

Totally green, I sallied forth and was waved off at about 1400'. The air to the South was crystal clear and to the north was just black. The lift was certainly smooth and once I sorted myself out, I was climbing almost off the clock and going up like a rocket. My first time in real lift and it was totally unlike anything I had experienced before. I was so enjoying the experience that I failed to note where I was but was giving a great yell of delight every time we went through another 1000'. I was then getting a bit worried as I was over 8000' and still going up and not at all sure where I was.

Then I saw that the cloud line had cut off my sight of the airfield and for the first time ever, I had a view of Gallows Hill (now Eyres Field), the Dorset coast and the green roof of Winfrith which was below me.

I didn't have a map, but knew the area well enough to recognize where I was and know that I had no right to be there. I had no thoughts of landing in the clear air but was more concerned that I was outside my designated area with my lowly 'A,B&C' badges so pointed the nose in the right direction and headed back towards Tarrant Rushton. Within seconds, I was engulfed by the cloud and with only a turn and slip to help me, concentrated on keeping the bubble in the middle and the compass pointing in the right direction.

It was incredibly quiet inside the cloud and just a purple swirling mass. We were still going up and almost at 10,000' when common sense eventually took over and I opened the airbrakes and eased the nose down. By some remarkable chance, there was a sudden brief break in the cloud and straight ahead was a distant Badbury Rings. I held the same speed and course until I could see vague shapes appearing below me then snapped the brakes shut. I crossed the Wimborne – Blandford Road at about 200' in what was now a heavy snowstorm. At least I knew which way the wind was blowing, turned into it and opened the brakes to my first ever field landing in deep plough.

I counted my fingers and toes and realized I was all there physically and heaved a very big sigh of relief.

After the inevitable half mile retrieve and recriminations, I had to clean the mud from the wheel box and wash the glider and put in an extra supply of drink behind the bar as it was going to be a very expensive evening for me.

I learned later that what I had encountered was a very vigorous Line Squall and I never saw it's like again when flying.

First time in a line squall, first time outside normal glide-range of the airfield, first time in cloud and first time relying on instruments, my first field landing and my first bollocking from the CFI who said he had been rehearsing what he was going to say to my widow.

Needless to say, we didn't have a barograph, so, I was unable to make a height claim. I learned a very great deal from that flight but, believe me, doing it the wrong way is not the way to learn. I was extremely lucky to get away with it unscathed. I could have ended up without oxygen and

still going up to oblivion or even in the sea, halfway to France.

Please never do what I did, unless you are very experienced and know what the consequences might be, but then, of course, sensible people like you wouldn't even think of doing so.

Did I say SENSIBLE. You are glider pilots and fly without engines. Crazy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dennis Neal