

## News from the Clubs

### Furness Gliding Club

Much hail, rain and snow has fallen on our site since the last account of our activities was published. Meanwhile there has been a good deal of flying. The past year was a record for the number of launches made, but primary work ended early in November, when the machine took off on its own and wrote off one wing. A pair of new planes are under construction in the workshop at Hawcoat, but the working party, never large, gets smaller week by week. This will never do, so will members please rally and get this work finished off.

Our new hangar is at last complete and has already weathered the severest gales. It will be a great asset.

Perhaps the most gratifying news is that relating to our new members who have all shown such promise, particularly Frank Charles, who has bought himself a KIRBY KITE, built a trailer for it, and taught himself to fly in it, all inside two months, an achievement so unprecedented that it is set out in detail below.

Meanwhile, W. A. Stevens has made one or two soaring flights in the B.A.C. IV., as well as putting his full weight into the concentrated training of the KIRBY KITE owner.

We hope to hold a training camp at Easter, with members camping on the site, and possibly a strong contingent from Workington, in Cumberland (where a gliding club is being formed at the works of the United Steel Companies at Moss Bay).

J. C. Redshaw, one of our able pilots, has departed for the City, and will undoubtedly be seen at Dunstable before long.

[The Furness Club's site escaped mention in Mr. Wills's article on the subject last month, he having never been there; nevertheless, it is one of the finest soaring sites in the country, as all can remember who were at the B.G.A. Competitions of 1932. The club would like it to be known that they extend a hearty invitation to Mr. Wills or any other pilot with equipment, to come and try the site; no pilot who really wished to fly has ever visited it in vain. The problem of landing has now been solved by a mobile trailer, and those who would rather not face a descent on the rugged hill top can now touch lightly down on a long smooth beach with excellent approaches.—ED.]

#### Believe it or Not.

A thermal flight by a man who has never been launched in a primary glider and has not enough launches to his credit to qualify for an "A" ticket! And now he begs me not to make a song about it, because, in his own words: "I'm merely a novice and have a great deal to learn!" On the other hand, there are others who would also learn—of how, when and where it was done, and it would be unfair not to tell them. So here is the sequence of events, truly set out for the first time:—

**November 23rd, 1935.**—An *ab initio* pilot, never been launched, takes delivery from Slingsby's of the original KIRBY KITE—the one in which Neilan flew to Withersea from Sutton Bank on its very first soaring flight three months before—and now named "Cutty Sark."

**November 24th.**—Car-launched on two slides and two hops, and decides straight away to build a handy trailer, as it appears essential for further progress.

**January 11th, 1936.**—Trailer fit for the road. Two slides and two hops on Askam beach.

**January 14th.**—Two long glides from Furness Club's site to Askam beach, distance  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, total descent about 800 ft., times, 4 and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  minutes respectively.

**January 18th.**—Launched at 1 p.m. with the intention of gliding down to sea level as before. Having arrived over the beach without losing any height, he began to circle (he had removed the delicate Collins variometer during the hopping stage). He climbed beautifully, circling to right and left to prevent dizziness, which began to present itself. By the time he got straightened out he had proceeded so far against the wind, which was only eight miles an hour at the starting point, that he had crossed the Duddon estuary to Millom iron works. Here he turned and made a bee line for Askam beach, where he landed, after being in the air 25 minutes.

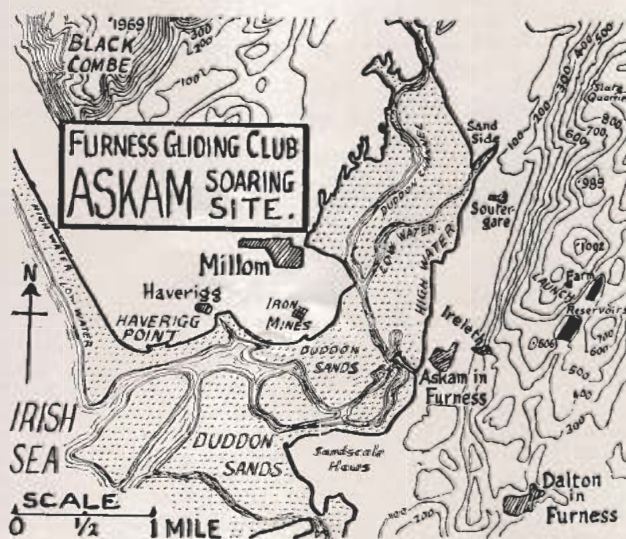
I can only account for the phenomenal lift as being due to cold air currents creeping down the snow-covered hill sides and forcing up the warmer air coming in from the sea, or else evaporation from the bare sands, the tide being well out at the time.

[We might interpolate here that the Air Ministry weather report shows a light N.W. wind and a temperature at inland stations of round about 32 deg. at the time, while the steamer "Cambria," crossing on the Holyhead route, reported that the air was from 6 to 9 deg. colder than the sea, the air temperature there being 39 deg. It seems likely, therefore, that the sea air was not only warmer than that over the land, but was in a very unstable condition.—ED.]

Same day, launched again at 4 p.m. No lift this time, glides to beach in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.

**January 19th.**—Launched in a tail wind and glides to beach in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.

**January 23rd.**—Soars for 58 minutes, converses with his ground crew from the air, gives instructions where to pick him up, and promptly lands on the appointed spot.



Environs of the Furness Club's site above Ireleth, where the B.G.A. Competitions were held in 1932, and where, as described on this page, an "ab initio" pilot has made phenomenal progress, reaching the thermal-soaring stage after only four hops and two glides.

**January 26th.**—Soars for 45 minutes, reaches colossal heights, circles continuously, swoops down to converse and instruct ground crew, gains height again and continues to "pole-squat" until trailer reaches beach. At dusk, side-slips down to a beautiful and feather-like landing on the predetermined spot.

I observed the flight myself and was more than amazed at the dexterity displayed. I can only attribute such remarkable achievements to a good site, a good machine, and last, but by no means least, to a most remarkable man. "Frank Charles" is a name well known to the patrons of Wembley Speedway, where he has won every honour possible. His judgment of speed is undoubtedly unique and precise.

I understand that, week-end after week-end last summer, he spent many hours on Dunstable Downs watching members of the London Club doing their stuff. He was particularly appreciative of that master G. E. Collins, and from that time his one desire has been to emulate those feats of airmanship.

Furness members who have been pottering about for five years are naturally blushing with shame. But why should they? The moral is: a licensed car and trailer, a good machine, a keen study of the technicalities of the sport and, lastly, the cash to carry out these dreams and schemes.

W. B.