



Skywriter

Monthly Newsletter of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club

May 1992

View From Above

by Paul Hemingson



For the April 1/92 CUFC meeting I showed some slides I took on a recent mountain flight. The scenery alone was worth it. But, the reason I took the flight was to get some first-hand experience to share with members of the Club. The lessons learned are the subject of this month's Safety Corner article.

We also watched a couple of videos that Don Rodgers brought. One of the videos was of a flight Don took through the Bow River Valley south of Calgary. Don mounted his videocamera to his Lazair, and the quality was very good, as was the scenery. We also watched a skydiving video that Don supplied. Some day soon I am going to get a video camera and mount it on my machine.

We made a decision to cancel the July and August formal meeting in lieu of some informal fly-ins. During these months many of us are on holidays and attendance is limited. The Newsletter will still be published and mailed out, however. So, we are going to organize some fly-in type informal meetings instead. Stu Simpson, Bob Kirkby and myself are going to organize separate events at different strips throughout the summer.

One of the things I would like to set up is a fly in at my strip, or the Priddis strip for the Canada 125 Program. This federal government program recognizes local community events, and I think this idea fits with the Canadian identity of freedom, opportunity and creativity. We have the most progressive UL regulations on the globe and I am proud of it. I will check with some of the owners of

larger strips in this area and consider registering the event so that volunteers will be recognized. I love this country and will proudly fly the Maple Leaf. More on this in the June Newsletter.

Its coming up to our spring-summer flying season and already I note a lot of geese and other birds around but not as many as last year. With our mild winter I believe a lot of them never migrated south, just stayed in the local area. The Hawks are out too, and you're likely to find one soaring in the thermals around you. With daylight saving time now in effect their is now enough light for evening flights, if you can get away from work, and if you have any energy left its a great time to fly.

I received a phone call from Dave Loveman on April 16/92. Dave had received a copy of the April Newsletter. Loveman is the new President of UPAC, replacing Don Marvin, and also owns and operates Buzzman Enterprises of Holland Landing, Ontario. Dave phoned to discuss some of his concerns about the proposed regulations and solicit support from the CUFC. As I see it, although our Club has good rapport with Transport Canada, it is UPAC that is the official voice of UL pilots in Canada. Further, where we can support Dave for refinements to the proposed regulations I am willing to put in the effort.

Dave had a lot of issues on his mind, and is well versed in the history of the proposal to date and some of the implications. He promised to send me a summary of his concerns. I promised

to review his ideas, firstly with the Club executive and then share our thoughts with you. From there, I will draft our reply to Loveman/UPAC and Transport Canada. The intent of the letter will be to provide support where we can. I anticipate a little research will have to be done to address many of the concerns that Loveman raised. Most of these concerns involve the TP10141 dealing with airworthiness and design. Which manufacturers will comply with TP10141? What will be the cost of UL machines? Which machines are truly TP'd? What to do when the manufacturer no longer exists? Is there a place for 2 place non-AULA machines in the future? Other issues are the reliance on manufacturers who may no longer exist, and also the plight of those who own aircraft whose registrations have been pulled by TC. I hope we can reach some consensus internally that everyone can live with.

Classified

Ivo Prop - updated 3-blade, ground adjustable, 60", composite blades. New - \$300. OBO. Paul Hemingson 931-2363.

Rotax 503 - single carb, excellent condition. \$1200. OBO. Paul Hemingson 931-2363.

Chinook 2 place - with floats, Rotax 447, needs some work, \$4000.00. Terry Spokes 533-3748.

FireStar - Rotax 377, instruments, enclosed trailer, \$7000.00. Jim Creasser 226-0180.

Beaver RX550 - Rotax 503 dual carb, 60 hrs, ASI, Tach, CHT, ALT, Ballistic chute, \$9000. Barry Oshitwa, W 530-4031, H 236-9392.

Letters

From readers



Dear Av8tors:

Greetings from the West coast. As usual I always look forward to receiving "Skywriter" and your April 1992 issue was no exception to the rule. While I'm on the topic please find enclosed my subscription fee. Thanks Bernie.

A "View From Above", by Paul Hemingson and "One Pilot's Opinion", by Bob Kirkby were very well done. I would, however, like to expand on a couple of points that are very important. So hang on.

First of all it is more than simply upgrading to the new proposed U/L category. Presently only the manufacturer can issue an SOC for each serial number aircraft that conforms to TP10141. You may request the assistance of a professional engineer to validate that "your" aircraft meets the design standards at your expense (big bucks). You may also contact the ORIGINAL manufacturer and request an SOC for your aircraft providing the design at that time conforms to TP10141. Just because a particular model is listed by TC does not mean that all aircraft of that type are eligible for SOC. Here's an example.

I'll use the Beaver RX550 as an example only because I can vouch first hand on company history and I know the aircraft technically. This example in no way reflects the quality or design of the aeroplane or the companies that manufacture it. As you recall the Beaver RX550 was/is manufactured by three different companies: Spectrum Aircraft, Beaver RX Enterprises and now Hurn's Aircraft. The Beaver Enterprises Inc. Beaver RX550 is identified on the TC list as one of the companies who had the "privilege" of issuing SOC's. By the way, Beaver Enterprises no longer exists, it is now Hurn's Aircraft. The Spectrum RX550 or the Hurn's RX55 are not on the list. This means that Beaver Enterprises and Hurn's Aircraft can not issue an SOC to a Spectrum RX550. Still with me?

