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Association

Bristol Strutter

Newsletter of the PFA Bristol Strut

September 2006

NEXT MEETING— MANUEL QUEIROZ



After the summer break, we will resume meeting at BAWA on September 14th, and look forward to seeing Manuel again to learn about his record breaking adventure when he flew around the globe in his home-built RV6a.

Now you will have the opportunity to ask him those questions which came to mind when *you* thought about flying around the world!

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FUTURE MEETINGS

October 12th - AGM

Nov 9th - Ultimate High

Dec 14th - The Strut Quiz

Jan 11th 2007 - Roger Hopkinson

Thursday 8 March 2007 -

CAA Safety Evening Presentation
with David Cockburn
BAWA Room 1, starting 19:30 hrs

April 12th 2007 Francis Donaldson

Places to go this September

Free landing vouchers valid for September are in:

FLYER magazine for Redhill, Scilly Isles, Sturgate and Swansea.

PILOT magazine for Alderney (Half only), Enstone, Eshott, Fife, Panshanger and Shipdham.

Today's Pilot for Brimpton, Panshanger, Cromer (Northrepps), Sumburgh.

Don't forget - check first and call PPR before going!

17th Sept - WPFAP's 7th annual fly-in to be held at Lower Upham,
for PPR call 01793-321974

23rd Sept Middle Wallop (Aeronca Club) 01980-678727

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GPS workshop

Following on from last month's article about airspace infringements you may be interested in the following event which will be held at Oxford Airport on **Saturday, 30th September**. The workshop is aimed at the GA leisure pilot and is driven by the Institute's concern about the increase in airspace infringements since the wide spread use of GPS by GA. Attendance at the event will cost £30, which includes coffee on arrival and a buffet lunch. A £6 landing fee will apply for attendees arriving by air. Oxford Air Training (OAT) is hosting the workshop.

Draft Programme for RIN GPS Workshop – Oxford 30th September

0930	Arrival and Registration / Coffee. Display available of GPS Equipment
1015	OAT Welcome – Paul Hickley Oxford Air Training
1025	GPS Update – David Broughton RIN
1105	Use of GPS in GA Environment – David Cockburn CAA
1145	Databases and GPS VFR Charts – Jeppesen Speaker
12.30	Lunch. – AFE Display of GPS Sets plus associated equipment
1330	GPS Use by Military in VFR environment – RAF Speaker
1415	GPS Training – TBA
1445	Considerations in Choosing a GPS set – Jeremy Diack AFE
15.15	Tea
1530	Instrument Approaches – Adam Whitehead CAA
1615	Wash-up

Is your licence really valid?

A message from the CAA:

"After an era of lifetime private pilots licences, the new 5-year European JAR-FCL Private Pilots Licence (PPL) has been in existence for 5 years and the CAA reports that the first applications for renewal have been processed.

The CAA has noticed that some licence holders have missed their renewal date and there have been cases when pilots have been flying without a valid licence. Although it is the pilot's responsibility to keep a licence valid, the CAA recognises that the change from the lifetime licence may catch out the unwary. The CAA will be sending out reminder cards to JAR-FCL PPL holders to encourage them to renew."

Can you help a fellow aviator?

A member of the Devon Strut has discovered that one wheel on his Aeronca Champ is cracked and therefore has to be scrapped. A quote from Univair for \$2155 (plus shipping etc etc) has yet to be beaten by Aircraft Spruce. Does anyone know of any source of wheels (one, preferably two) that might be a little more affordable?
If you do please contact the editors and we'll put you in touch.

Rally News

PFA Flying for Fun 2006

Bristol Strut once again ran the Used Aircraft for Sale facility; we are very grateful to John for bringing his caravan along and providing much needed shelter and refreshment during the sometimes inclement weather!

A video clip made by British Satellite News at the Rally at Kemble is on the net. If you want to see it go to www.bsn.org.uk and look for FLYING HIGH in the Science & Technology category.

Further video clips from the rally have been published by Pilot magazine on their web-site. Go to www.pilotweb.aero to see them.

