

Ten minutes later the retrieve crew arrived. The glider was de-rigged and loaded into its trailer. Unfortunately, due to a typhoon which was in progress and the general inky blackness, a large hole appeared in the fuselage during this operation. Then the long vigil began. Luckily this was a period of complete rest, since the absence of food and drink meant there was no tiresome business of preparing and eating it. Also, all available cash having been spent, it was not necessary to send anyone off to buy any.

*Meanwhile, back at the guest house . . .*

After a pleasant breakfast our pilot decided that the thing to do was obviously to ring the club and put them in the picture. Again, alas, no reply, but our pilot's name, together with the address of the guest house, was noted by the operator. The pilot did not give the telephone number of the guest house (he remembered after the call), but this did not really matter since it was merely necessary to look it up in the directory. Unfortunately, in the directory it was only listed under the proprietor's name, which no one knew . . .



*Meanwhile, back at the airfield . . .*

The morning being well advanced, members began to assemble in the clubroom. The phone rang and the by-now wearied instructor and his retrieve crew, having begged the use of a telephone, enquired politely if intelligence had been received from their friend the pilot, since they had now been sitting for eleven hours in adverse weather conditions waiting for him to appear. Unfortunately, no one present could offer any information but they took down the telephone number, promising to ring back if anything was heard. However, the telephone operator, having listened to the call, must have had a ponder, and an hour later rang the club to ask if the name and address of the guest house which he had on his pad could help resolve matters . . .

In a flash all was clear. A quick telephone call from the airfield to the number our instructor had left and . . . No reply.

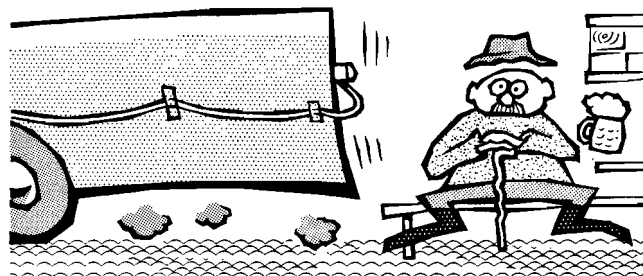
*Meanwhile, back at the glider . . .*

Our instructor and his crew, their vigil entering its twelfth hour, and the prospect of night driving once again appearing on the horizon, decided that the pilot had clearly made his own way back the previous day, and, thinking how like old DB it was to play such a good practical joke on them, set off on the homeward trek with two gallons of petrol and no money.

*Meanwhile, back at the guest house . . .*

At that very moment our pilot was trying to overcome his first doubts. After all, he had chosen a

guest house on the main road, and had been watching for the trailer to pass on its way to the glider. Surely, under these circumstances, it as unnecessary to go back to the glider? Anyway it looked as if it might rain. However, he decided, first things first. So he explained to the hovering landlord that he had quite forgotten to mention the previous night that he had left his wallet behind, but that the moment that the car and trailer appeared on their way to the glider he would stop them, extract his wallet from the car and settle up.



"Oh," said the landlord, "Would that be them?" pointing at the car and trailer which at that very moment were passing the house, although, unfortunately, in the opposite direction to that in which our pilot was looking.

The latter rushed out and pursued them on foot. This, whilst well intentioned, turned out to be in vain, since the retrieve crew, by now deranged by lack of food, were heading back at no mean speed.

Our pilot now returned to the landlord and, leaving his watch as collateral, started out on foot. Three hours later and two miles further on, as his faith in hitch-hiking was deserting him, he got a lift which was heading towards his home. He decided to cut his losses, go home, and collect his car the following week. Meanwhile our famished band of retrievers, by dint of travelling at such high speed, soon ran out of petrol and, being penniless, begged a few gallons from the nearest garage, leaving all manner of personal belongings as security.

Finally, thirty hours after they had set out, they returned to the airfield. Unfortunately, by this time everyone had left, and, destitute and starving, they faced the problem of getting home . . .

All of which goes to show that, even if you head off on a cross-country with little or no thought for the retrieve, everything works out all right in the end. Of course, it isn't a thing you can do too often, since you do tend to lose friends with astonishing rapidity in the process.

