

# Auxiliary-powered Sailplane Association

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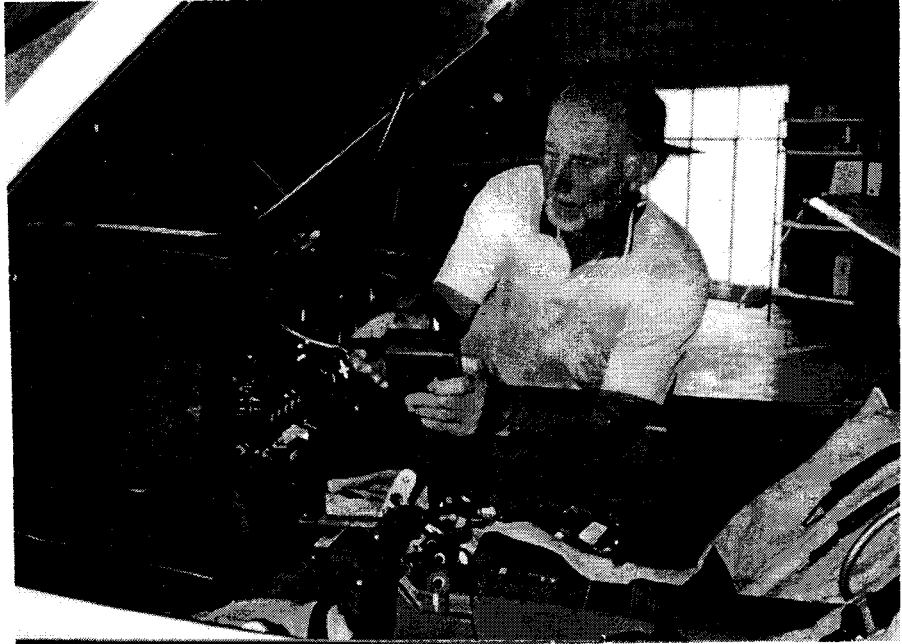
## A note from the editor

The following interview with Tug Wilson provides an insight to the enjoyment of flying self-launchers. In particular, I suggest we all listen carefully to his comments on safe flying.

### Soaring the Stemme S10 in Spain

An interview of Tug Wilson by Marc Arnold.

In June 1994, Marc Arnold and Tug Wilson soared for five days in Alicante, Spain in the Stemme S-10 Chrysalis. The following interview was conducted for the benefit of those having an interest in cross country soaring.



Tug Wilson and S10

Marc:

Before we get into the details of cross country soaring in a motorglider, perhaps we could begin, Tug, by your telling me something about your background in aviation, and soaring in particular.

Tug:

Welcome to Spain, Marc. I must say that I have thoroughly enjoyed the five days we've had together. I have to start by putting you right on terminology in that in my book, the Stemme S10 is such a superb machine. It should never ever be called, what I regard as a derogatory term in the soaring movement, a "motorglider". "Motorglider" to me refers to an aircraft like the Diamona and the Grob, fixed propeller on the front and a fixed undercarriage. Machines like the original PIK-20, the DG400, the Stemme and all of the other that are coming along are foremost sailplanes, so they are part of the world's sailplane movement, and should not be referred to as "motorgliders".

Having said that, my background in flying first of all has been 20 years in the Royal Air Force in England. During that time I was Chief flying instructor with

three soaring clubs in the UK, and flew 15 British National and United Kingdom two seat records in the hot ship of those times, the Blanik. After 20 years in The Air Force, they began to confine me to a desk as a desk test pilot, and that did not thrill me too much, so I left the Air Force to join Cathay Pacific in Hong Kong. I had 18 wonderful years there and during that time, was able to continue soaring in Hong Kong in a PIK-20 which became available through the fine officers of Erie Avion in Finland. I flew the PIK-20 over the period of about 7 years in Hong Kong for over 2,000 hours and went on a number of Cathay sponsored flights for the company which was a wonderful opportunity.

