip is therefore on and congratulations to the flying policeman's son Simon Smith for winning first prize — a hang glider. Policeman Ron Smith did some quick and successful negotiations when he discovered the alternative prize for his son was a dull old stereophonic music centre!

The complete prize winners list is as follows:

- 1st S. Smith, Salisbury.
- 2nd K. Lang, Northants.
- 3rd C. Taylor, Kendal.
- 4th M. Woods, BFPO Ships.
- 5th D. Betts, Mansfield.
- 6th P. McLoughlin, Reading.
- 7th R. Softly, Essex.
- 8th M. Bygott, Horncastle.
- 9th J. Phipps, Godalming.
- 10th T. Cashmore, Marlborough.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this fund raising exercise and particularly to our 'sponsors', Birdman, Chargus, Hiway, Skyhook Waspair, Mainair Sports, Protect Flying suits and Birdman Harnesses.

Derek Evans

S.E. WALES CLUB SITES

(1) Cwm Parc/Nantymoel

The grazier, Mr. Pugh, has taken the unprecedented step of purchasing the entire mountain top in order to secure his privacy against, amongst others, hang gliders. Very delicate negotiations have secured a limited agreement with Mr. Pugh for the site to be flown on certain occasions by a small group of local flyers known to him. He is adamant that no-one else shall fly here — *please keep away*: it is possible that if we are able to show ourselves responsible, permission might be extended. If not, the site will be entirely lost.

(2) Rhigos

This site seems to have been 'discovered' by visitors this season. It is a serious undertaking, the nearest good bottom landing being more than a mile from take-off, and the top landing surrounded by rotor, thus the Club is insisting on Pilot 2 minimum for visiting flyers, as one incident will lose us this site. If you doubt your ability, go somewhere else, there are plenty of other sites in the area.

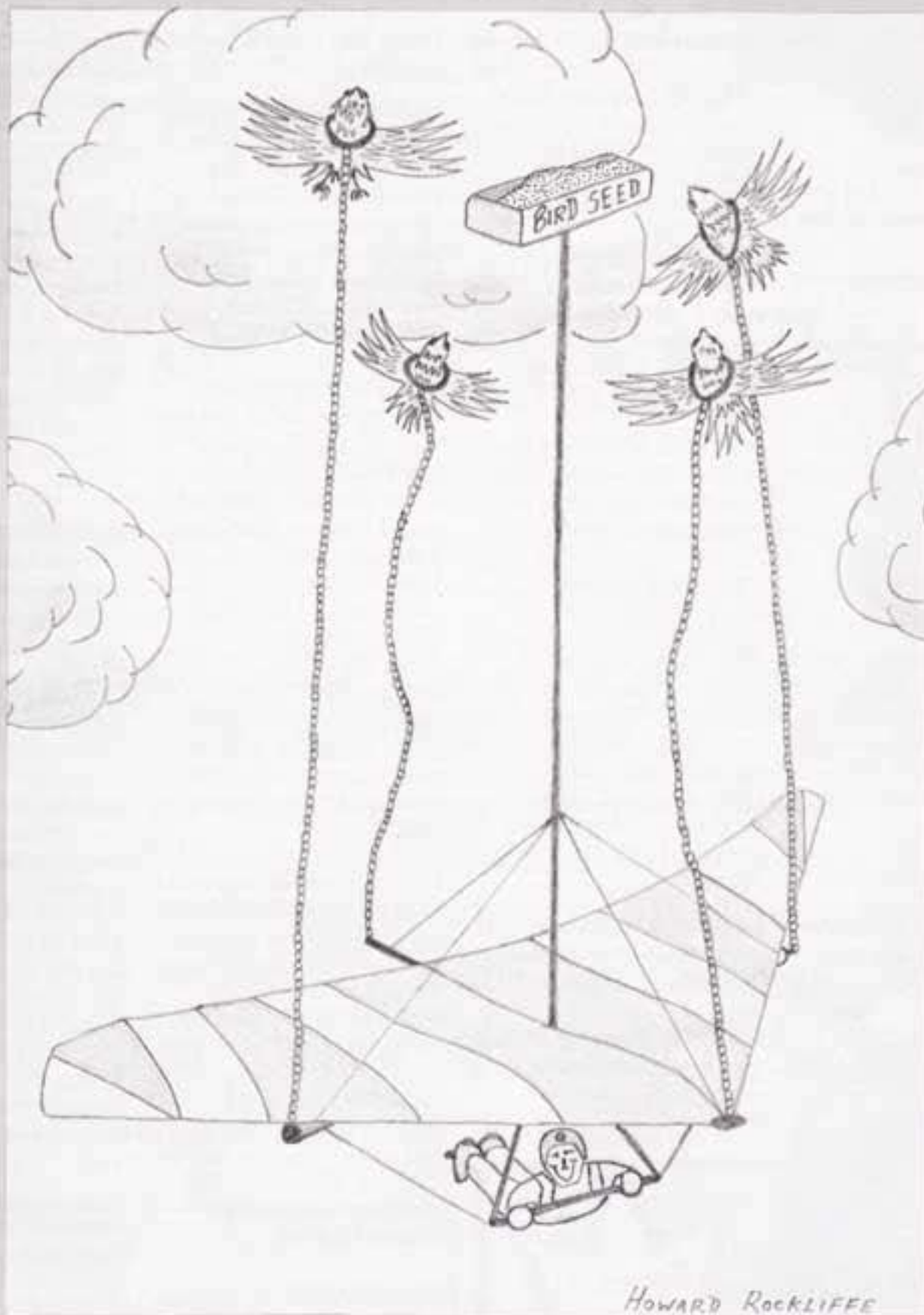
WASPAIR LTD.

