

Soaring Readers Write

6 ama'alot St.
Jerusalem, Israel

"I have often wondered at the great discrepancy between full-size soaring and model glider flying in the United States. Whereas you are definitely on a high level in the full-size field, holding, if I'm not mistaken, 6 out of the 14 World Class-Records recognized by the FAI, this is not the case with model gliders, a point I had the possibility to observe personally at two of the last World Championships for model gliders (1953 in Yugoslavia and 1954 in Denmark). After reading the article "Towing Techniques" by Henry R. Jex in "Technical Aeromodeling" (SOARING, July-August 1955) I began to understand. It seems that in some respects you are still thinking in quite obsolete terms.

"Contrary to Mr. Jex's belief, a modern rational auto-rudder (including even the writer's retractable towhook-cum-autorudder described in AEROMODELLER for March 1954) is 100 per cent reliable. He seems to have in mind the systems of 4 or 5 years ago!

Now take the twin towhooks as an example. This system is quite old (I have before me R. H. Warring's article on 'Aeolus MK III' in the March 1943 issue of AEROMODELLER, but seem to remember the arrangement in a German publication still farther back), but it has long ago been shown to be inferior to the single hook slightly in front of the overall center of pressure. In support of his remarks on the subject Mr. Jex quotes sources of 1946 and '47, which have mostly been superseded long ago. After all, model glider techniques have changed quite a lot during the last few years (the main reason being, I believe, the introduction of a World Championship class—the Nordic—for the type). Now by dedicating all this space to the twin hook system many modellers in the U.S. will be led to believe it to be the most efficient or modern system and to try to use it—instead of being taught a real modern and efficient method.

But what made my hair stand on end were the instructions for launching the CG-hook glider. Good luck with your 'creaking model'! I doubt whether Mr. Jex has ever seen a European modeller launching his glider on a 53-meter launch (50 m of line, 2-1/2 m of modeller and outstretched arm, and 1/2 m of jump!) Reading his launching instructions I do not think he has.

Lastly, I'd like to add that my connection with American soaring began by starting full-size gliding on a TG-4—surely not the ideal primary training medium! But just this gave me some valuable knowledge for my modelling.

By the way, foci, the plural of focus, is spelled with a single i."

N. Kadmon

Mr. Jex replies:

"It is gratifying to be able to answer the honest criticism of Mr. Kadmon, whose efforts in the International model competitions are known to overseas Nordic glider enthusiasts. Unfortunately an accidental mixup of manuscripts resulted in

an unedited copy being sent to press. Consequently several typographical errors slipped through, for which I apologize.

"I must admit after reflection, correspondence, and flying sessions with immigrant European aeromodellers, that the average American glider enthusiast is less polished than the average European in his towing techniques. This also applies to the full-scale realm in some respects, and my article was calculated also to interest sailplane pilots as well as aeromodellers in a potentially high efficiency launching system.

"The twin-hook Y-bridle, with the 'rolling bobbin,' is fundamentally a superior launch technique from the performance standpoint. That it is not used commonly has been due to two main reasons: the principles have not been understood or propagated, and aeromodellers have been afraid to employ the 'creaking-wing' launch necessary for good results. I have seen and jumped many 53 meter launches, but none compare to the rocket like climb and Immelmann snap-off to 60 meters which can be achieved with twin-hooks. Perhaps Naftali has never seen one of these!

"If all auto-rudder installations were made as carefully as Mr. Kadmon's, I would agree with him on their reliability. However, the average aeromodeller continues to substitute rubber bands for metal springs, string (or worse, heat sensitive nylon) for wire, and so on. Under these circumstances a large fraction of auto-rudders do jam or fail, even in International competition. I will agree though that a properly constructed autorudder is simpler for most aeromodellers to use effectively than twin towhooks on the wings.

"Incidentally, the Y-bridle has been used for years on kites for structural reasons, and the 'rolling-bobbin' principle was employed on World War I (1918) barrage balloons.

"Someday a brave pioneer will open a new era in full-scale towing techniques by demonstrating the safe and startling efficient 10 g winch tow made possible with twin wing hooks and a rolling bobbin."

Henry R. Jex

El Mirage Field Adelanto, California

"We read with interest in the recent 'Soaring News Briefs' that the Elsinore Airport, California, would be the only commercial glider operation of its kind in the country. We wish to bring to your attention that El Mirage Field, California, has been operated as a commercial glider school and field since 1939 except for the war years. I believe that this is the only field that you can get aero tows six days a week and all year round.

"Aside from its commercial aspects El Mirage Field is the homesite of the Southern California Soaring Association and is famous for the many National and International records which have been set from this location.

"On reading the article on the SCSA

1955 Regatta it is interesting to note that of the 8000 odd miles soared during the contest, better than 7000 miles were made from El Mirage Field, not to mention the several National and International records which were broken during this Regatta.

"While El Mirage Field has not been successful in securing the Nationals, it still offers the finest in soaring. Hundreds of people have been introduced to motorless flight at this commercial field and it has been strictly through the efforts of my wife, two sons, and myself, and a few staunch supporters that we have been able to build this field up from a deserted Army Air Field to a financially successful commercial glider operation. While many GI sponsored glider schools and other schools went out of existence, El Mirage has weathered the storm and is today America's oldest full time glider school.

"You might be interested to know how we did it. It took plenty of guts, (intestinal fortitude to those who don't like the word) the will to do without many of the so-called necessities of life . . . but the biggest support came from Anne, my wife, who acted as chief cook, secretary, painter, gardener, and general all around 'fill the biller.' Ross my 16 year old son who spent hours washing, pushing, and working on various gliders, etc. and who today is experiencing the hard work of flight instructing without pay (because of age) and who has 200 hours of glider time, most of it with a passenger, and last but not least, Kenneth our 13 year old son who builds gliders both model and man size, runs tow lines, wing tips, handles the gas pump for transient aircraft and our own, and as remuneration warms up the tow planes and gets an occasional flight in the glider which he could solo if he was old enough.

"Such is the background and backbone of this commercial glider operation."

Wm. G. Briegleb

"P.S. Just another note and that is if it weren't for Gus's terrific driving power, constant work seven days a week and his determination to make El Mirage a better equipped facility for our hundreds of soaring friends throughout the U.S. and many foreign countries, we would not be as far ahead as we are today. It has taken the harmonious cooperation of the four of us and not just the three as he has mentioned above."

Anne Briegleb

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Jon Carsey, who unearths most of the News Briefs, writes, "Although it is unfortunate that a comment comes from a reader of this page as a result of an error, it is gratifying to learn in some ways that we have a reader. Our reader is thoroughly justified in his complaint and I beg forgiveness by Gus and Anne Briegleb for forgetting momentarily that El Mirage is a commercial 'Gliderport' and has been for a number of years as a result of their long untiring and unselfish effort to provide gliding and soaring people of Southern California with a home and field of their own. My humble apologies, Gus and Anne, and thanks for confirming my suspicion that this page was being read by someone.")

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