The 20% amnesty must come from the ORIGINAL manufacturer. It is much more than simply revising your launch weight. Also, it is not 1.2 times the 430 lbs (195 kg) as specified in TP4310, but rather 1.2 times the launch weight you

specified on your application for Certificate of Registration. Do you remember what that was? Concurrence in writing is required for the extra 20% weight and must accompany a new application for a Certificate of Registration.

A local flyer has purchased the remains of a damaged Beaver Enterprises RX550 that has been issued an SOC and has been registered as an AULA with C-Fxxx marks. Being a seasoned U/L pilot (TP4310), he is. He took it home to repair it. The repair included making new wing spars and lifting struts and other needed parts. Under the TP4310 rules this is OK. Under the TP10141 it is unacceptable as he has "modified" the aircraft without written permission from the manufacturer by using parts that have no way of verifying they meet the design standards. If you change anything, add anything or deviate from the manufacturer's assembly instructions, the aircraft has been modified. Written permission is required from the manufacturer. He's bought a very expensive weather vane.

If anyone out there thinks that the manufacturer, if the company is still in business, will give you authority to make your own parts rather than sell them to you at market value, have I got some prime marshland for you.

I maintain that the TP10141 standards are good and still need a little more trimming here and there. The policy 1.6 and the interim policy are a great "foundation" for a program that will be second to none in the world for recreational flying.

A means was needed for owners and kit manufacturers who did not, could not, comply with the AULA program. Remember that after the deadline NO new two-place aeroplanes can be registered as C-lxxx. Personally I am not in agreement this and neither should you. We need options. Under the original proposal all aeroplanes must have been TP10141's. This is where Dave Loveman and myself lobbied TC for the Amateur Built Aeroplane that meets the maximum take-off mass and minimum stall speed definitions of AULA. As you have pointed out the TP10141 program is ruled by the manufacturer. Owners needed alternatives. Such alternatives will include the Ultralight Central Technical Committee who will provide options for owners of aircraft that no longer have a manufacturer, such as Lazar.

It is very important that the industry (including LAMAC & UPAC) help form

this committee tomorrow if the program is to continue. This committee will have the authority to provide compliance with TP10141 and will recommend persons who are qualified to provide fitness inspection reports. Presently there are no industry reps to provide this service.

There is so much information to convey to you that my C drive may explode or you might fall asleep. Anyway, my Quicksilver MX II HP is registered as an Amateur Built Aeroplane, meeting the definitions of an AULA, for the following reasons. It has C-Fxxx marks, a special C of A and I can modify and change it without the kit manufacturer's blessing, as well, I do not have to comply with any mandatory modifications if I choose. Kind of like the TP4310 rules with added privileges. As well, I can train on it for PPL-A and all the endorsements such as night (don't worry, I'm crazy, not stupid) and a seaplane endorsement and include all the time towards a commercial license. So take a good look at Chapter 549 of the Airworthiness Manual. UPAC and Dave Loveman have worked hard for this category and I think it would be worth looking into.

On another note, Bernie Kespe has indicated that some brave soles may be flying West for the Abbotsford Airshow. I have indicated to Bernie that I would be glad to offer any assistance. My hangar is open and camping space in the back yard or at the airport is available. As of May 15th I can look out my window at Pitt Meadows tower (YPK) which is about 15 minutes flight to Abbotsford. The house is a five minute walk to the airport and you can see your plane from the yard. If you would like to use YPK as a base let me know. My new address is 18822 Ford Road, Pitt Meadows, BC, V3Y 1W1, (604) 465-0947. Just so you'll know where to send the May issue of Skywriter. Keep up the good work, blue sky and I look forward to meeting with you soon.

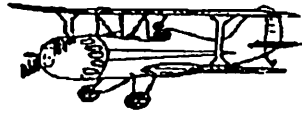
Brad Allore
11824 Stephens Street
Maple Ridge, BC
V2X 6S2

Thanks for the timely input, Brad. All readers are invited to send letters for publication in Skywriter. Address your letters to Bob Kirkby, RR 7, Calgary, AB T2P 2G7.

- Editor

One Pilot's Opinion

by Bob Kirkby



Safety Bulletin Board Open

The Transportation Safety Board started a computer bulletin board service dedicated to the exchange of safety related information concerning Ultralight and Homebuilt aircraft. Anyone can access the bulletin board from a PC or a terminal with a modem by dialing 613-990-8645. The service is available from 4pm to 8am Eastern time and 24 hours on weekends and holidays.

The bulletin board program allows the caller to search the database for information by model of aircraft, sub-assembly (i.e., engine, fuselage, landing gear, etc.) or both. The caller can then add safety related items for others to see.

I was intrigued, so I dialed the bulletin to try it out. The menus were very easy to use and it only took a couple of minutes of playing around to get the hang of it. I did a few searches on a few ultralights that came to mind and was surprised to find a significant number of entries which were of interest to me.

I identified a number that I suspect would be of interest to club members also. The FAA operates a similar service and arrangements have been made with the FAA to share data, so there is a large volume of information in the database.