Other strut members involved in the rally were Dave Hall and Mike Samuels who were running the Youth & Education Strut tent, along with Stewart Luck. Well done to all.

National Council Meeting - Sat 16th Sept 2006

If you have any items you wish to be discussed at the next NC meeting please contact our rep Graham Clark.
E-mail: cgraham978@aol.com

Members News

Andy Ferrington to start Cadet training.

Some of you will remember that one of our Young Eagles in the year 2000 showed real drive and ambition to become an airline pilot. Andy joined the strut and has been along to many meetings and we have been following his tortuous journey. We can now report that he is at last on his way to achieving his goal. Andy tells us his story:

After many applications for cadet schemes, including Flybe, Thomas Cook, PFA, GAPAN, J.N Somers (semi-finals) and Thomson Fly, I have finally secured a place on a self-sponsored Cadet Scheme. I have a place with GB Airways (BA franchise operator) as a mentored cadet with Flight Training Europe (FTE), Jerez, Spain.

The 4 stage selection began with the standard online application, with some 150 applicants and initial screening; you receive 8 essay questions to answer within 2 days! All focused around 'core skills', which the airlines love: teamwork, leadership, communication, achievements and why you are applying.

That's stage 2. FTE then shortlists for stage 3 testing...

Stage 3 contains 2 technical written exams, aviation focused mathematics and physics, i.e. fuel calculation equations, temp lapse rates, take off performance charts and flap configuration on big jets. All good fun, pretty basic maths but very pushed for time!! Then a verbal reasoning exam, again aviation focused. Follow this with around 5 computer aptitude tests, from the easy task of flying through hoops up to multi-tasking (4 tasks on screen at once, yikes!!) Just as your brain has been turned to mush, you walk into a one-on-one interview with FTE.! Relaxed interview, focusing on core skills, life experience and hypothetical questioning; "you smell alcohol on your training captain's breath... what do you do?"

Stage 3 done, FTE's chief pilot then assesses each candidate and puts forward recommendations to GB Airways, who choose who to progress.

Stage 4: Gatwick, 'Aurora Hotel' (BA and AA crew hotel), and it's the final. 24 candidates for 10 places. Spread over 2 days with 12 candidates a day. Meeting the other candidates, 12 guys, all of extremely high standard; degrees, PPL's, 200-300 logged hours, current GB Cabin

crews... and this is the competition you're up against.

Ice breakers; we are walked into the conference room, to be greeted by around 8 or 9 senior GB directors/managers and crews. Yikes!! A great company presentation and interesting ice breakers, before we are split into 6's. Our first task - to create a new destination for GB to fly, develop a marketing strategy, logo, advert and slogan. Oh... no planning time - you start now and you will be presenting it to our directors in 20 minutes!!!! With 5 assessors watching and recording your every word, "on the spot?!"

My group of 6 choose Bulgaria, a new and up and coming destination, currently under-served by UK carriers. So of course everyone's company research shows through here, very clever. We worked very well, completed the task with ease, and were told that our group/task and presentation was the best they had seen. Wow.

Next... "group discussion", ok, so on an airline cadet scheme, you would expect something along the lines of "discuss your views on the recent security issues resulting from the terrorist threat"; but oh no, instead we are asked "please discuss your views on single-sex couples adopting children". Silence!!! We actually developed a very intellectual conversation, working well as a group.

That's the group exercises covered, now the long/eternal wait for the individual interview. Great fun waiting in the hotel lobby as flight crews enter and leave. The American pilots (AA) being very amusing, showing great interest in the nervous 21 year olds sitting in a big circle. We chat with 2 senior captains as they argued about who over-took who mid-Atlantic in their Boeing 777's! Great fun. And last but not least I was called into interview; I was interviewed by Captain Bill Ward, flight operations director, and another senior safety captain.

