

trial of conditions at Gananoque airport, situated about 25 miles away from the lake and five miles north of Gananoque, the Gateway to the Thousand Islands. Conditions have been excellent with most Sundays providing good soaring. So far two flights have been made to 6,200 feet and several have made it just over 5,000 feet with durations up to one hour, usually cut short to "Let someone else have a go at it."

For conditions as strong as these we are all quite happy to travel the extra distance to the new field and plan to stay there indefinitely. Power traffic is

very light and in winter one runway is cleared by snow blowers so we will be able to fly throughout most of the year.

Now that we have a good soaring site, consideration is being given to rebuilding our second LK (in need of a left wing) and some members are casting about for private sailplanes. We are hoping that with more experience we will soon be able to join in events with other clubs. In the meantime we will be looking forward to visits from glider pilots interested in sampling conditions at our new site.

DAVE PANTON

Letters

Performance Measurement Pitfalls

Dear Alex Dawydoff:

At the risk of annoying everyone, I would like to write about the subject of polars, inspired (if that is the word) by George Moffat's article in your July issue.

Unfortunately, I missed meeting George at Lasham, but everyone told me what a terrific fellow he was. From his article I am beginning to picture him.

(a) He is jolly clever. In his comments on the HP-10 he writes crisply: "I recorded a best L/D of 34 to 1 at 60 mph . . .". Now, measuring a best L/D of 34 at 60 mph is only a bit less tricky than measuring the Holy Ghost. George does it in a sentence. Will he tell us how?

(b) He is a kindly man. "According to published figures the Austria should have had a sink of 1.15 m/sec. at 80 mph giving an L/D of 31, while the Foka ought to have had 1.65 m/sec. giving 22. The actual difference must have been very slight as we only changed relative altitude by 15 feet or so in several miles. The Polish figure seems very conservative." A less nice chap might draw the opposite conclusion, and I must tell you that last year a very high-up member of OSTIV who had been doing a lot of performance testing told me that the only polars which, as a class, he had found to bear much resemblance to the facts were the Polish ones.

(c) He is a bit of a jumper at conclusions. During a long hill-soar he found the Ka-6 and Skylark 4 held the same height at the 4's "best L/D". A bit later he divulges he is six-feet two inches high, so presumably he weighs at least 180 pounds. How heavy was the Ka-6 pilot? Because he is talking here of sinking speeds, not L/D's, and these are adversely affected by the amount of meat on board! And has he noticed how on hill-lift you get every machine on the slope, irrespective of performance, holding the same height. Suddenly, one, possibly the least efficient, finds a local upcurrent that gives him an extra 200 feet; which he then proceeds to hold over the others for the next hour or so. Don't ask me why. But one can't get useful performance figures when flying in unstable air.

I do suggest that George Moffat should reach up and seize a lot of the polars floating above his head and wrench them down up to 20% or so.

The only reliable polars I know of (there must be more) are the series of

12 produced as supplements to the December '63 and January '64 issues of the *Deutscher Aerokurier*, and the four we are publishing in the October issue of *Sailplane and Gliding*: these are probably accurate within $\pm 3\%$, but only for the actual gliders tested. No one knows how different are the performances of apparently identical gliders of the same type.

Please, Alex, believe me when I say I am not trying to write up or denigrate any particular types of gliders, and I do hope I am not maddening George Moffat. I just want to get some sense into this nonsensical belief in a Polar as a thin reliable line on a graph that is as accurate and meaningful as a yard tape-measure.

PHILIP WILLS, London, England

Lead Sleds and Hollow Logs

Dear Alex Dawydoff:

In writing of the Skylark 4 in July, our newest pundit "cannot help being disappointed with its performance." Now in October, faced with the undeniable fact that this rotten machine has won both Canadian and U. S. Nationals two years running, he goes off muttering about "inconsistent weather" (like most days), superb piloting (unarguable), and "rules . . . (that) still encourage the 1930's types," and he concludes with a glancing allusion to the Weihe. That the Skylark 4 might simply be a top-notch competition glider he evidently considers a possibility too absurd and laughable to contemplate.

It is easy to imagine one source of our friend's discomfiture. Here we have all the wealth, skill and aluminum of Texas and its suburbs from Atlantic to Pacific pitted against one cherubic old gentleman who, sitting up in the drafty crags of Yorkshire, carves gliders out of hollow logs and surrounds himself with heaps of trophies.

Without meaning to detract one whit from George Moffat's indisputable accomplishments both as author and pilot, I submit that he has overlooked the fact that world record flights and competition flying are two very different breeds of cat. Record attempts are made on days when the weather promises to be uniformly superb; on such days the "lead sleds" come into their own, and the leader the better. Competitions are held in spite of the weather, and the ability to "waft slowly up from a hangar-top low point" is a demonstrably useful attribute for a glider to have. It's my opinion that any rule changes tending to erase this natural distinction would cause most contests to die on the vine—there just aren't that many marvelous days in the year. Also, from a purely selfish standpoint, while I don't mind the boys with the cast-iron gliders trotting off with all the world records, I do think it's a bit unreasonable of them to want to win all the contests too.

It's been great fun reading the bomber pilots' view of things. But would it be appropriate for *Soaring* to solicit now a brief clutch of articles from, let's say, Dick Johnson, Dave Webb and perhaps even Slingsby himself on sailplanes for competition?

STEVE WOLFF
1513 Locust Ave.,
Baltimore 4, Md.

If one of the above mentioned gentlemen will consent to write for us a pilot report on the Skylark 4 we will be more than glad to publish it. Ed.

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