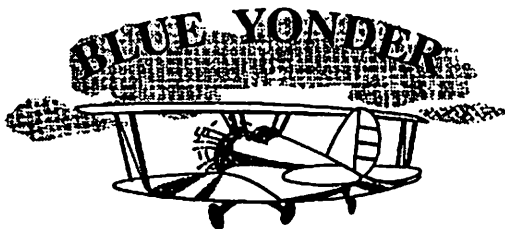
I read somewhere in the instructions that the database would be made available to interested organizations so I left a message on the bulletin board for the manager to send me a copy, after telling him of our organization. I then signed off (after spending a good \$20 on long-distance charges) and expected that I might hear something in the next six months if I was lucky.

To my surprise, I found a package from Ottawa in my mailbox a few days later. Delighted at seeing my tax money being put to work so efficiently, I immediately sat down at my computer to examine the diskette that was in the package. I found the entire database and search program on the diskette and spent the next few hours doing search after search. This was a lot better than paying long-distance charges!

In the accompanying letter from the bulletin board manager, Mike Mathieu, he says that they he will update the database for me periodically, providing I returned the diskette for re-use ("budget restraints" was the phrase he used). I will do this so that we will have a current copy available locally. If you would like a copy to run on your own computer, just give me a call and I will duplicate it for you. If you don't have a computer, but would like to know what is in there pertaining to your airplane or engine, call me and I'll look for you. Anything I see pertaining to Ultralights that are flying in the area, I will reproduce in Skywriter from time to time.

Here's a sample. Date: 15 July 91; Chnook single place with Rotax 277; main frame tube failure. Remarks: Aircraft had experienced a number of hard landings. A crack must have developed in the main tube under the lower engine support. The crack was hidden from view by the fabric and the support bracket. Tube failed in flight.

The consequences are not reported, but we can all guess at what happened after the tube failed. I will pull off reports by aircraft type and start publishing them in the next newsletter. Until then, don't walk under a Chnook!



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Skywriter is the official publication of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club and is published 12 times per year. Opinions expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of the club. Articles and letters to the editor are very welcome from any readers. Address correspondence to: Bob Kirkby, RR 7, Calgary, AB T2P 2G7

Meetings of the Calgary Ultralight Flying Club are held the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm at

R.C.A.F. Association
110 - 7220 Fisher Street S.E.
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Around The Patch

by Stu Simpson



Dragonflies Over Eden

"Good morning", I greeted the weather briefer, "I'm part of a group planning a trip to Banff in some ultralights this morning. What can you tell us about the weather?"

"Ooo! Banff, eh?", he replied in an "I wouldn't if I were you" tone. The way he said those words was all it took to paint the weather picture for Banff.

The briefer went on to explain that a major cold front was slated to hit the Calgary area that afternoon, and it was supposed to reach Banff first. So much for our trip there.

I called Todd and told him the news. We agreed to stay out of the Bow Valley, but, since it was only 0700, we still had most of the day to fly. We agreed to meet at the Glider Strip at 0900. Don and Ken would join Todd on the trip from Indus.

I hurried out to my strip, which is just a couple of miles from the Glider Strip. I preflighted and got airborne at 0900 sharp. I landed at the Glider Strip a few minutes later and spotted my wingman inbound from the east.

Todd, in his amphibious Beaver, led the formation. The blue and yellow two-seat Chinook, Don's mount, was number two. And Ken, in his standard Beaver RX-550, was tail-end-charlie.

I stood off to the side of the runway numbers and watched as each flyer manouvered his plane around the airport. Todd lined up on final and flew a perfect approach, landing a little long.

As Don turned final, I couldn't help but feel just a little bit like a Landing Signal Officer on an aircraft carrier. A charge of excitement went through me as the Chinook zoomed by for touchdown. Don even waved to me as he went by.

Then Ken landed and taxied in. I walked over to him as he shut down and knew immediately that he was having a ball. He was all smiles as he shut down and told me how smooth the flight from Indus was.

The four of us did some serious hanger flying for a few minutes before getting down to picking the day's destination.

Ken wouldn't be joining us because he had a previous commitment on the golf course. Then Don hauled out his map and we poured over it, trying to think of somewhere we all wanted to go.

I suggested the Eden Valley. We could fly south about 15 miles toward Longview, then turn and follow the valley southwestward for about another 15 miles. I'd only flown the valley once before. That was in early autumn and the scenery then was the most spectacular I had ever witnessed. It was easy to see why it's called Eden.

The Eden Valley is the last dividing line between the foothills and the Rockies. It's the source of the Highwood River and eventually curves around to the north to join Kananaskis Country. It'd make a challenging flight, and be a good chance to practice some of the mountain flying techniques we had been studying lately.

Using the ole' Mark I eyeball, we checked the weather and discovered a chinook arch had formed high above us. Since there was no strong west wind, we figured the wave was travelling well above us, as it had done on previous flights. But that chinook would come back to haunt us.

Todd added another dimension to the morning's adventure; he suggested we use the call sign 'Dragonfly' - the one we had picked for our upcoming trans-mountain flight this summer.

With everything arranged we saddled up and headed south. Ken called us on his radio to wish us all a good flight. It was too bad he couldn't join us.