The interview was 95% focused on my personality, that's all they wanted to see, the rest had been covered, it was now just about you, flying alongside you, fitting into GB Airways, and of course, your potential as a future captain. I focused on my expedition skills, after taking such an active leadership role, numerous travel experiences were discussed. And it all paid off... the next day I receive the phone call from GB Airways; it seems I am now one of the 10 cadets to train at FTE Jerez for GB Airways!

All the hard work has paid off, although the days of full sponsorship are long gone, a scheme like this is a superb opportunity. Even though I shall be paying for integrated ATPL training at Jerez, GB will be mentoring us, before our sponsored JOC (jet orientation course) and into Type Rating training on the Airbus A320/21 - training at British Airways Flight Training (BAFT), Cranebank, Heathrow.



Briefly, GB Airways are a privately owned, family run business, operating as a full BA franchise. Selling the BA product, livery, colours, and uniforms. Operating a full Airbus fleet, with eleven A320-200's and four A321-200's, with 156 PAX and 189 PAX respectively. Also with orders for three A321's, planned to enter service at the same time as the 10 cadets (myself included) will turn fully qualified. (All planned to the day!)

I now start out in Jerez 19th Feb next year for the 64 week course, ending in a JAR-FCL CPL ME IR MCC. (that's JAR commercial + multi engine + instrument + multi crew). Then the JOC (jet training) and TR (type rating) with GB on the A320/321 (common TR licence).

Life is about to become extremely exciting, and that dream career that I have held for so long has just become one huge step closer... but I shall never forget my first ever step in the direction of aviation - that step taken as a Young Eagle with the PFA Bristol Strut, 2000. My huge thanks to the PFA, especially the Bristol Strut.

Andy

We wish Andy all the best on the next stage in his career. Eds

Roger:

**Used when you're not sure
what else to say**

Gliders and Glaciers - the story by Graham Clark.

Recently, Graham and a friend of his, Jim Cripps, flew in his Jodel across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and into Switzerland to experience gliding over the Swiss mountains and glaciers. Their tour of Europe is related by Graham in the following pages, illustrated by photos taken by themselves along the way. It makes compulsive reading. Enjoy...



OF GLIDERS, GLACIERS, AND GRUB

Text: Graham Clark

Photos: Jim Cripps, unless otherwise indicated

**"Zurich Radar. Hotel Bravo three zero four niner "
This is Zurich Radar; Four niner, pass your message
"Zurich from four niner, no transponder, no engine,
Flight Level 150. Request clearance continue climb to
Flight Level 200.
"Four niner, you are cleared to Flight Level 195.
Height restriction due to jet traffic en-route to Milan."**

Without a doubt, this was in all senses the peak point of a recent *Tour d'Europe* in Jodel Sicile Recorde DR1051 M1 flown by Graham Clark and Jim Cripps; a tour that took in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland, and a lot of very hot weather. All trips like this have a story. But who needs an excuse to fly? Here's the story anyway.

Through the internet Jodel discussion-ring Graham got wind of a fly-in at the Deutsches Museum historic airfield at Schleissheim, near Munich. The dates coupled neatly with an invitation to go soaring in Switzerland. How's that for a combination? In a word, irresistible.

Everything dovetailed neatly: aircraft serviceable; pilots serviceable and available. So down to the planning: charts ordered and an application for a fly-in slot for Schleissheim. Since the museum fly-in only accepts 35 aircraft, we were delighted when G-BHTC was accepted almost by return of e-mail.

The initial trouble was that the preferred Wednesday route was straight through Blackbushe to Ockham; does the Farnborough Air Show ring any warning bells? So the route chosen from Oaksey Park (EGTW) near Kemble was via Popham to Goodwood on the south coast, then hang a left, keeping the blue stuff on the right, the green stuff on the left. One hour and forty-five minutes later 'TC touched down in an entertaining crosswind on Lydd's (EGMD) 2771 metre runway 03. Normally, we would have chosen Lashenden, but today the temperature was well over 30°C, so Captain Speaking with full fuel wanted a long, long departure runway. The crosswind sea breeze was the penalty.