The company is formally in liquidation and any members who have a financial claim on the company should communicate direct with the liquidator, A.M. Wajih, Carlisle House, 8 Southampton Row, London WC1.

AVON CLUB CHANGES

New secretary of the Avon club is John Clark, 11 Bramley Close, Olveston, Avon, telephone Almondsbury 613778. New chairman is Colin Lark, telephone Dursley 46592.

INFORMATION



HOWARD ROCKLIFFE

IMPORTANT

The British Powered Hang Gliding Club is holding its Annual General Meeting near Marlborough on Sunday 18th November 1979, and it is imperative that all who have an interest in powered hang gliding, microlights, ultralights etc, attend this meeting so that the Club may be reconstituted in an effective form to help this new branch of aviation to develop in a healthy manner.

For full details of venue and a map, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

Ashley Doubtfire,
Birdman Flight Training School,
Mildenhall,
Marlborough, Wiltshire.

NON MEMBER CLUBS

A new method of providing Public Liability Insurance for members of College, University Clubs, etc, was recently agreed by Council, final administrative details are being worked out. Will the Secretaries of Clubs not receiving Council minutes (i.e. those not known to Taunton Office) please contact the Secretary.

DELTA BRONZE BADGES

All who have qualified for the F.A.I. International Badge (since renamed FAI Delta Bronze), BHGA "Pilot" (old PR system) or "Pilot 2" are entitled to wear the Delta Bronze badge. If you want one send £1.50 to the Taunton Office with your name and address.

NEWS FROM BIRDMAN SPORTS LIMITED

Following a very successful season, it was intended to expand our production capability during the winter months to enable a shorter delivery and faster spares backup to come into operation next year.

Due to the unexpected resignation of key members of our staff at extremely short notice the expansion is to be brought forward and should have taken place by the time this information is printed. This change at a time when our order book is very full is bound to temporarily affect production and I apologise to any customer who has suffered a delay in delivery due to these unusual circumstances.

Ken Messenger

DARTMOOR COMMONS BILL

Brian Milton will be appointed as our Parliamentary Agent to present an official Petition to the House of Commons Committee dealing with the Bill. The British Horse Society and the Camping Club of G.B. & I are unable to Petition the Commons as they petitioned the Lords using professional Parliamentary Agents. They did not have any success in getting reference to riding and camping taken out and it is rumoured that their legal costs were over £4,000 a piece.

We also intend to circulate all MP's but currently don't know when this will be. If we have time we will again circularise clubs with full up to date information and to ask for renewed contact with local MP's.