The air had gotten bumpier with daytime heating and the effect of the light southwesterlies coming out of the foothills. But we were still making good ground speed and the weather looked a little better in the Eden Valley.

As we got a little north of Longview, right at the mouth of the valley, Todd called me on the radio.

"Dragonfly 02 to Dragonfly 01."

"Go ahead 02," I responded.

"Those mountains," he said, "seem to be getting bigger and bigger all the time."

"01 to 02. Just wait'll you see 'em right up close."

We continued on into the valley. The sun was now firmly behind a lower layer of clouds situated between the mountain peaks and the chinook arch. The wind was steady out of the southwest at about 10 kts giving us light, but steady turbulence. The terrain was also climbing, forcing us to adjust our altitude.

I peered down through my helmet visor at the Highwood River, marvelling at how it chiselled its way along the valley floor. I was equally amazed to view the geological transformation that stretched out in front of us. In the space of about twenty miles, the land changes from flat prairie, to the not-so-gentle waves of the foothills, and on to the actual mountains, that loom on the horizon like a row of gigantic shark teeth. I felt fortunate to be there because so few people ever get to see this.

As we continued down the valley, I seemed to be having trouble keeping altitude. Then I realized my error. I was flying in the center of the valley, but the wind was blowing from the west. To gain some height I should move to the east side of the valley and catch the up-slope air.

I made the correction and noticed immediately how it was much easier to maintain altitude and conserve power.

About 15 miles later we came to a point of decision. Ahead of us lay a narrow pass that lead to the real Rocks and eventually, K-Country. None of us really felt like tempting fate, especially with such uncertain weather in the area. Todd recommended we do a 180 degree turn to start heading out of the valley. I agreed and called Don to ask his opinion. Since Don was RONLY, a quick dip of his left wing clearly revealed his thoughts on the matter.

So, we each wheeled around and headed back north. But we hadn't discussed at the Glider Strip where to go after the Eden Valley. Todd asked if I had any suggestions. I thought it might be nice to head to the High River airport. We could grab a cold drink, chat with the locals, and generally show off our airplanes.

Todd seemed pleased with the idea and Don agreed with another dip of his wing. So we turned east and headed for the prairies again.

(continued on page 5)

(The Patch - continued from page 4)

Just as we crossed the last ridge in the foothills, I glanced out to my right and saw Todd and Don in loose formation. It was definitely a Kodak moment as both planes were banked between the earth and the sky in a picture that would set any pilot's heart soaring. The Dragonflies may have left Eden, but we were still pretty close to heaven.

The flight to High River was bumpy. The flat land had spent the morning sunning itself and allowing the thermals to make good their escape. They ran smack into us on the way up. We did have good ground speed though, as we rode the west wind to our next destination.

Approaching HR airport, I noticed it's name painted in big letters on the taxiway. Then I looked down at the wind sock and was astonished to find it sticking straight out to the east. I knew we'd had a tail-wind, but I didn't think it was a full-blown chinook.

I touched down on runway 24 showing 55 mph on the ASI and estimating my ground speed at about 30. I knew I wouldn't be able to taxi in that type of crosswind, so when I'd left enough room for my wingmen to land, I simply pulled off to the side of the runway.

A gust was so strong, I actually got airborne for a few feet as I rolled down the runway. After shutting down, as I tried to walk the tail into the wind, another gust nearly flipped my airplane over. Only Todd's quick reactions, as he grabbed the strut, saved me from walking home.

The chinook stranded us at HR for the next hour and a half as we waited for it blow over. Adding to our concern was the weather briefer's warning of the coming cold front. But we managed to spend a pleasant time reading magazines and chatting with the FBO operator, Phil King.

At 1300 hrs it was time to go. The chinook had tapered off and now the winds were coming from the south at 10-15 kts. It was our last chance.

Because my airplane handles so poorly on the ground in a strong cross-wind, Todd and Don each grabbed a strut and walked me down the intersection - plenty of runway for my Beaver. I firewalled the throttle and blasted into the cloudy sky.

As soon as I was fifty feet up I knew we'd made the right choice to wait. The air was considerably smoother than when we'd landed. I immediately took advantage of the southern wind and turned northwest toward Black Diamond and home.

But the closer I got to my strip, the rougher the air was. I knew I'd have my hands full very shortly.

My strip, about 600 feet long and located on an acreage, runs slightly southwest-northeast. It sits in a creek bed bordered on the south by large trees and a 25 foot cliff. Then the wind blows from the south, the cliff and trees cause turbulent eddies to pass right into my approach path and over top of the runway. To make things even more interesting, the hanger and a large house sit at the west end of the runway.

This layout means takeoffs are to the east, and landings to the west. It makes for very hairy landings if the conditions are right.

As it turned out, the strong southerly wind was just perfect for a hairy landing.

I thought about all of this as I watched the cold front steaming in from the northwest. But I knew I didn't have much choice. I also knew I'd made tough landings at this strip before, and I could do it again. I felt confident in myself and my airplane.

I made the last descending turn and headed south into the creek bed to begin my standard curved approach. Just as I drew level with the tree tops, a gust of wind slammed my left wing down, cranking me toward the trees. I countered hard with right rudder and right stick, recovering to find my airspeed at about 70 mph. I eased back a bit on the throttle and continued in.