The next bit was easy: fuel, loo, file flight plan and grab a bite to eat. Luckily, we arrived just in time for the day's 'special', which set us up for the next long-leg to Speyer (EDRY) in Germany, with rough life jacket covers scraping the neck skin.



The approach into Speyer airfield just misses the Cathedral and the Boeing 747-200 at the Technisches Museum (Photo Jim Cripps)



This ASW 28 flown by Daniel Müller is in wave at 18,000 ft over the Aletschahorn Glacier (Photo GC)

But the Lydd runway is wide, allowing for some offset into wind during take-off, with a right turnout direct to the Boulogne VOR, which came up immediately. We stayed on the Lydd frequency until mid-channel, then switched to Lille. Sipping water from bottles as we went, we passed BNE and then got a hand-over to Cambrai military. They have the VOR and the zone through which we ideally wished to track. However, just before we got there the kind controller declined transit and we had to switch to IFR mode: I Follow Roads. Typical, they try to get you lost, then tell you to 'resume own navigation.' Conveniently, there is a motorway south from Cambrai with a handy intersection further south. But with loadsafuel (TC's bladders can hold 146 litres, consumed by the mighty 105 h.p. Potez 4E20A at 21 litres per hour) the diversion was not really a problem; just a nuisance.

So on we droned in the July heat, picking up the track again over the Ardennes of Southern Belgium, followed by 'Wonderful Radio Luxemburg' (remember that?). Then we were into Germany's River Moselle Valley, Kaiserslautern, and converging with the River Rhine at Speyer; the river has many dead side arms, ideal breeding places for mosquitoes. Soon, we picked out the power station cooling towers by the river and began to look forward to some *Weizenbier*, preferably in copious quantities.

Three and a half hours after leaving Lydd, the approach to Runway 17 at Speyer was right over the town centre, keeping the cathedral on the right, closely followed by a retired Lufthansa 747-200 set on a column at a jaunty angle. This is one of the several external exhibits at the *Technik Museum*, which is endowed with a poly-technical collection ranging from submarines to SSTs. The trouble is, it has no air conditioning. The coolest place in town was the Cathedral crypt. With a ground temperature in the shade of 38°C, guess in which facility we chose to give thanks for our safe arrival? Correct; the airfield *Biergarten*.

The arrival formalities at Speyer were quickly completed. The local flying school made space for TC in their hangar and a piece of grass for our tent. But be warned: the mossies in Speyer bite with the vengeance of *schraege Musik*; chemical warfare essential. At the airfield beer garden you can sit and watch the BASF Dassault Mystere bizjets come and go at close quarters, lightly laden because the planned runway extension is still 'under negotiation'.



The fountain in Speyer's High Street provided momentary relief from the heat of the day -- 38°C in the shade (Photo Jim Cripps)

Following breakfast at the airfield restaurant, we strolled into town. The centre of Speyer is a 15-minute walk from the airfield. The baroque buildings are teutonically neat, clean, painted in bright pastel colours, and boast red geranium window boxes. Pavement cafes adorn both sides of the main street; we felt we had earned a rest, following the stress of the previous day's heat, Potez noise and vibration.

After supper at the airfield, we got ready for the mosquito onslaught, which came in force. They won; we lost. Enough said.

WEISSENHORN

The following morning the airfield restaurant was closed so we improvised breakfast round the corner at an Aral petrol station where the selection and quality of food would put any Burger House to shame; then back to the airfield to prepare for the next leg: Speyer to Weissenhorn (EDNW) near Neu-Ulm. There, we were to meet fellow Jodel driver Raymond Reis.

An hour after leaving Speyer, we called Weissenhorn Radio and got a rather scratchy reply from which we inferred we were expected. Arriving overhead the airfield, Raymond's son Sebastian (DR220 driver, ATPL student) was awaiting us at the airfield. TC was rapidly tucked into the corner of an empty hangar and we were whisked off to lunch and *Pils* by these very kind and hospitable people. Raymond had to do some more work during the afternoon: "Can I lend you transport?" We opted for the 650 cc Yamaha with full air conditioning, and trundled into the town for a stroll, look-see and ice cream: the town is '*Klein, aber fein*'.

