## SAILPLANE & GLIDING DEC 12/JAN 13

## WINTERFLYING (FROM YOUR ARMCHAIR)

FEATURE

CONDOR COMPETITIONS

How do you keep members focused over the winter? Tony Lintott explains how to host online Condor competitions



Condor flying can brighten the dark nights of winter

IT WAS EXCITING AND ADEFINITE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, BEARING IN MIND THERE AREN'T MANY MOUNTAINS OR RIDGES AT HUS!

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S I write this article, our English summer has erupted (more than once) in a most spectacular way – rain, storms, floods and disruption to glider pilots in abundance. Perhaps "I'd rather NOT be flying!". So, I am pleased to be writing about something which may be of benefit to you and brighten the dark nights of winter.

I'm talking about Condor, the glider simulator software package, and how it has been used for the pleasure and benefit of

members and friends of The Gliding Centre (Hus Bos to most of us) through the hosting of a Monday night internet competition.

I've been a flyer on Condor for some years; have 'done' the occasional competition and even won one – a screaming ridge race through the Italian mountains against international competition. Sounds impressive, well not really, but it was exciting and a definite learning experience, as the training fraternity say, bearing in mind there aren't many mountains or ridges at HUS!

So, in these few words, I'll attempt to go through my process for hosting, hopefully keeping it simple, and explain the whys, hows, and so on in the hope that you'll be enabled to do the same for your club members, assuming they want to be involved.

I'm not an IT expert so there will be those readers who may find my terminology 'incorrect'. However, I hope I get over to you the things I did in order to make an internet-based competition available to those who wanted to join in. I have, though, assumed that you, dear reader, have a reasonable level of computer knowledge, otherwise the editor could 'get her eraser out' in a big way.

Let me kick off by saying this club-based Condor competition was an off-the-cuff idea as I'd never seen other clubs' names

come up in Condor blogs or comps, except as occasional competitors in general competitions. Perhaps I've missed seeing these, so I apologise to those who may have gone before me. I thought it could lead to a UK club league where HUS competes with EDG or NYM, etc?

If ever it does, the operational control will have to be by someone far more expert than me though.

My first decision was to find out whether my computer was 'man-enough' to host a competition. By host, I mean using the computer to be the link to the internet and into which others link for instructions, eg the task. By reading lots of the notes found in the Condor forums – see www. condorsoaring.com - I established that my laptop (a Sony Vaio F series) was more than adequate, having a fast processor and lots of RAM. I also used the forums for many other queries and found everyone willing and able to help.

## Software and scenaries

Next, I made sure that the Condor software and sceneries, downloaded to my computer over the years, was up to date with patches - all available through the Condor Soaring website or Condor Club at, www.condorclub.eu

My first challenge was to set up the laptop so that it could talk to the internet and become a personal webserver. In other words ... your PC wants something from my PC, my PC finds it, processes the request and serves it back to your PC, at breathtaking speed of course.

As with many of you, my laptop is wirelessly linked to the internet at a speed 54Mbps and my incoming telephone line broadband speed is 100Mbps. My experience shows that running a comp via a wireless link works perfectly well, but I've always had a feeling that communication failure was a possibility. So, I generally use an Ethernet cable from my router to cut out wireless failure. I also get the full 100Mbps speed of my incoming line, but I don't detect this



difference when 'flying' a comp. Perhaps an expert will tell me my Ping rates should be higher, or should that be lower?

The most difficult part for me, a newbie, was the router settings. The hosting settings part comes later and this, too, was quite challenging.

Router settings are accessed using the web browser and a 192.... address entered in the URL line, the one where the "www....." address is usually seen. The router access 192... series of numbers will be in your router manual I suspect and probably ends with 1.1. There will also be a request for a UserName and Password, which might still be set to the usual defaults of ADMIN and ADMIN - only you will know and, beware, they're case sensitive.

Once into the router menus (mine is a D-Link DSL-2640R router) look for and click on "ADVANCED" in the side listing. "OK" the 'warning' message. Then "ADSL Setup" should become visible. If not, open that from the sub menu. Then open the second "ADVANCED" tab followed by "Port Forwarding", if it's not already open. Here you will need to add the necessary data of "Private IP" and "Port".

I found my IP address by going to Wireless Network Connection Status/ Details, via the laptop Control Panel and

found my wireless address is "IPv4 Address 192.168.1.2". This address connects me to

my router and to the internet wirelessly. For hosting via a cable, the final digit needs to be a number greater than that shown, ie >2, so I use 6 for my cable link to Condor. The "Port Start" needs to be 56278 and the "... End" I've set to 56300.

Finally, "Connection" should show as PVCO. Just check the settings under "Firewall & DMZ" too. There should be nothing ticked.