The turbulence was now moderate to extreme as I gradually fought my way below the trees - now only 30 feet off my left wing. At the same time, I began a slow turn to the right, to eventually square off with the runway. There's no such thing as a straight-in approach at this field.

The unseen wind hit the left wing again, this time jerking it up 30 degrees. I recovered quickly, and it occurred to me for an instant how this sure beat the hell out of any carnival ride.

About a hundred feet from the button, I turned final. I lined up and checked the airspeed one last time. It was jumping up and down like a jack rabbit in a snake pit. I came back on the throttle some more to bleed off speed.

Dragonfly 01 floated over the fence and

settled toward the grass. Then the wind took one more jab at me. A heavy gust hit right on the nose, knocking the airplane ten feet in the air almost before I knew what happened. I jammed the stick forward, added power and planted the Beaver on the runway. It bounced once, then stayed down. I was home.

Dragonfly 02 and 03 had a much easier flight home. They had the full effect of the wind to slingshot them north to Indus in record time.

They hadn't made the field any too soon earlier. The cold front hit Indus just as Don was closing his hangar doors. The wind was so strong, in fact, that he nearly didn't get the door closed at all.

It had been a heck of a day. We'd seen the best and worst of the Calgary weather and even logged a little mountain flying time. The day had turned into an adventure that we'll remember for years. It was the day three ultralight jockies were Dragonflies over Eden.

Fly-ins

June 14 - just for CUFC members and friends at Bob Kirkby's strip. Food and refreshments served from 0800 to 1200 hrs.

July 1 - Canada 125 Day fly-in organized by Paul Hemington to be held at his place or Smith's. Details in June Skywriter.

June 7 - Beiseker fly-in breakfast. 0730 to 1130 hrs.

May 24 - Airdrie fly-in picnic and opening of new clubhouse. 1000 to 1400 hrs.

July 19 - Vulcan fly-in breakfast. 0800 to 1100 hrs.

July 25 - Nanton fly-in.

June 24-26 - High River EFTS reunion and fly-in. CUFC is invited to fly in for hangar flying and to view displays.

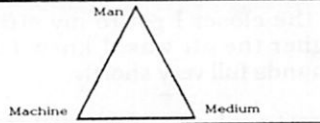
June 19-21 - RAA western convention at Josephburg airport near Edmonton.

May 16,17 - Namao International Airshow at CFB Edmonton. (Not an Ultralight fly-in)

Look for more information on CUFC summer activities in the June Skywriter.

Safety Corner

by Paul Hemingson



Rocky Mountain High

During the latter part of March this year I had the opportunity to make a flight into the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. The purpose of this flight was to get some first hand experience that I could use to relate to other UL pilots contemplating a flight into this environment.

I wanted to maximize my knowledge, so I went on this introductory flight with CFI Mike Dupuis of the Westpoint School of Aviation, based at Springbank Airport. I would do most of the flying under Mikes tutelage and guidance, using his Citabria (Photo 1). A lot of folks who fly out this way from central and eastern Canada enroute to the West coast have to cross the Rocky Mountains. It is not uncommon to see them leave Springbank full of false bravado, only to return in 2-3 hours and ask for some expert training in flying the mountains. Mike offers a 3 hour introduction to Mountain Flying at his school. Full marks to those who recognize their limitations and turn back for some instruction instead of carrying on to potential destruction.

The flight took over two hours and I learned a lot. Before going on this flight I tried to visualize what it would be like. I got out the map, and sitting at my kitchen table tried to visualize from the contours the nature of this flight.

My route was west paralleling the

TransCanada Highway to Banff. From there I would fly in behind Cascade Mountain to enter a narrower north-south valley paralleling the Bare Range and go North about 50 miles. Then an eastward turn through a pass originating in the headwaters of the Panther River, and follow it to its confluence with the upper reaches of the Red Deer River. I would then find the Red Deer Forestry strip and pick up the Forestry Trunk road and fly southwards along the the Foothills to locate the Waiporous Creek strip. From here, I would go eastwards across the Foothills to the Water Valley area and then south back to the Calgary area.

What did I learn?

First, a thorough plan is required before getting anywhere near the aircraft. Study the map along your proposed route and the height of the terrain along the way. Sounds simple enough. But it will save you some embarrassment if you find yourself at 6500 feet approaching a 7500 foot pass! You laugh. It is easily done, heights and distances are deceiving in the mountains and until you experienced its difficult to tell whether your high enough to safely get over an obstacle. Its also a lot more efficient use of your fuel to avoid a bunch of circling turns to gain altitude.

Secondly, try to visualize how to best fly the route given different kinds of winds aloft, and the time of day. Your objective is to fly the 'lift' side of the

rocks to avoid downdrafts associated with sinking air on the shady and sheltered sides of the valley walls. You can use the lift on the sunny and updraft side to gain free altitude, or power back appropriately to roughly maintain altitude. Remember too, that other pilots will likely be flying along the same side of the valley for the same reasons. Stay alert.

On the day of this flight the winds aloft were light from the West. That's why I went. I would not have it any other way. I don't think its wimpy to have this attitude towards for flight. I have a reverence for flight, and for life. To venture in to them under strong winds is against my principles....and limits or skills. If your subject to bouts of masochism then go when its rowdy and that will probably cure any future inclinations to do it again.

