

Booker Gliding Club

Newsletter

July 2020

Aboyne
2020
page 8

Back to Wycombe Air Park from 1st August



See page 5 for full details of operations

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The Chiltern Park Challenge – 11th to 17th July 2020

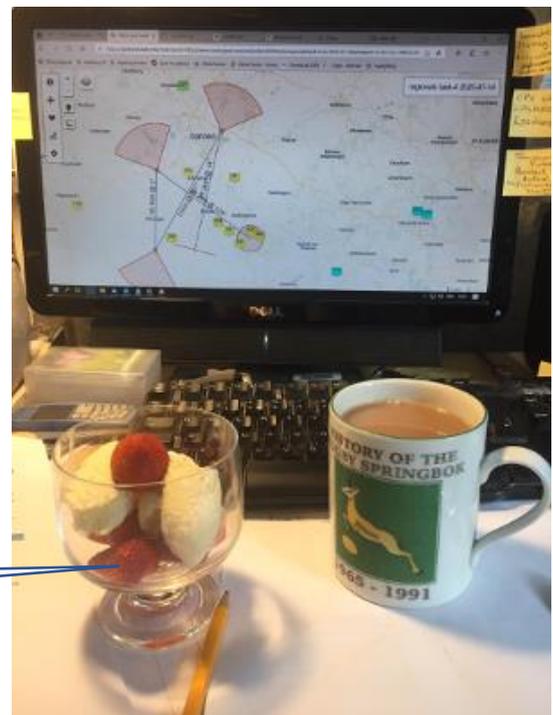
Chiltern Park proved to be an excellent venue for a competition and the weather provided some excellent opportunities for challenging but safe tasks. All the competitors (including our guest from Chilterns GC at Halton) enjoyed six days of varied flying.

All other competitions this year have been cancelled, so the Booker Regionals comp was renamed the Chiltern Challenge Cup and was no longer a rated comp*, although the rules used were a simplified version of Regionals rules. The weather co-operated, providing 5 contest days, with one no-score day (no-one passed the mythical Y) and one scrub. In order to ensure safe and responsible flying, tasks were set so as not to be too far from base and to route near aerotowable strips. There were a few landouts, one in a mammoth stubble field, and all but one (on a very short strip) were retrieved by aerotow.



Jim White, John Otty and Denis Campbell jostled for the podium places throughout the week, until the last day when Howard Joseph and Bob Smith managed 2nd and 3rd behind Jim. Overall, Jim took the cup, with John 2nd and Denis 3rd. Special mention to David Hamilton, flying his first comp, who achieved his longest flights to date – and learnt a lot in the process. In fact he's now considering flying in the InterClub League.

The success of the comp was down to Richard's hard work in setting it all up, and to our host Dennis Pearson of Chiltern Airsports who trusted us to get on with it, mixing in safely with gyrocopters and microlights and whatever else turned up. Thanks also to Nils Wedi for the daily weather forecast, to the tuggies James Roland, Rob Turner and Doug Hilton for efficient launching, and Pete Wyld who sat quietly at home doing the scoring.



The view from the scorer's chair

The last day ended with a mass move of trailers to make way for the resumption of parachuting at Chiltern Park, and then a bbq cooked up by Jim outside his motorhome.

** the results of all competitions that pilots have flown during one year are amalgamated to form the ratings list which is used to prioritise entry into national competitions in the following year.*



The winner of the 2020 Costa del Chilterns Camping Equipment competition is revealed



Treasurer John, happy with his 2nd place - and the thought of all the launches



Nils the Met Man



David in his huge stubble field



James and Doug, two thirds of the tugging team

Part of the grid



Who's flying what and where

We are now flying both at Wycombe and at Chiltern Park, as set out below.

Medical requirements

Members must be in good health and should strictly follow the UK Government guidance on identifying the symptoms of COVID-19. Any member with virus symptoms must stay at home and follow medical guidance.

Wycombe Air Park

The operation is on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, mainly K21 training, and subject to demand. All are welcome. Single seater flying may be available, subject to agreement with the duty instructor. If you wish to fly, please attend the daily briefing at 0830 (notified on the club Whatsapp group) and let us know you are coming.