Now, having said all this about router settings it may be that your menu structure is quite different. If so, work through your router menus and you're sure to find the fields which need addressing. You might also want to consult your router's manual.

One of the Condor team has kindly provided a link to test your router so go here for port testing: www.condor-club.eu/port/152/ When everything is done you'll still have to "Logout" and hopefully things should work.

To host, I use DS Helper (http://software. hitziger.net), a free download from one of the Condor team on the Net, though I know Hitzi appreciates a contribution for his efforts.

Setting up DS Helper to host your task needs the input of certain data:

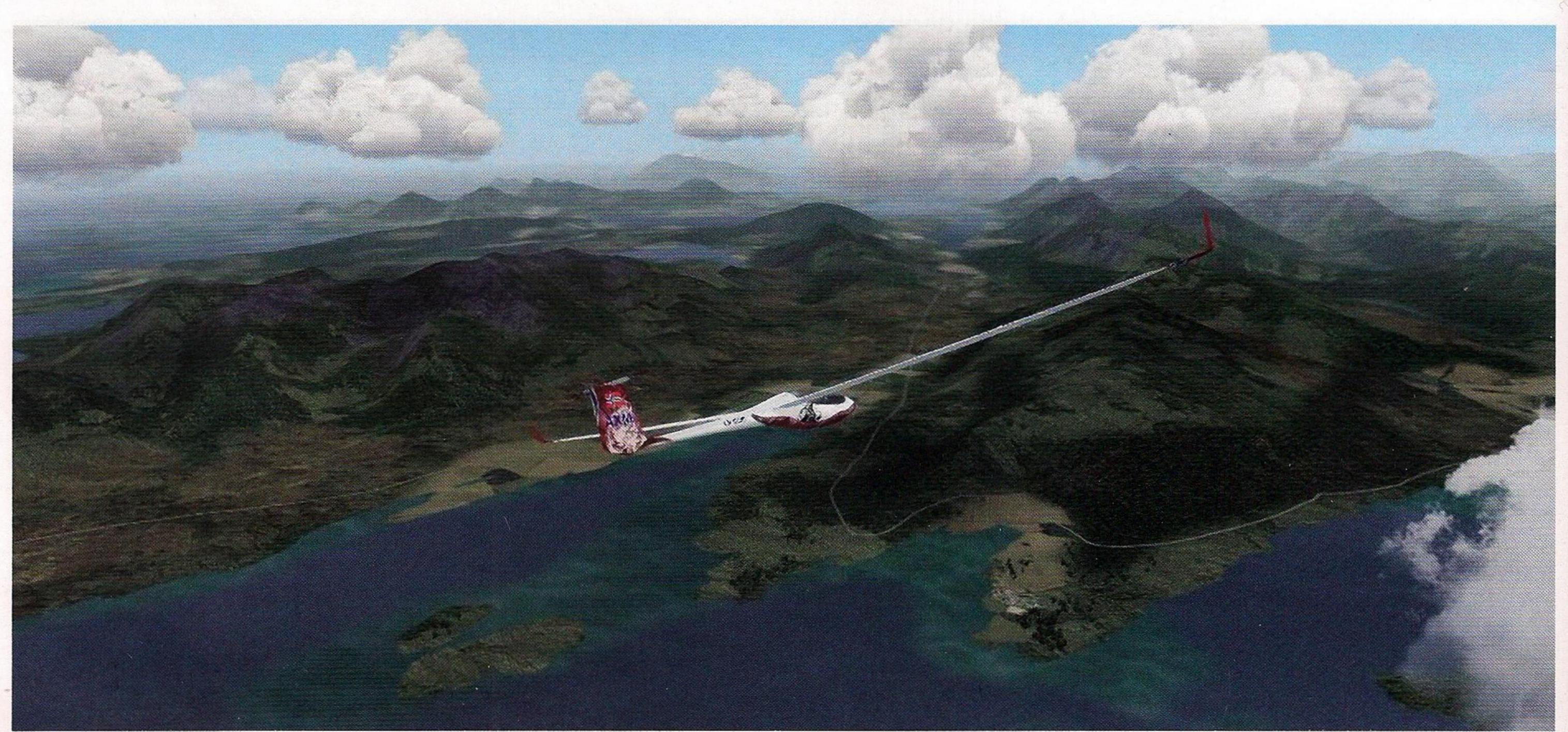
A Condor screendump of the Libelle over HUS, with proper registration number, but Tony Lintott's Condor competition number on the fin

■ The 'Friends of HUS' last winter included the UK's current WGC 18m medallist 'flying-in' from his European base. We also had pilots from Lasham and this year we may have a Scottish representation. Where will it all end? Whatever, the competitions were valuable in keeping some members focused during those months when flying was limited due to the weather, as well as being enjoyable.