HELMET LOST

Left on Merthyr Common during the League final — one white Romer hang gliding helmet with union jack sticker. Belongs to Graham Hobson, telephone 061 973 4085, who would be grateful for its return.

CLUB COACH SCHEME

The Welsh Hang Gliding Centre School facilities are being made available for a weekend course for club coach/observers. Plans are for a weekend course involving half to one day on site practical instruction and one day theory covering first aid, safety, air law, navigation and meteorology. Club coaches/observers interested in attending should ring 0873 810019 to arrange a suitable date.

WE WON THE CUP — AGAIN!

At the time of going to press, the news came through that the British team had won the American Cup for the second time, with U.S.A. and Canada tying for second place and Australia last.

More next issue.

SMALL ADS

For your own safety, if you are purchasing a second-hand glider, check that it is a registered BHGA model, see it test flown, test fly it, and inspect it thoroughly for damage or wear to critical parts. If in doubt seek advice from the Club Safety Officer.

All small ads should be sent to Lesley Bridges, Commercial Editor, *Wings!*, Yard House, Wentnor, Nr. Bishops Castle, Shropshire.

Ads sent to any other address will be redirected and therefore delayed.

CYCLONE 180 in immaculate condition with spares. Blue, white and gold. Fantastic flyer. Try it and you'll buy it. Genuine reason for sale £400. Ken Barker, 01-427 3014.

GRYPHON III. See George Worthington report *Wings!* No. 7. White with beautiful asymmetrical tips. Price negotiable. Tel: Steve, 01-969 2788.

HIWAY SCORPION C. Bainbridge sail, complete with B-bar seated harness, and spare uprights. Ideal post p.1 kite. Why bend a new one? £340. Ring David Jenkins on Freeland (0993) 881932 or Witney 71595 (early evenings best).

Falcon IV — much admired machine, beautiful rainbow sail. Eats many 3rd generation kites. Must sell now! Therefore only £220. Tel: Roger. Caterham 46411 ext. 7 anytime.

WASP FALCON III SPORT. The best around. No prangs, very good condition. Has Falcon IV plus performance with easy handling. E.P.C. to intermediate pilots. Incredible L/D and sink rate. Multi-coloured sail. £295. Mike Lingard, Caterham 42568.

MOONRAKER 77. Excellent condition. £250. To clear. Ring Charles Willmott, office - 021-454 8841; home - 021-455 9304.

MIDAS SUPER E. In excellent condition. Red and white sail. One careful owner. £200 for very quick sale. Ring Keynsham (Bristol) 3447.

FALCON 3 for sale. Good condition; soars well; ideal first kite for pilot 1 holder. £150 o.n.o. Tel: 01-946 0370 and ask for Pete.

Glider owner with no car is willing to share glider and/or petrol costs in return for transport. Contact A. Engeham, 168 Holland Road, London W14.

PHOENIX 8 Junior. Large A frame and pulley system. Good handling. £210. J. Hunt, Bristol 696866.

CYCLONE. Superb in every way. Must sell. Buying house. Give away at £425. Contact Dave on Mansfield 34002 after 6.00pm.

Beautiful white **180 CYCLONE** and spares. £450 o.n.o. Tony Elsdale, weekends only. Stow (0451) 30224.

SKYHOOK TOW WINCH. £450. Phone Pete Jackson on Sheffield 585644.

MIDAS E. Plain yellow sail, very good flyer; prone or seated. £240 o.n.o. Tel. Winwick 314.

Large **MOONRAKER 78.** In very good condition. Must sell. £350 o.n.o. Prone Webb Knee-hanger harness with stirrup. £25. Terry, Tel: Leiston (Suffolk) 831027.

GANNET/SABRE/SUPER GRYPHON. If you haven't seen one, see this! Eats everything put before it. Top performance with easy handling. As new machine £600. Must sell to pay tax-man 1st Jan! Contact: Reading (0734) 864543

HIWAY CLOUDBASE 20ft. Hardly used, chord battens, unique colours. Suit Pilot one/intermediate. Good condition. Includes seated harness. One owner. Transport considered. £175. No offers. Alan, 41, Leys Ave., Cambs. (Cam. 358016 evenings).