The following morning, Sebastian and camera got airborne first in the DR 220, followed a couple of minutes later by TC and crew heading straight for Schleissheim. Sebastian was awaiting us and got a picture or two in the chip before waving goodbye.



Our air-conditioned transport in Weissenhorn with poser Jim (Photo GC)

Munich Radar was helpful and had us on their list of 'approved' arrivals. Our official slot time for Schleissheim (EDNX) was noon but -- shame of shame -- we were early for our straight-in approach to 08. However, we fuelled TC and at noon precisely (cheat!) were guided to our parking slot in front of the Museum by a yellow Smart 'Follow Me' car.

DEUTSCHES MUSEUM - SCHLEISSHEIM

Schleissheim airfield still boasts the original pre WW1 workshop hangars built for maintenance and repair of the aircraft then based at the Munich *Oberwiesenfeld* town centre airfield, subsequently sacrificed for the Munich Olympics. The Schleissheim hangars (*thank you, St. Franz Josef Strauss*) now house part of the Deutsches Museum collection of historic aircraft, for which there is insufficient space at the main building in the Munich city centre. The airfield was used by the US Military after WW2, and is still home to sport aviation. However, its use is severely restricted. Many sport pilots in the Munich area would love to have access, but this is denied to all but a fortunate few. So TC and its crew were all the more delighted to enjoy this rare aeronautical treat, which also attracted a good crowd of local people paying entrance money to the Museum.



The Deutsches Museum fly-in was held at the historic Schleissheim airfield on the north-east edge of Munich. The fly-in offers a rare opportunity to visit this airfield, access to which is otherwise highly restricted (Photo GC)

As one would expect from the Deutsches Museum restoration workshop technicians who ran the fly-in, the all-volunteer organisation was meticulous and went without a hitch. Your scribe is always happy to look at historic aircraft, but IMHO the real museum attention-getter has to be the Horten IV tailless glider, restored and suspended from the ceiling close to a pedestrian catwalk. A flying replica Horten IV is currently under construction, but not in Munich. The current incumbent of the restoration workshop is a Merlin-powered CASA-built Heinkel 111, as seen in *The Battle of Britain* film.

The Saturday fly-in was not a mega-event, but offered easy access, opportunities for crews to meet and talk, good food and organisation, rides in a Swiss Ju 52 and other historic aircraft. There were entertaining demonstration flights by the Messerschmitt Foundation Me109, the Bucker Bestmann and others. The entire venue and event offered a unique blend of a relaxed atmosphere with plenty of technical interest and generous hospitality from the Museum. The only drama was when a fuel line fractured on a Ju 52, causing a minor start-up fire that was quickly extinguished on the ground.



The Deutsches Museum generously made space inside for visiting aircraft (Photo Jim Cripps)

The Deutsches Museum hangar exhibits were rearranged in order to create overnight space for visiting aircraft; Duxford and others, please note.

Schleissheim has no campsite, but there were a couple of big assembly halls upstairs in the museum, with no furniture and big windows to let in the balmy forest night time breeze: "Which one would you like to occupy?" asks charming Gudrun, of the organising team. Toilets, showers, etc., just downstairs. Anything else you need?"

Our Sunday departure was delayed until the evening to give the duty CBs time to freshen up the air en-route via Tannkosh (EDMT) to Mengen (EDTM), on the upper reaches of the River Danube. Aircraft tied down, tent pitched up, recce of the airfield restaurant and a quick decision by the crew. "Will that be two beers or four?"

MENGEN

If you are touring South Germany by air, Mengen makes a good stop: campsite, loos, washroom, showers, restaurant, fuel, and customs available two hours' notice on request. Luckily, there were gliding clubs from the Netherlands and North Germany camping at the airfield, so the mosquitoes had alternative targets and TC's crew took no further hits.

The restaurant was closed ('*Ruhetag*') on Monday morning and we were obliged to hunt for breakfast scraps. Never mind; the next stop is Grenchen in Switzerland -- and it has a restaurant. I know. Been there before.