I did the first ever soaring flight the whole length of Japan, from Kagashima to Shaporo. This was so well received by the company public relations people that they asked me to go to Australia. So I went down there at high speed and soared from Sidney to Perth and when I got there I had such a good offer for the aircraft, I sold it in Australia and used the money straight away to buy the next generation, which was the DG400. I flew that over the next 5 years or so, quite a lot in California. While there, I did a soaring flight from the Mexican border in San Diego up the

Sierra Nevada and Cascades up to Vancouver and then back to San Diego again.

I retired from Cathay Pacific two and a half years ago, bought the Stemme S10 and now have to say that I am going through the happiest phase of my life, because the S10 combined with this situation here in Spain is an utopian existence for me.

Marc:

In addition to your time in the PIK-20 and DG400 have you had the occasion to fly other self launched or pure sailplanes and how many hours have you amassed?

Tug:

Yes I have flown at various times just about every sailplane or every other sailplane that has been available to the general market. Among the hot ships, the only one I have not flown currently is the Nimbus 4. Competition flying I did in the UK, I flew the world championships in Benalla Australia in a Ventus, so I have had a reasonable cross section of flight in a wide variety of sailplanes.

Marc:

I would imagine in the course of these different types of airplanes you have, all told, amassed quite a few hours.

Tug:

Yes, I've logged 17,000 hours total time. My total soaring time is 6,400 hours.

Marc:

And you've been flying the S10 for about two and a half years, is that correct?

Tug:

Yes, I've had the S10 here in Spain for exactly 2 1/2 years. In that period I have amassed a grand total of 38 engine running time and 1,080 hours soaring time.

Marc:

And I'm happy to say that the last 22 were time that I had a chance to soar along side of you. What is the arrangement here and how do you describe this opportunity for people to take a soaring holiday?

Tug:

Really, what I have set up here is an utopian existence, because I decided quite early what I wanted for myself in retirement was a side-by-side high performance self launching sailplane. The only aircraft that fits that bill, at this time, is the Stemme S10. There are others which are high performance tandem, with pop-up engines, which I don't care for too much.

I flew many thousands of hours in the PIK-20 and the

DG400, but for me the superb arrangement with the S10 is absolutely idyllic, and considering the S10 is a totally new concept, it has performed for me here, absolutely wonderfully. What I decided was that in retirement, I wanted to carry on soaring. Like all soaring pilots, I've had countless hours of absolute exhilaration in sailplanes, and I thought how nice it would be in retirement to be able to share these experiences with other people. We have all heard soaring pilots screaming of the radio and for a solo pilot that is their only release - howling into the radio what wonderful things are happening to them. But now, with the new generation of high performance dual aircraft, it is possible to go and share these experiences together. And for me to share it in the side-by-side configuration is absolutely superb.

Marc:

What kind of soaring conditions exist here in Spain and when do they occur through out the year?

Tug:

Conditions are excellent. There is every aspect of soaring in the local area. Excellent thermals; excellent wave; hundreds of miles of ridge; and the best sea breeze front conditions I have ever seen in my life. The weather here is soarable all throughout the year. I discourage people from coming here in July and August because it is very hot and the Lavante Marina sea breeze comes in from the Mediterranean. This precludes soaring until you are about 100 miles inland, so during those two months I siesta in the mornings and play golf in the afternoon. For the rest of the year, the best seasons are the Spring and Autumn, but even during the Winter, there are good thermal conditions, and excellent wave, so it is really an all year around site.

Marc:

You make it sound as though you only play golf in the off season, and from what I've seen your handicap does not suffer too much during the rest of the year. What is the normal soaring schedule when people come here to soar with you?

Tug:

Normally, it's 18 holes of golf in the morning and take off at about 2:00 in the afternoon. During the winter month of December and January we will be landing after 3 to 3 1/2 hours -- at 5 or 5:30. During the summer months it is possible to be soaring up until 10:00 at night, so there is no shortage of flying time for people that come here to fly.

Marc:

Starting that late in the afternoon, how long does it take you to rig the airplane, prepare it for flight and then at the end of the day to pack it up and put it away?

Tug:

Well as you will have seen for yourself, this is one of the things that astonishes people from the soaring world, because my villa here is about 50 yards from the hanger. And when we go to the hanger and open the doors, we are airborne within 10 minutes of arriving at the hanger. At the end of the day having flown anything up to a thousand kilometers, you are walking away from the hanger within 10 minutes of landing, with the exception of if it's been a very good day there is another 10 minutes of debugging the wings.