SMALL SPECTRUM. White, blue, gold, sail. Good condition. B.Bar, Bag, Harness. £350. Les Seers, Tel. Sittingbourne 25627 anytime.

Want to reach the top of the stack with your feet still on the ground? Now you can, with the Olympus Vivitar 400 mm f5.6 telephoto lens, mint condition. £115. Keith Morgan, 01-647 3395.

FALCON IV B. £150 recently spent on rigging and tubing. Making way for Cyclone. £220 o.n.o. Peter Harvey, Tel: Shenley Church End 304.

MOONRAKER 78. Very good condition. One of the best performers. Blue with red flash. £395 o.n.o. Tel: Graham Leason, 073477-2423. Also **AUDIO VISUAL VARIO** - bargain £38.

CIRRUS 3. Two colour Dacron sail. Outflies many present-day gliders. Kept me in the league for three years. Offers invited. Tel: Peter Day on 0734 55977 ext. 2425 or 0734 21481.

WASP C4 221. Red, black sail. Gold anodised tube work. Seated harness. Carry bag. Excellent condition. Little used. Ideal soarer. £85 o.n.o. Phone: 0432 50501 after 6pm.

LOST. Red Skyhook harness with blue flight design parachute and orange everoak helmet. Left at the Hole of Horcum, 4pm, 6/7/79. Reward - 0874-730195.

Wanted! Secondhand SAFARI, SUPER-SCORPION or SUNSPOT for a 12 st. pilot. Will repair if necessary. M. Lake, 13 Russell Ave., Norwich, Norfolk. Tel: Norwich 402089.

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RIDGE RIDER 18in. 6in. Orange and blue. Little used, in good condition. £150 o.n.o. Ring 0285 3209 (Cirencester).

MIDAS Super E. Very little air time. Red/orange/yellow/white. £325 o.n.o. Also Prone Harness £25 o.n.o. Phone Dave Studlet: 3424 (work) Astwood Bank or 3344 (home).

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Small ATLAS. White sail with red leading edge with flexiform nose catch. Amazing performance yet easy to fly. Suit lightweight pilot. £520. Tel: Mike Robertson, Brighton 553286, evenings, or 504923, daytime.

MOONRAKER 78. Unforgettable cream and maroon. About 3 hours flying time. £375. Also Birdman prone harness, seated harness, bag and helmet. Mick Lamb, Dursley 47427.

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THERE HAVE NOW BEEN Over 12 issues of *A4 Wings!* You will appreciate them even more if they are bound in a dark walnut simulated leather *Wings!* binder with gold blocking on spine and motif of hang glider on front. £2.95 for A4 (Hang Glider also fits). £2.50 for A5 (original *Wings!* and Club magazines). Livingstone Promotions, 2 Timberyard Cottage, Herstmonceux, Sussex.

