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Latest News

Although Covid-19 restrictions are still with us we are making progress in some areas. There have been a number of great flights, we have visitors again at the airfield and we have some new members learning to fly.

Lectures on the cross country endorsement have started and at the end of October we are starting a series of lectures for the Bronze theory exam.

Unfortunately, the club rooms and accommodation are still closed, but we are hoping to have limited availability of the clubroom to warm up, have a cup of tea or coffee or a snack. Watch for announcements when and how this happens and please follow all the rules and guidelines that we have to put into place to make sure everyone keeps safe.

And, when the weather isn’t flyable, why not think about some of your experiences, around the airfield or in the air and put them down in writing for the next newsletter. I am always looking for articles.

There is also the weekly Condor race on Wednesdays at 7 pm. Details on the forum with the task available there at 6 pm.

The Editor

Trip to Feshie Mayfest

I've wanted to get to Feshie's Oktoberfest for years. Mayfest was blown by COVID-19 restrictions, but luckily not the week of 25th September-2nd October.

So it was that we set off on the Friday at 08:00, and parked the glider at Feshie airfield that evening.

Cairngorm Gliding Club is a small operation compared to Portmoak, but their hills are a tad bigger.

Despite being small - or perhaps because - Cairn-
Transporting a Motorglider

As most of you will know already I had an accident in the Falke motorglider in July. Landing in rain with poor visibility I misjudged the roundout and landed heavy. As a result the port side undercarriage collapsed, which also meant the prop struck the ground and broke.

After getting some estimates for repairs, the insurance company decided it was a write-off.

Since the engine was due to be replaced this year anyway the syndicate had been saving up for a new engine. So we started looking for a replacement for the Falke.

A Super Dimona caught our eye and Alastair and Matthew went down south to have a look at it. It looked good, with a new Rotax engine, but was in a workshop / shed next to an airfield turned into crop. So it had to be brought to Scotland on a trailer.

Meanwhile, the remains of the Falke found an
Earlier this year

Between the wet start to the year and the Covid-19 lockdown there has been a lot less flying this year. Let's hope we don't see the airfield like this again.

This picture was taken on the 25th of February.

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Obituary - Brian Cole-Hamilton

Brian was born in Ayrshire, but brought up and educated in the Glasgow area, during the Second World War. His first contact with aviation was during his National Service in the RAF, when he worked as an engineer on Beverly and Valetta aircraft, among many other types. His first piloting experience was on the Valetta, a medium sized transport with two piston engines. Brian was part of a team which flew round various airfields in the Middle East, doing repairs to other aircraft which had become unserviceable. The regular co-pilot frequently had a hangover to sleep off, so Brian took over his seat, and the skipper taught him to fly the beast!

He left the Air Force to work in the family scaffolding company, starting at the bottom as a labourer, and ending up, after his father’s death, as Managing Director.

Brian started gliding at Portmoak, going solo in 1963. After gaining some experience, he became a civilian instructor with the Air Cadets at Kirknewton, but suffered a back injury in a heavy landing which gave him trouble for the rest of his life.

Returning to Portmoak, he joined the syndicate owning the all-metal T-53. He flew his silver distance in this machine, and on arriving over Arbroath with several thousand feet to spare, decided to celebrate with a few aerobatics. Pulling out of a loop, he was alarmed by a loud CLANG from somewhere behind and flew very carefully down to land, to find that the noise had been caused by the whip aerial striking the top of the fuselage, under the influence of G!

He had another alarming experience when instructing in a K-13 at Portmoak. He was just about to touch down in the south field when the glider’s tail was removed by an Astir which was landing at right angles to it. Fortunately, Brian, his pupil and the Astir pilot were all uninjured.

Brian gained his PPL at Glasgow Airport, and carried out many hundreds of tows in the Super Cubs and the Pawnee. For a time, he owned a share in a Goldwing microlight, and later became a member of the Jodel syndicate, flying all over Scotland with syndicate partners, family and friends.

He was also a member of my Libelle syndicate for several years but having put on more than a little weight, found himself one day unable to get back out of the cockpit, and decided that his gliding days were over! However, his last glider flight was in the Walking on Air K-21 in 2017, when he managed to soar Benarty in weak conditions, using the hand rudder control.

Always willing to volunteer to help with club management, Brian became the director responsible for buildings, and was heavily involved with the alterations to the clubhouse which became necessary for the establishment of Walking on Air. Later, he was Chairman during the planning and construction of the first new glider store.

Brian was unfortunate to suffer from ill health during his later years. A rare form of vasculitis left him wheelchair bound, and he was diagnosed with prostate cancer earlier this year. He died on Wednesday 12th August at the age of 85. His wife Christine had passed away last year, but he is survived by two daughters and three grandchildren.

Brian was one of these people who never made any remarkable gliding achievements, but he thoroughly enjoyed his flying, and put as much into the club as he got out of it. We all continue to benefit from the work he did over very many years.

Bruce Marshall