GRENCHEM

Zurich radar accepts our height assurance about lack of mode C, nudges us gently away from their zone more towards Basle. Given past events, we are not surprised, but it does leave us in the wrong valley on a very hot day with a heavily laden four-seat aircraft with only 105 h.p. Once we get it sorted, we are soon homing into Breitling country and the 09 threshold, trucks just feet from the runway. We park on Customs Stand Number 1 and walk the mega-heated 50 ft tarmac to the air-conditioned GA Terminal under the tower. We are now hungry, but the notice board has valuable remedial information: "Grand Opening of the new restaurant on September 1!" Today is July 24. Get the message? Eat your heart out, 'cos you'll get nothing else.

Our final destination is Munster in South Central Switzerland and given the mountain terrain, we essentially have three options: option one, approach from the East and cross a very high pass; option two, long route first West, and then through the Rhône valley to the East (safe); option three, direct from North to South through a high pass.

Now, Jim suddenly declares himself to be a born-again coward and so we seek local advice, finally identifying a flying instructor, who says that today we should go for option three: the *Grimselfpass*. We thank this (rather young) flying instructor for his advice and retire to think. While doing so, Captain Speaking sees a Jodel 1050 with HB registration taxi up to the GA Terminal. The pilot looks old and wizened, so we go for a second opinion. "Yes", he says. "Today, take the Grimselfpass. " Fair enough. As Lenin was wont to say: "Trust is good. Checking up is better."

After take-off we head for Berne, and request a climbing transit through their zone, which is readily forthcoming. It is hot, and the *Grimselfpass* is 7103 ft amsl; the altitude is that of the road at the narrow col, so to get over in safety I want 9,200 ft. On this day, it takes us nearly an hour to get there at full throttle, passing Thun, Interlaken and the Swiss Air Force base (F-18) at Meiringen. But we make it, and immediately after passing through the gap are rewarded by the sight of the beautiful Alpine Rhône valley running westwards, with our destination immediately below. So: here we are up here; and there it is down there; and the valley is narrow north to south. The way down calls for as much planning as the way up. In addition, it is a beautiful day and there are thirty or so glider trailers.... on the ground.



At 9,200 feet P1 looks straight ahead through the gap, while courageous P2 takes pictures of the rocks (Photo Jim Cripps)

MUNSTER

Open for only six weeks a year, Munster (LSPU, 4357 ft amsl) airfield is a jewel worth every drop of avgas. It would try the reader's patience to read of its long list of merits; details on request from cgraham978@aol.com

Built in the early 1930s as a fighter defence airfield, it has a number of well-concealed and dispersed grass-roofed concrete hangars, still used as such in the summer. The 800 m runway rises/falls 30 ft from end-to-end; pilots must be doubly wary of local wind variations and density altitude.



Münster airfield was constructed as a Swiss Air Force fighter base in the 1930s; now it is open for only six weeks each year for soaring (Photo Jim Cripps)

If we report nothing else, we must say how thoroughly well organised and managed is this airfield for and by Swiss glider pilots, one of whom has invited me to join him for some Alpine familiarisation in a two-seat ASH 25. He has 700 hours in the Alps, and knows which way is up.

The way up is behind an MCR Remorqueur manufactured by Dyn'Aero, powered by a turbo-charged 115 hp Rotax and flown by retired ex-Swissair MD11 pilot Jaques Barbezat. The heavy ASH 25 with front-seater Andrea Schlapbach, trundles uphill along runway 05 into a 10 kt wind and we clear the boundary by a 'comfortable' 30 ft height margin, heading up the valley towards a granite wall some five miles away. Gently, we move towards the southwest-facing valley slope; Jacques uses his local knowledge to keep us away from the sink. We

complete a turn towards the west and then traverse the valley towards a group of southwest-facing 'hot rocks'. Jacques has hit the sweet spot and Andrea pulls the yellow knob. The wind here is opposite to that over the airfield three miles away; the terrain is different too. Our wing sweeps past jagged rocks that have been fashioned by thousands of years of freeze, thaw, heat, ice, snow and wind; brutal, unforgiving terrain. *But:* the variometer is giving one to two metres per second lift. We beat back and forth, each time turning away from the steep slope.