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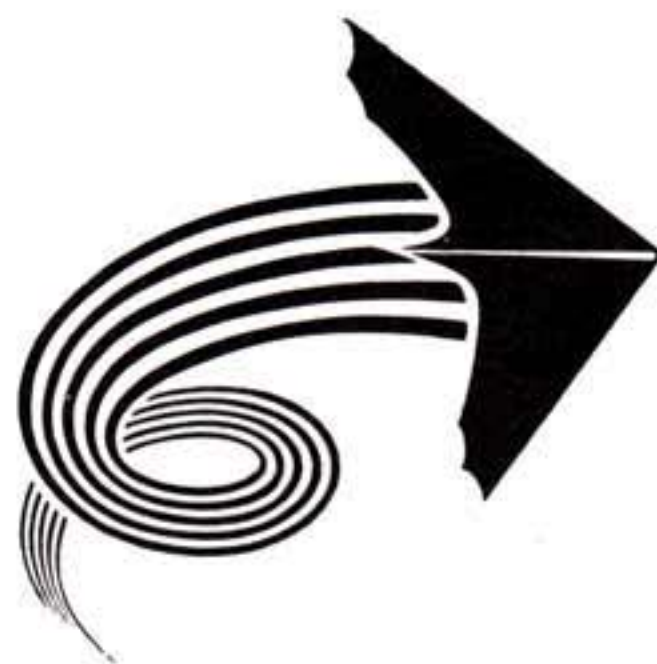
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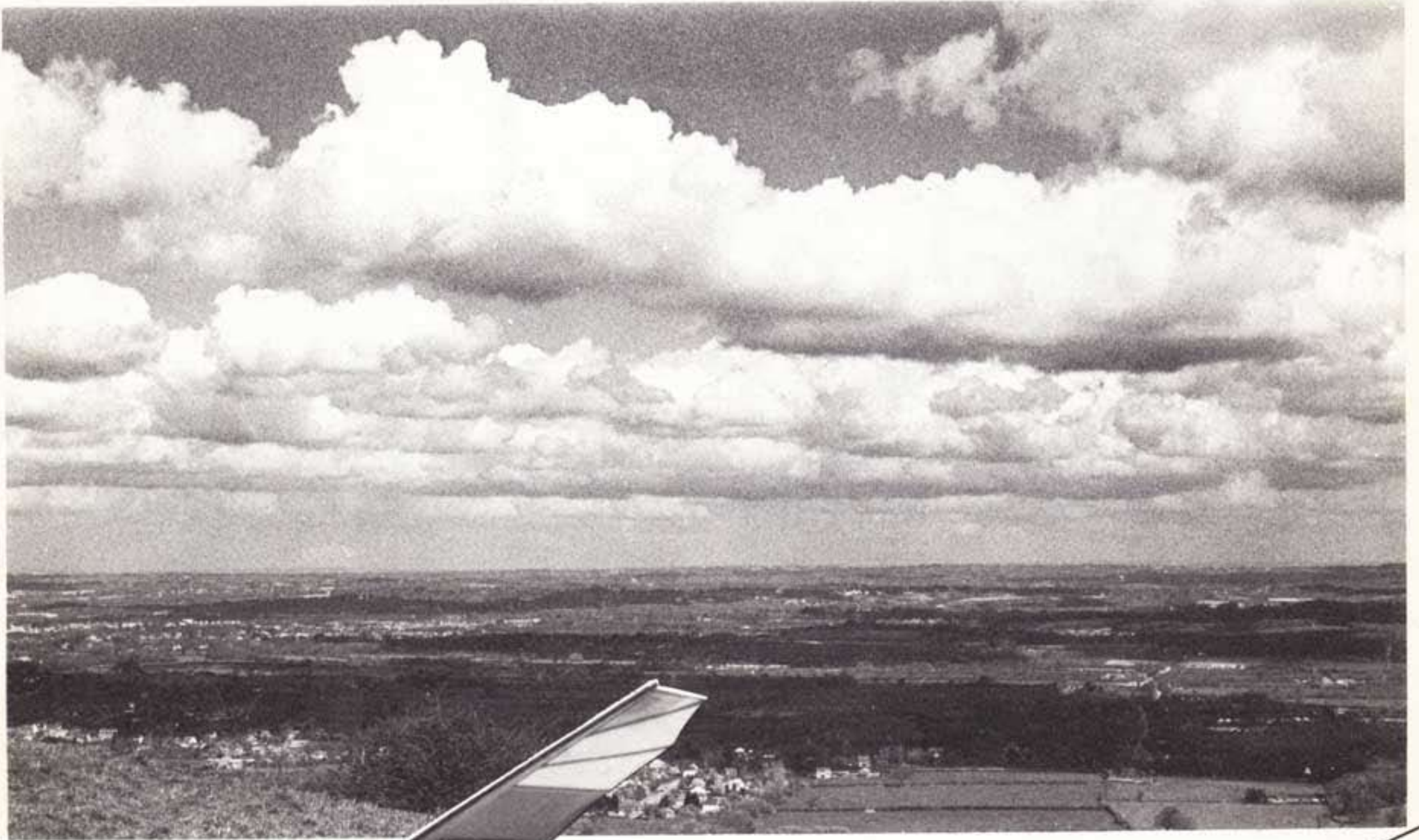
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