From 1st August all training will be at WAP, 7 days a week.

Evening groups on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday start on 21st July – all from 1700hrs.

There is no longer full Air Traffic Control at WAP and an Air-Ground system is currently being tested. Please be patient while this beds in. **All flying operations will be on 126.555 and gliders must make 'downwind' and 'finals' calls to Wycombe Traffic.** If you are unsure about the new procedures, please ask the Duty Instructor for a briefing before flying.

Chiltern Park

This is a 7-day operation, mainly single seaters, but the Duo Discus may also be available for site checks and training. There may be some restrictions at weekends now that parachuting has resumed. If you wish to fly, please attend the daily briefing at 0830 (notified on the club Whatsapp group) and let us know you are coming. Chiltern Park is a bit further away than most members are used to but it is well worth the drive.

From 1st August Chiltern Park will be for cross country flying only, no training will be available.



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has imposed the slot system, to test the new ground/air radio system following the removal of ATC. It is only temporary, and it applies to all airfield users.

Because it would be difficult at the moment to launch a grid at Booker on good soaring days we have decided that single seat flying will remain at Chiltern Park, probably for this soaring season. I can only imagine the complexity of managing two busy sites but Richard seems up for it and thank goodness he is good at it!

I am happy to welcome a number of new members to Booker. Linden Porter and Paul Brice are returning members, and from Bicester we have been joined by Paul Copland (previously a Booker member), Miles Bailey, Rob Hines and Steve Parsonage. Good to have you with us. We also enjoyed the company of Martin Langford from Chilterns GC (Halton) during the Chiltern Challenge Cup competition.

So, as things seem to be edging to the 'new normal' let's make the most of what remains of the summer and get in the air. And then beyond the summer there is Aboyne to look forward to, of which more below.

Symeon Economou



Aboyne 2020

Soaring doesn't stop in September – come to Scotland and discover the wonders of wave.

The expedition is open to all levels from pre-solo to hotshot and is an excellent way of building skills and experience, and maybe getting badges, as well as getting to know other club members. We will have club two seaters and single seaters available.



Aboyne airfield, home to [Deeside Gliding Club](#), has two hard and two grass runways, with plenty of launch failure and land out options nearby, and the Cairngorms as a playground for exploring wave. It's not just about getting badges, it's also about learning a different kind of flying, and enjoying the amazing scenery too.

Full briefings on all aspects will be given in due course.

The dates are **10th to 25th October**. If you would like to come, email Richard on cfi@bookergliding.co.uk saying which week(s) and whether you need a club glider.



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T21 fun – Nick and Andy’s big adventure

Nick Newton owns a share in the T21 affectionately known as ‘Goofy’ and he recently flew it with Andy Monk. It was a good thermic day so they thought it would be an adventure to pop over to Chiltern Park to say hello – it’s not that far! It all went very well until they got to Nettlebed where the wind proved a bit too strong, so they picked a remarkably well-manicured grass field for a landing. The estate manager was very accommodating and the Pawnee soon had them home again.



Early optimism

Looking good at 4,000ft



Down to earth

More tales from the past – breaking records in a T21

In the previous issue of the *Newsletter*, attention was drawn to the BGA Archive on their website, available for all to peruse. Not only are all the back issues of the VGC News and S&G magazines to 2009 on it, but there are also approximately 150 books on gliding listed as well, courtesy of Wally Kahn - <https://www.sailplaneandgliding.co.uk/archive>.

Many pilots and others at Booker may well have experienced a flight in the red T21 Sedbergh side-by-side two-seater shown on the front page of this newsletter, and kept rigged in our main hangar at Booker. If you are one of the lucky ones, you may have noticed on getting in that there is a reference, in red typeface on the rear cockpit bulkhead between the two front seats, to a **record-breaking flight** made back in 1953 in this very glider. The full story (UK 2-Seater record 15,249ft gain of height and 100km speed record established at the 1953 Nationals at Camphill) is told in one of those books donated by Wally Kahn, and can be accessed from the BGA website in the aforementioned Archive. The book is entitled *The Powerless Ones, gliding in peace and war by the aviation journalist Michael Cumming*, published in 1966. One complete and enthralling chapter is devoted to this flight (Chapter 8 'The Ascent of Red 31' pp 165-182).

