



# NATIONAL GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS . . .

League 2			
1. Martlew (Petrel) ... ..	...	...	2 hr 46 min.
2. Palfreeman (Sky) ... ..	...	...	2 hr 46½ min.
3. Mann (Gull 4) ... ..	...	...	2 hr 47¼ min.

On total points, the leaders were:—

League 1		League 2	
	pts.		pts.
1. Wills ... ..	186	1. Mann ... ..	186
2. Nicholas Goodhart ... ..	162	2. Jefferson, Baynes and Blake ... ..	169
3. Deane-Drummond ... ..	159	3. Garrod and Bentson ... ..	157
4. Tony Goodhart ... ..	157	4. Mackenzie ... ..	149
5. Ince ... ..	149	5. Torode, Burton and Martlew ... ..	132

Wednesday, July 31, was an exceptional day. This much was obvious from "Wally" Wallington's met. chart displayed at morning briefing—though whether it would be exceptionally good or exceptionally bad was not immediately clear. The map was covered with an extremely complicated miscellany of detail, and matters were hardly clarified as the met. man began, "It's really very funny when you look at it closely. . . ."



Lasham had everything—including the kitchen stove, but excluding constant h. and c.

The chart featured yesterday's high-pressure area, now centred over the Wash and followed by a weak warm front. Good thermals were likely in the Lasham area, but thermal strength, wind direction and temperature-inversion height varied from region to region. There would be a pronounced sea-breeze effect along the south coast, and industrial haze from London, Bristol/Cardiff and the Midlands was likely.

The tasks today were markedly different from each other. For League 1, it was a 130-mile triangular race with turning points at White Sheet Hill, between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, and at South Marston, near Swindon. League 2 pilots, however, were to go for free distance—an interesting task in that the best direction to fly was far from obvious, for they could not simply drift downwind.

A blue sky spattered with building cumulus soon proved sufficiently attractive for pilots to put down morning launch-times. Launches began shortly before 11, and from 11 until 12.30 the take-off board was booked solidly. Take-offs were in a south-westerly direction, with hardly any wind.

On returning to the circuit after towing Rutherford's red Skylark 2 to the 2,000ft release height at about 12.30, I noticed Phillip Wills' Skylark 3 on take-off—one of the last to go. Along the winding roads from Lasham thin grey tubes that were glider trailers were moving. Many of their crews were to have long hauls today.

The hot afternoon sun burned down at Lasham as we awaited sight of the League 1 arrivals and news of League 2's distance flights. Just after the Short Nimbus trailer had turned on to the perimeter track, bringing Stuart Morison's machine back for a second attempt, the first sailplane to complete the triangle was seen, head-on, on its final glide. Once again it was Nick Goodhart; once again a precisely judged arrival. The time was about 4 o'clock.

Only a few minutes later, the Olympia 403 crossed the line, banked round and landed not 50 yards from the Skylark 3. Brotherly greetings between the two Goodharts were quickly followed by inquiries as to starting-times. The brand-new 403 was doing well, and its bearded pilot was making up for his lack of flying time on it prior to the championships.

The Weihe of John Williamson and the Skylark 3 of Tony Deane-Drummond were next to arrive, followed by a close finish between four sailplanes which dived off height and bored in in almost King's Cup fashion. Times over the course had varied

between about four and five hours. Most pilots spoke of a difficult first leg, adequate but elusive thermals, and a dead patch over South Marston. There had been negligible wind.

Some struggled for seven hours over the triangle, Derek Piggott coaxing the prototype Eagle home after having been down to a few hundred feet on occasion; Charles Ellis (Olympia) scraping his skid over the finishing line—no wasted effort there; and John Furlong in his Skylark 3 landing a few miles short at Odiham.

Meanwhile, what of the League 2 pilots? They had been going places, in all directions, as a glance at the control-tent map that evening showed. The pins were scattered in apparent random fashion all over the country, and the best distances were comparable to the 130 miles of the League 1 triangle. Edward Day (Olympia) had landed at 4.40 in an unpronounceable village near Swansea: the Petrel, flown by Burton, was also in Wales, high on the Brecon mountains. Up to the north-west, F/L. Mann had taken the Moonrakers' Gull 4 to Winthorpe Airfield, Newark-on-Trent (133 miles and, by a small margin, the day's best distance); and Mackenzie (Olympia) was at R.A.F. Shawbury, near Shrewsbury. The R.A.F. Kranich had put down at the Long Mynd, site of the Midland Gliding Club; and other landings had been made at Cranwell, Church Stretton, Loughborough, Rearsby and Kennerleigh, Devon.

The Sky flown by H. A. Pitt-Roche broke both wings after ground-looping on rough ground nine miles north of Worcester, but the pilot was unhurt. One of the A.T.C. T.21Bs, flown by J. C. Allan, made a modest 80-mile flight south to Littlehampton—after all, it was a perfect day for a trip to the sea.

It had been a satisfying day, with a total cross-country distance of over 6,500 miles. No single-seat record had been set up by League 1 for the 200 km triangle, but a new one for two-seaters had been established by Derek Piggott in the Surrey Club's Eagle with a time of 5 hr 50½ min. No fewer than 18 pilots had completed the triangle—a reminder of the high performance standards of present-day gliding.

The day's best times around the triangle had been made by Deane-Drummond (3 hr 54½ min.), Nick Goodhart, Tony Goodhart, Wills and Ince, in that order. These five pilots were now extremely close on total points, which stood as follows after the third contest day:—

League 1		League 2	
	pts.		pts.
1. Wills ... ..	281	1. Mann ... ..	286
2. Nicholas Goodhart ... ..	261	2. Mackenzie ... ..	248
3. Deane-Drummond ... ..	259	3. Day ... ..	225
4. Tony Goodhart ... ..	254	4. Benson, Green and Knotts ... ..	220
5. Ince ... ..	240	5. Torode, Burton and Martlew ... ..	208

The organizers had now had experience of three full contest days, and most of the snags and doubts had been sorted out. On two days take-offs had been along the main west runway and on one day along a south-westerly grass strip. On the one airfield they had accommodated aero-towed launches, winch launches, glider-landing and tug-landing areas, glider-rigging and line-up areas, start lines, finishing lines, a launch-control area and a public enclosure.

The public, positioned close to the line-up and launch point—and periodically entertained by aerobatics and parachuting during quiet periods—were happy enough. The competing pilots, who, justly, had not hesitated to criticize what they thought to be doubtful or dangerous procedures, were now also happy enough. The organizers, harassed as all organizers always are, were content—the plan had been shown to work.

There remained the tug pilots—and it should be emphasized that we, also, were happy enough. We had become accustomed to the differences between individual Tigers, and to the different approaches to the field. And we were still doing our honest best not to wrap our tow-ropes round the boundary fence.

On the fourth contest day, Thursday, August 1, distance along a line through Park Head, near St. Merryn, Cornwall, was set for League 1. League 2 pilots were to fly a triangular race with turning points at Andover and Inkpen. David Ince flew farthest (168 miles) and Tony Goodhart moved into first place on total points. Mackenzie headed League 2 after almost completing the triangle. (To be concluded)

Sailplane and crew relax on the grass.