It was mid-afternoon by the time we left Springbank and headed west, essentially paralleling the TransCanada. As the plains end, the Foothills begin and this gives way to the Morely Flats area where the Bow River has cut a major east-west pass through the Rockies (Photo 2). It is both a beautiful and yet intimidating experience to enter the main ranges of the Rocky Mountains. As you enter the Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains through the Bow River pass at Exshaw you get your first inclination of just what kind of day it will be to fly into the mountains. The plume of smoke or exhaust from the cement plant is a good indication of the surface winds. It is a measure of the direction and velocity of the winds on the surface that you can interpret for winds within the pass. At this point, the Bow River Corridor narrows to form a venturi like valley. Within its narrower confines the wind is constricted and forced to speed up and one can expect an increasing headwind and some increase in turbulence. Eastwards from here the Bow River corridor widens to several miles as far as Banff and beyond.

At this time of day, the south facing slopes along the North sides of the Bow River corridor are the sunny side and I elected to fly in this 'free lift' zone at 6500 feet. This puts the aircraft a few thousand feet below the peaks. The horizon is gone, at least as far as I could see and one needs to know his machine and peek at the altimeter to ensure your not unconsciously climbing. I elected to fly about 200 metres or less from the valley wall which loomed along my right-hand side. I am accustomed to seeing horizon and sky under my wings, not

(Continued on page 7)



Photo 1.

(Safety - continued from page 6)

rocks. I found I was unconsciously flying with the right wing high. I think this has to do with the incredible mass of the mountains and my natural fear of rubbing up against them at terminal velocity. Anyway, once I realized I was doing it the correction was easy enough to make. After a while you get used to the phenomenon of no horizon under the wing.

Continuing westwards to Banff the Bow River corridor widens and near Banff the main corridor is met by the Minnewanka valley. With three valleys meeting you can expect some turbulence due to mixing of the air, and it came about the time I expected it. We overflew the Banff strip and then turned slightly north to go in behind Cascade Mountain (Photo 3) to pick up the Bare Range which trends north-south. Several times along the way Mike asked me to confirm that we were on the correct course, i.e. in the correct valley. He also showed me how to safely nose into a narrow valley to check that it is not a blind valley and allow yourself an out before committing.

The Bare Range valley is much narrower and precipitous than the main Bow River corridor and one gets the impression that it would be impossible to turn 180 degrees within its confines. It's the sheer scale of the mountains and narrowness of the valley that gives you the impression. In fact there is ample room to turn and Mike asked me to demonstrate a 180 (Photos 4 & 5) to satisfy myself. The turn did not require more than a medium bank but I found it easier to stare down the inside of the turn and rotate about a fixed point on the ground rather than fixating on the surrounding cliff-faces. There is no horizon visible to you when

you're below the elevation of the surrounding mountains.

I then flew northwards in this narrow valley. Along the way (Photo 6) I learned it was a full time job to fly the airplane and read the map. After a while the flying got easier as I anticipated the whorls and eddies that we would encounter and when they happened on queue I was pleasantly surprised at my forecast capability. From the map I knew I would need 7500 feet to clear a pass that acted as a drainage divide in this valley.

Consequently, I rode the lift when updrafts were present. I also became more comfortable in flying closer to the rock-face, usually within 100 metres of the edge and about two-thirds to three quarters the way up the mountain side.

We reached an east west cut in the mountains and I recognized this from the map as the headwaters of the Panther River (Photo 7). Along this pass several ridges had to be crossed and I elected to approach them at 45

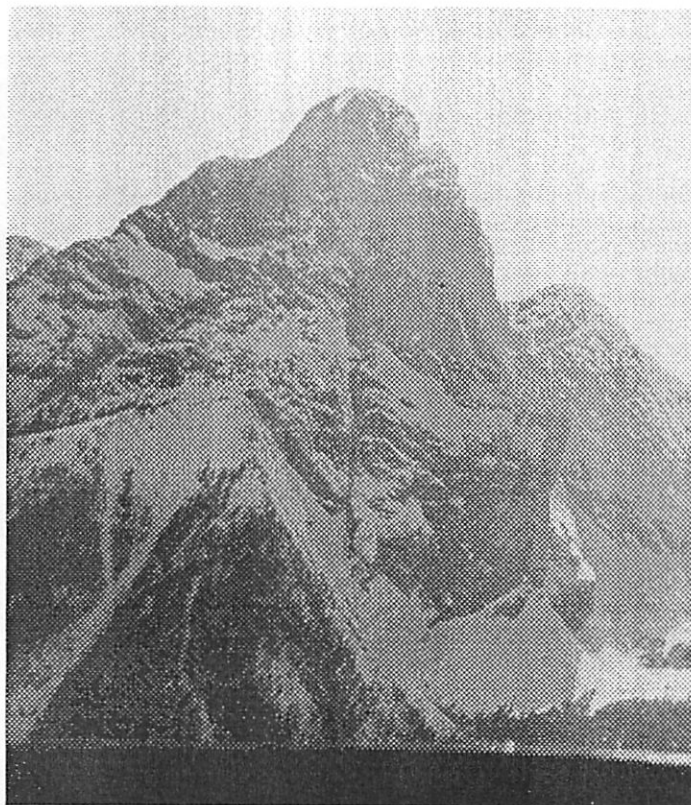


Photo 3.

degrees to allow for an easier turn away to the lower valley floor if a sudden downdraft forced me below its elevation. Following this pass, the Panther River joined up with the Red Deer River and the comforting site of the Red Deer Forestry strip (Photo 8) came into view and gliding distance.