Marc:

How much experience does a pilot have to enjoy their time here soaring with you?

Tug:

It really doesn't matter here Marc, because no licenses are required, no medicals, no formalities, no club joining fee or any of that. I always do the takeoff and landing. The moment we are airborne with the undercarriage up, whoever is with me does all of the flying. I just talk them through and demonstrate as necessary or as requested. The experience level truly doesn't matter, because the S10 is such a wonderfully docile aircraft to fly. No nasty wing drops or anything like that, so it is well suited to anyone who comes along, from those just wanting joy ride to competition pilots. And of course, it is an absolutely unique opportunity, because the problem with soaring in general is one of instructional cross country flying.

Learning cross country flying in almost every country in the world is almost a do it yourself exercise. And it takes a long time, because you learn from your mistakes. To be able to come here and have the opportunity to do cross country flying every day is not the sort of opportunity that exists in most other places. The instruction is tailored to the experience of the person. Everyone has plenty to learn, whether they just started cross country flying, or whether they are serious competition pilots.

Marc:

What are the accommodations for your guests that come here?

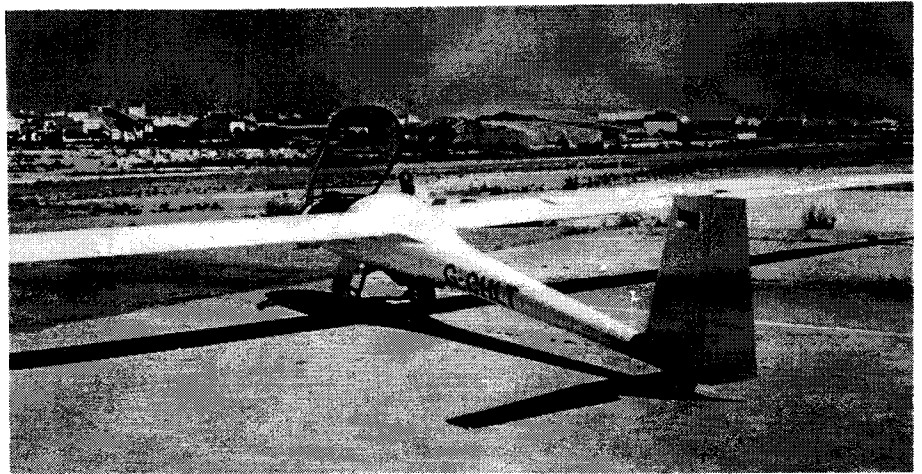
Tug:

We have an apartment 5 minutes walking time from the airstrip. It's a two bedroom apartment with bathroom and sitting room, and satellite television

which covers just about every language. Associated with the apartment block is a very large swimming pool with a child paddling pool beside it. All set very nicely in gardens. People come out here on holidays, normally from the UK and stay in that apartment. It seems to work best for people who come out as a foursome. That way, when one of the pilots is flying, three go out and sightsee locally as opposed to leaving only one person behind. Although it works well both ways when there are just two, the non flying partner usually just enjoys the pool in the afternoon.

Marc:

Can you tell us about some of your more interesting flights in the S10 - Any particularly long ones or travel throughout Europe with the S10 and in general what kinds of experiences have you had with your S10?



Tug's S10 at Alicante, Spain

Tug:

I say its two and a half years soaring time and just over 1000 hours. During that time I soared to the factory in Berlin, and back here to Spain. I soared both ways, taking three days one way and four the other. Kay and I also had a week in the Swiss Alps, flying out of Fianous. We also soared there and back. The rest of the time we have been here at Quesada, because the flying conditions are so good, and we enjoy the situation here so much. It's a bit hard to go and find anywhere else that we are going to be as happy.

Mostly, I fly with people who come on soaring holidays. A normal week's holiday would include 15 to 30 hours soaring time. We don't stay in the circuit at all, so all the flying is cross country soaring time. Since we average a speed of about 80 km/hr and I've flown a thousand hours, that's one hell of a lot of kilometers. It works out to about 30,000 km/year







