

## The CCF Glider

2 Dec 2008

The following is a collection of emails received from David Tooke (68-75), Graham Skinner (55-63), Colin Flood (staff 1970-2007) and Eric Henderson (70-77) who wrote in with stories about the RAF Glider. My thanks everyone for their emails and particularly Graham for his press cuttings and David and Colin for their photographs. *These pictures can be seen under 'News'*.

### From David Tooke (68-75)

After a bit of a search, I managed to find this photo of the CCF glider at Hampton. I am pretty certain that I took the photo in the spring of 1975. As you probably know, it was a Slingsby T.38 Grasshopper TX.1, registration marks XP 487. A search on Google indicates that it was built in 1961, and sold to a private owner in the Netherlands in 1987.

I never saw the glider really get airborne, but it did make a few good "hops", which gave the cadet pilot quite an interesting sensation!

It was pulled by two teams of cadets, on either end of a long rubber bungee rope, used like a catapult. When the rope was stretched far enough, an anchor on the glider was released, and the craft shot forward at quite an impressive rate. Normally it had spoilers bolted to the wings, to prevent the pilot getting his "wings" too soon!

Regards,  
David

### From Graham Skinner (55-63)

Dear Bryan

I had many trips on the CCF glider, a Slingsby Grasshopper, because I was relatively light and the bungee could propel me further than most - that is provided the 'V' of the bungee was pulled evenly; it was possible for the team of cadets to pull less on the side without the indicator and the other team to pull hard on the side with the indicator so that an asymmetrical thrust was imparted to the glider which then had a tendency to yaw strongly and this used to upset Flt Lt Olsen quite a lot!

I have no original pictures of the machine but please find 2 press cuttings from the Richmond and Twickenham Times of the period.

Regards  
Graham

### From Colin Flood (70-07) staff

Bryan

I attach an archive picture of the type of glider used by the CCF. This pictured model is in the RAF Museum & is identical to ours. I operated it and on a training course at RAF Syerston got it up to 60 feet - scary! I did see one winch launched but it flew rather like a brick and didn't have a long flight.

Yours Colin

**From Eric Henderson Jnr (70-77)**

Hi, Bryan - hope all's well. Greetings from Houston. I sadly have no photo of the Glider but if my devout 'Aircraft-Spotter-at-the-time' memory serves me correctly, I believe the CCF Glider was a Slingsby T38 Grasshopper TX1.

I can't find my old log book which would confirm the specific registration number, but I'm guessing it may have been one of the 20 delivered to the Air Training Corps pre-1971 (registration numbers XP454-464 & XP487-495).

However, I can report that after 5 years of informal lunch-time observations (69-'74) that it certainly lived up to its name...as alas, over the few weather-conducive days each year the CCF Cadets would retrieve it from its tin shed, assemble it then drag it back and forth across the back of the school field to get it aloft, I never saw it fly!

Boys being boys, I recall much friendly banter emanating from the student body on their lunch breaks; their words of dubious encouragement directed 'in support of' the Cadets. The CCF team would toil to predictable and consistent no avail - employing a giant version of a rubber band in order to achieve sufficient 'tug-of-war-induced-rotational-speed' to get the glider airborne.

If my memory serves me further correctly, I believe Messrs Ernie Badman, Hesketh & Colin Flood oversaw the efforts over the years I witnessed the entertainment...my guess would be that the recently retired latter gentleman might be a resource for photos?

All the best  
Eric

Bryan Brown  
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## ADDITIONAL ARTICLE FROM JOHN TAYLOR (59-66)

### ASYMMETRICAL THRUST, THE CCF GLIDER AND THE LEH INVASION

Graham Skinner's glider story talked about creating asymmetrical thrust when launching the famous RAF Section Glider. I well remember the following event.

One Friday afternoon – in those days, the cadets always paraded and did their activities right after school on Fridays – a conspiracy was hatched to send the glider, while being piloted by the senior officer, F/Lt. Eric Olsson, over the fence into the Lady Eleanor Holles school grounds. I'm pretty sure that Graham (F/Sgt. Skinner) was present, but I believe the originator of the idea was the senior NCO of the time, Warrant Officer Keith Spurgeon, who was a bit of a lad and rather a thorn in the side of Mr. Olsson, or, as he was better known to his Chemistry students and cadets, "Uncle Bo" - a reference to his not infrequent allusions to his Swedish ancestry. Mr. Olsson was one of the few pilots who routinely got the glider airborne for a reasonable flight, often high enough to just clear the fence into Forbidden Territory, had the glider ever taken that direction. All that was needed was about a 30-degree course change - and that's where the asymmetrical pulling came in. Just like invading Iraq, it seemed like a great idea at the time and, after all, gliders had been used in the D-Day invasion, hadn't they? I doubt if anyone considered that there could possibly be dangerous consequences.

The word went round : one team was ordered to pull like hell, while the other team merely went through the motions, doing little more than tauten their side of the bungee. On release, the glider swerved sharply and duly headed for the fence at a considerable rate of knots, while we cadets did our best to look innocently surprised and not split our sides laughing. F/Lt. Olsson also looked surprised, to say the least. However, as any Applied Maths student will have figured out by now, the overall thrust was, naturally, rather less than a normal pull would have supplied, and certainly not enough to lift the glider over a 2-metre fence. For a few moments, it really looked like the glider, its pilot and the fence were about to have a more-than-close encounter of the unfortunate kind. To give him his due, Mr. Olsson kept his head and, after some quick and quite fancy work with the stick and rudder pedals, the glider skidded to a halt no more than a couple of metres from the fence. We all held our breaths. Surely, even the usually genial "Uncle Bo" would suspect a plot. Eternal detention and imposition writing loomed large in our fearful minds.

Looking a bit white and somewhat less self-assured than usual, our senior officer stepped away from the glider – a little shakily, I thought. There was a pause, a quite long and very silent pause. Then : "well, that was a bit close, wasn't it? Be more careful to pull evenly next time, lads. Now – who's up next?". And the great LEH invasion had failed.

Regards

John Taylor (1959 – 66)