Within the inner Foothills it's more difficult to relate topography to the map. The lower relief Foothills are tree covered and their heights and distinguishing features less dominant than the rugged character of the main ranges. An easier way to navigate for me was to find man made features to relate your position in space. In this area the Forestry Road is the only road and its cut clearly visible. I followed it southwards to locate the Waiporous Creek strip.

From here, I turned eastwards to the Water Valley area where the Foothills terrain gives way to the Plains and beautiful open farm fields with oodles of forced landing sites. I was now in familiar country and the flight home to Springbank was easy. All told, the flight took over two hours and I was saturated with my new experience and new found knowledge. I would recommend anyone contemplating a mountain flight to first get a proper introduction to the vagaries of the wind, the rocks and the techniques. It is cheap insurance and will give you

(Continued on page 8)

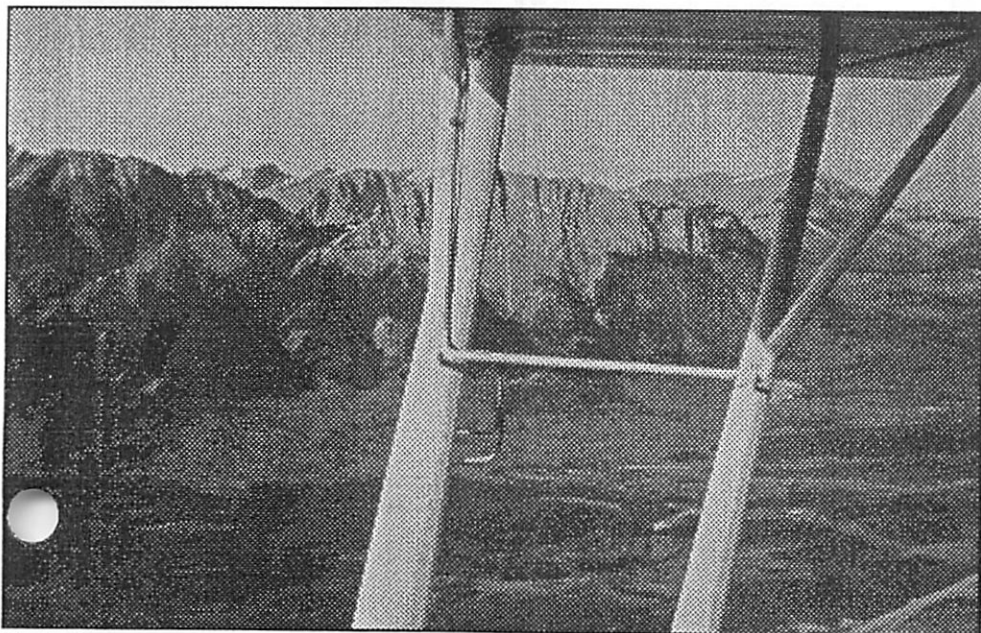


Photo 2.

(Safety - continued from page 7)

more confidence in dealing with the conditions unique to this environment. In an ultralight with its lighter wing loading, one would expect the updrafts to be more dramatic and the headwinds to set you back more....so fuel conservation and leg limits are a definite consideration. The climb rate of many UL is as good or better than many small aircraft so downdrafts should be manageable. Another advantage of UL is that they can turn in a shorter radius, and if I had to force land in the mountains I would rather do it with an UL.

In my mind the secret to safe mountain flying is pick your weather, plan your flight and pay attention along the way. It is an awesome experience that is sure to give you an Rocky Mountain high.