A shorter rather more prosaic version written by Derek Piggott himself, (*17,000 Feet in a Sedbergh* by Flt./Lieut. A. D. Piggott) originally appeared contemporaneously and is reproduced below with permission from The Sailplane and Glider, (Vol. 4 No 3. pp 108-109). Whereas the account written by Derek Piggott is a first-hand factual account of the UK Record flight, (in a towering cumulus-congestus cloud alongside a frozen 'rookie cadet' as P2 and without oxygen, never mind anything resembling warm clothes!) it lacks the exciting drama a professional aviation journalist with access to the background story was able to bring to the event - Piggott doesn't even mention the name of the cadet! If you have time, judge for yourself!

Nick Newton

17,000 feet in a Sedbergh by Flt./Lieut. A. D. Piggott

Round about lunchtime on 27th July [1953] there was very heavy rain as the trough of low pressure forecast by the met. man passed through Camphill, and it was apparent that behind the trough there were large build-ups of cumulus, which might make it possible to climb up high in the cloud and so go a fair distance downwind. At the last minute it was decided to change pilots as I had previous experience in cu-nim.

We took off at about 15.25 and spent about an hour searching up and down the ridge, trying to get away. Just after take-off we dived down below the hilltop to mark a low on the barogram; this caused considerable comment on the ground, as it was thought peculiar for a Sedbergh to worry about height.

We climbed up amongst about five other gliders and eventually left the site about 3,200 ft. a.s.l. Gradually the other gliders (all except two Olympias) dropped out, which left us soaring together just below cloud base. As I fell out of lift the Olympias found some for me; I went over to it and they kept me going.

About 4,000 ft., just before cloud, I ran out of lift and turned down wind, arriving over Sheffield at about 3,000 ft., where we got a strong thermal and climbed up into the cloud. We

couldn't see what sort of cloud it was. When we went in the sky was overcast and there was a pitch-black patch a mile or so N.W.

Just after we entered cloud, we did a timed climb against a watch to check the rate of climb, and we gained height from 5,500 to 6,500 ft. in 45 secs. At about 7,000 ft. the cadet asked me at what height he needed oxygen. I said, "Oh about 15,000 feet," never dreaming we should get as high.

Climb was very smooth and rapid to about 15,000 ft. when it started to rain ice crystals, but the cockpit cover was sufficient protection and we did not have any difficulties from this. It became very turbulent just about the time the pitot head seized up between 15 and 16,000 ft., and we climbed by turn-and-bank and sound the rest of the way, stalling quite frequently owing to turbulence. It often happens that way when you get near the top.

We did have radio and had seen our trailer on the road and called and told them we were off – that was over Hathersage. Unfortunately they weren't listening out throughout the flight, and although we called them from about every 3,000 ft. we got no answers at all. Probably at 15,000 ft. we were heard all over England.

When at about 15,000 ft., I realised that the electrical variometer (a prototype of an instrument which had been developed) had stopped flashing green lights and I tried to switch it off. Unfortunately I had forgotten to wear gloves and I found my fingers frozen, so I had to get out a pair of gloves to unfreeze them.

During the climb, when I looked round, I found ice on the leading edges everywhere, but strangely enough the venturi for the total energy variometer was still operating in spite of a considerable build-up of ice all round it. It had also a new type of venturi which had been developed and will probably be on the market shortly.

I decided to continue to 18,000 ft., which I considered to be the limit for straightening up, and allow possibly another 2,000 ft. for getting out of the cloud. I thought that would allow a reasonable margin, as we had no oxygen and my cadet was somewhat frozen.

We were thrown out of the top of the cloud at 17,000 ft. and, looking around it appeared that we had come out almost at the very top, as there was very little cloud above us.

We turned on to course for Grimsby, hoping that we would be somewhat on track, and we were able to pick out the River Trent and Gainsborough through a gap in the cloud. In the distance we could see very large cumulus clouds apparently masked by a layer of alto-stratus at about 10,000 ft.