About -- maybe 1000 ft -- above the ridge, a cumulus cloud is building nicely and soon we can make the transition from ridge lift to thermal soaring. Up, and up we go, four to five metres per second and at 10,000 ft it is time to start using oxygen. The oxygen feed is via nasal cannula -- two tubes inserted into the nostrils and fed from the bottle via a regulator. Breathe in, and you hear a gentle *hiss* burst as the oxygen is inhaled. A green light on the regulator indicates the oxygen has been delivered. At regular five-minute intervals, Andrea calls an oxygen check.

Having reached cloud base at about 12,000 ft, Andrea points west and soon we are in smooth wave lift; straight, but definitely not level. We are about to bust our altitude clearance for the day:

"Zurich Radar. Hotel Bravo three zero four niner "

This is Zurich Radar; four niner, pass your message

"Zurich from four niner, no transponder, no engine, Flight Level 150.

Request clearance continued climb to Flight Level 200.

"Four niner, you are cleared to Flight Level 195. Height restriction due to jet traffic en-route to Milan."

So up we continue. Andrea knows that other Munster-based sailplanes are in the vicinity with similar intentions, so we keep a careful lookout above and below. Below we see a couple of black Crows, above an Eagle -- here comes lunch on a VFR flight plan. The GPS-based on-board FLARM collision warning system is doing its duty and gives us notice of nearby sailplanes. An ASW 28 is flown by Daniel Mueller, with whom we agree a spot of air-to-air photography. Andrea has the height, and we agree to drop down to Daniel's left, with the sun also on our left. A few minutes later my remaining film is used up and we part company. Over to the west is *Mont Blanc*. We are now higher than the highest mountain in Europe.



This ASW 28 is equipped with the GPS-based Flight Alarm (FLARM) system, as is the sailplane from which the picture was taken. Clearly visible in the canopy reflection of the lower aircraft is an (inverse) reflection of the FLARM red warning lights alerting the lower pilot to the proximity of the upper sailplane. Most Swiss sailplanes and glider tugs are equipped with the system which costs about 400 pounds (Photo GC)

There is no cloud in the wave zone, but the valley over our home airfield is now gathering cloud cover and we need to get down. The sun has disappeared from the valley. But not too fast; we have been up here for over an hour at minus 10°C and the ASH airframe needs to warm without thermal shock to the GRP and carbon fibre structure. Gently does it, and we take the ASH down slowly into warmer air. We land, and I realise that my feet and fingers are -- how shall we put it? -- bloody cold. Quickly, we push the ASH to its parking spot, covers on, tie-down and secure.

We are late for supper (like I said, the Swiss Glider Clubs at Munster have it *well* organised -- the menu, and home cooking); but no complaints about our lateness! Forgiveness guaranteed; volunteer cook Regula is a honey!

Three hours in an ASH 25 with an expert in slope, thermal and wave lift, plus the beauty of the Swiss Alps -- Glaciers and Gliders -- is an experience not to be missed. Just like dinner.



When flying high in wave, return to the valley airfield can rapidly become obscured by evening cloud formation (Photo GC)



Left - The Aletschahorn Glacier is the biggest in Europe: a glider landed out there some years ago and was recovered by helicopter (Photo GC)

Below - Yes, we were there! Co-pilot Jim Cripps and the Münster Airfield backdrop (Photo GC)



During our visit to Münster co-pilot and Jodel D18 builder Jim Cripps celebrated his 65th birthday. Our delightful Swiss hosts laid on a birthday cake with 65 candles.

For his birthday treat, Jim was taken for a ride over the glaciers in a Duo Discus. Happy Birthday Jim! It doesn't get any better than that.

(Photo Jim Cripps)

© Text: Graham Clark
 © Photos: Jim Cripps and Graham Clark