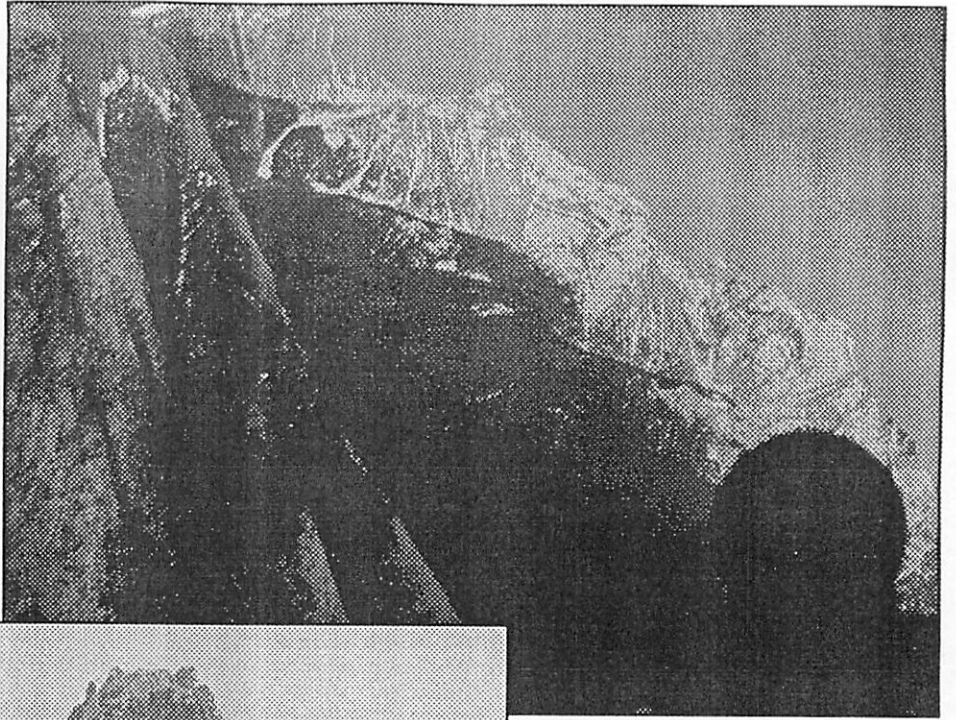


Photo 4.

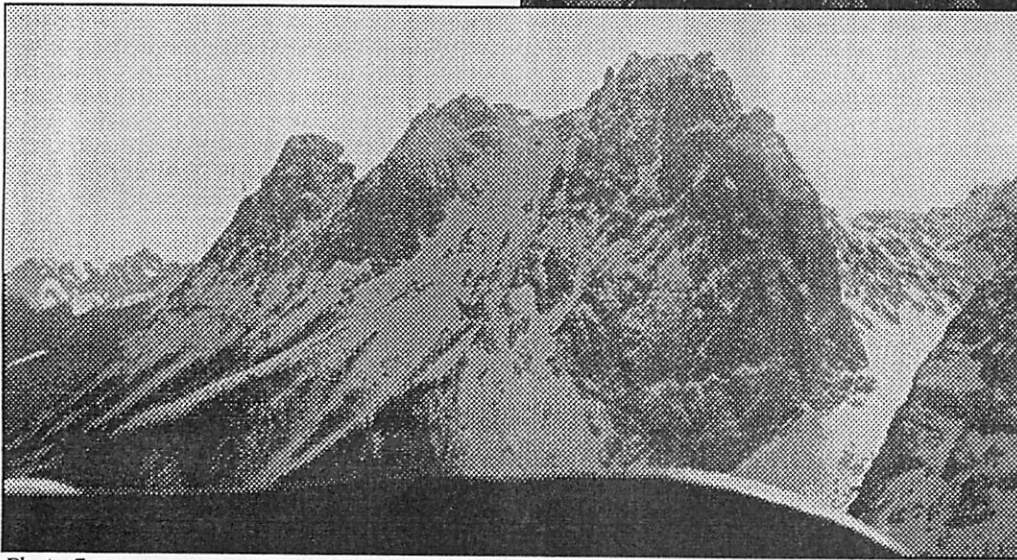


Photo 5.

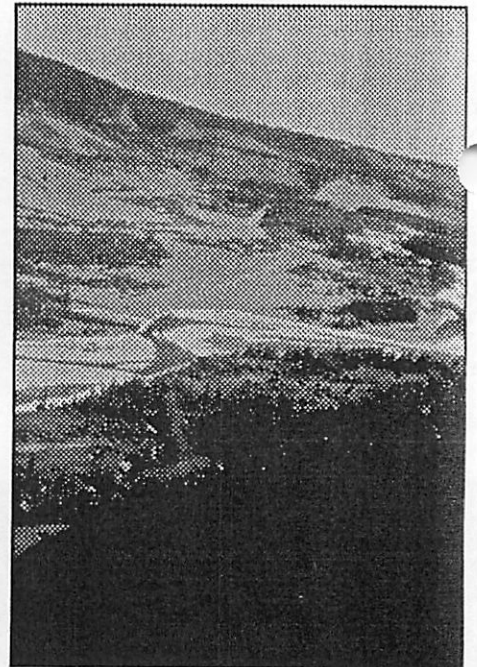


Photo 8.



Photo 6.

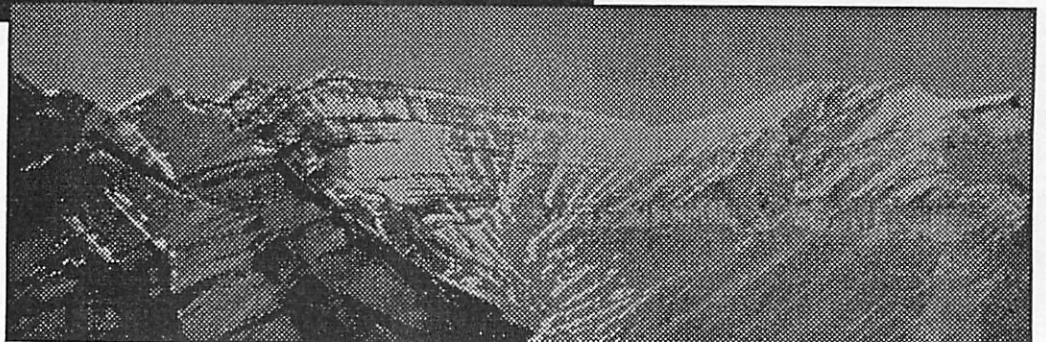


Photo 7.