As we glided down we realised how cold it was. The met. forecast had given us a temperature of 18 degrees F. at 15,000 ft. [NN: approx – 8 degrees C. without any



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consideration of the 35-40 knot wind-chill factor!] and in our lightweight suits and open cockpit it felt like it. It was noticeable that flying at this height seemed very much quieter than normal flight, and I think this is probably due to reduced density of the air, as this also occurs in jet aircraft at height – although it may possibly have been slight deafness.

We broke cloud at about 10,000 ft., pin-pointed ourselves over Bindle airfield, and saw our goal for the first time. I then realised that we were going to have flown over 100kms and there was the possibility of putting up a two-seater 100kms. record; I therefore dived for Grimsby as fast as was comfortable, only to find Grimsby aerodrome a deserted airfield with apparently no hope of official observations. We landed at Grimsby at 18.20 hours to find warm, calm conditions in between heavy showers. The aerodrome wasn't, in fact, deserted. There was an A.T.C. officer who was permanently stationed there, and he observed our arrival and welcomed us with tea and eggs, generally thawing us out.

A flight of this sort is within any person's reach who is lucky enough to get into the right cloud. We must have entered the cloud just as it was building up. Stephenson apparently entered the same cloud but only reached 14,800 ft. and, strangely enough, complained of lack of oxygen. We certainly didn't suffer from any lack of oxygen as far as we could tell, although the main problem was discomfort through being too cold. The moral is: go properly dressed. *[NN: It is likely that they were both shivering which would have increased their resting oxygen consumption by up to 10 times, meaning that they were definitely suffering a considerable degree of hypoxia – typically accompanied by the euphoria which would mask their situational judgement!]*

The other thing was that we arrived over our goal with 8,000 ft. to spare, and could have done so with 10,000 ft., which would have given us a gliding range of another 70 miles, assuming that we didn't find any more lift – which shows the possibilities of finding just *one* good cloud and exploiting it to its full. It also possibly shows once again that artificial horizons and all "mod. cons." are not really necessary.

The worst feature of the flight came afterwards – publicity! I received many telegrams, but the most amusing one was from my wife, which said: "Now I can really get you certified".



Derek Piggott (L) with Chris Wills, founder and first President of the International Vintage Glider Association

The current stats page shows us in 2nd place in terms of points scored, but with many more flights and pilots than other clubs.

BGA 100k diploma



The diploma is designed to help those just starting out in cross country gliding to progress from silver distance to tasks that require more planning and organisation. You can get some experience of flying to turn-points without getting too far from your home airfield, and get an idea of your average speed in the type of soaring conditions encountered. This might also be a great first flight to put on the BGA Ladder.

Key points

The rules are fairly simple:

- ✓ declare the flight beforehand on paper or in the logger
- ✓ closed course - out and return or triangle
- ✓ go through 1km wide start and finish lines
- ✓ height loss of less than 1000m between start and finish, eg if you start at 4200ft you must finish above 920ft. If you plan to finish at 1500-2000ft that gives time for your circuit planning and you are unlikely to start too high. Safe and easy.

Do it on a nice day with 4000ft cloudbase, no approaching fronts, and get a briefing for the task beforehand. Have an idea of 100k task options before the day you fly, that way you should already know about the terrain and landout options on your route - it's a measure of your ability to plan and safely complete a task avoiding airspace (including parachuting and NOTAMs) and bad weather while following some basic rules.

You can claim the diploma in two stages – for part 1 you can take as long as you like, for part 2 you need to have an average speed of 65kph or more.

There are lots of examples that could be flown from Chiltern Park, for example, CPK-RIVar Hill-FARingdon-CPK or CPK-OXfordSouth-SWintonEast-CPK. These also work with GORing as the start-finish but you need to remember to keep more height in hand, the distance on the final leg is to Goring and not your airfield. If you're flying from Booker, you now have the advantage that something like BOO-BIchesterEast-ILSley-BOO would take you close to Bicester and then through familiar territory around Chiltern Park on your way back to Booker. Of course, if you pick and complete your own task it will probably be more rewarding.

Bob Smith



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