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A Condor screendump showing Northern Norway, created by Arne Martin Güettler

WE CAN ALSO BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF THEIR TASK FLYING STRATEGIES AND THIS HAS CERTAINLY BENEFITED ME ON REAL LIFE CROSS-COUNTRIES

On opening DS Helper you will see the

main screen with options along the top. Open "Program/Options/Dedicated Servers" and a default "Displayname, Path and Port" will be seen. Click on "Create a new server" and select a directory and folder/file path into which everything for DS Helper will be stored. Mine are in C:\Users\ Tony\Desktop\TGC. When you've clicked "OK" the data should become visible on the Options screen and in the Menu with the last part of the path, ie the name you've selected – mine is TGC – listed. Click on it to open the settings tabs.

The "Servername" will be whatever you set it to be and should show your selected name. This is the name which appears in the Condor Servers List online too, so make

it appropriate. The "Port" is 56278 and should already

The "Password" is optional. If there is no password, anyone can link to you and fly your task. A password restricts entrants to

those you give the password to. The other fields on this screen, except for "Join time limit", I leave untouched. Join time in minutes determines how long you allow users to login. At the end of join time there can be no further entrants. Sometimes a short join time is appropriate.

Now click on the tab "DSHelper Server Settings".

Leave ticked or un-tick as you see fit. The only one I've ever needed to alter is the "Automatic Start Procedure". Removing the tick allows manual control of the start

timing but I've rarely used it. Finally, click "Save".

Back on the first "DS Helper" main screen you should now see your designated server name as a tab, so click on it.

To the far right of this new screen you will see a box headed "Flight Plans". A right click of the mouse opens a menu which allows flight plans to be added.

Click and you will be directed to the Condor Flight plans folder and it is from the "User" sub-folder you select the **DEC 12/JAN 13** 

task you wish to host. Without going into much detail, I hope you can create a task in Condor and have saved it as a User Task. In order to host this task, it is necessary to be sure that the task appears in the Condor Flight Plans folder. I use Win7 Home operating system and, in order to get the task file I've created into the right place, I have to copy it over from an apparently identical folder (which is not identical).

Open this path: "C:/Program Files/ Condor/Flight Plans/User". Then, look towards the top of the screen to find the line of options beginning "Organize" and ending with "New Folder".

Did you spot the "Compatibility files" one listed too? Well, this is where your created task file will initially be found. Simply copy the .fpl flight plan file to the master "User Flight Plans" folder and you're task will become visible to "DS Helper" when you need it.

Don't ask why user created tasks don't automatically save in the master folder, I don't know!

Back in the main #1 "DS Helper" screen, all that is required is to click on "Actions/ Start Server etc..." and your task will, as if by magic, appear in the Condor Servers List found at www.condorsoaring.com/ serverlist.php

If you've done everything correctly you should find people joining your hosted task.

## Advertise your competition

The final thing is to advertise your comp. The simple way at HusBos is to use the 'Bar Room Chat and Talk' blogs. So, each Friday evening I issue a short email with a task overview. This is a text statement, mainly to let people know there will be a comp in a couple of days' time and what scenery will be used.

Prior notification of scenery should avoid on-the-night panics and not having the correct scenery downloaded.

Then on the night of the comp, 45 minutes before the start time, a further email gives links to the task, access details like password, and how to enter TeamSpeak (www.teamspeak3.com/#), another free download, if an entrant wants to chat to others. Info: TeamSpeak is like having a radio where a keyboard key set up as a PTT button. It's a free download and you'll need a PC headset with microphone.

And that's about it.

So how good is it and how enjoyable? Well VERY... IMHO.

SAILPLANE & GLIDING

From a learning perspective there's the chance to 'fly' all manner of glider. For me, a Libelle owner, flying a fully watered and flapped ASW 27B or an ASG 29 is something I'm very unlikely to do in real life but, if I ever do, I think I now sort of know what to expect. Also, I'll never fly Omarama, the high mountains and Alps of Europe etc and Condor scenery gives me that chance - all from the comfort of my computer workstation.

Condor programmers have done an amazing job of modelling gliders and scenery, all of which can be combined to make valuable training aid packages. Stalling, spinning, field landings and more really are possible. I'm sure those clubs who use Condor with their simulators will agree with me.

Realistic in almost every way, but of course it's not real life perfect. For one thing there's no bum on the seat feel, but it's pretty damn good all the same.

And, finally, for even more enjoyment, how many of us can have a crack at beating top pilots or watch them struggle on a task? We can also begin to understand some of their task flying strategies and this has certainly benefited me on real life crosscountries.

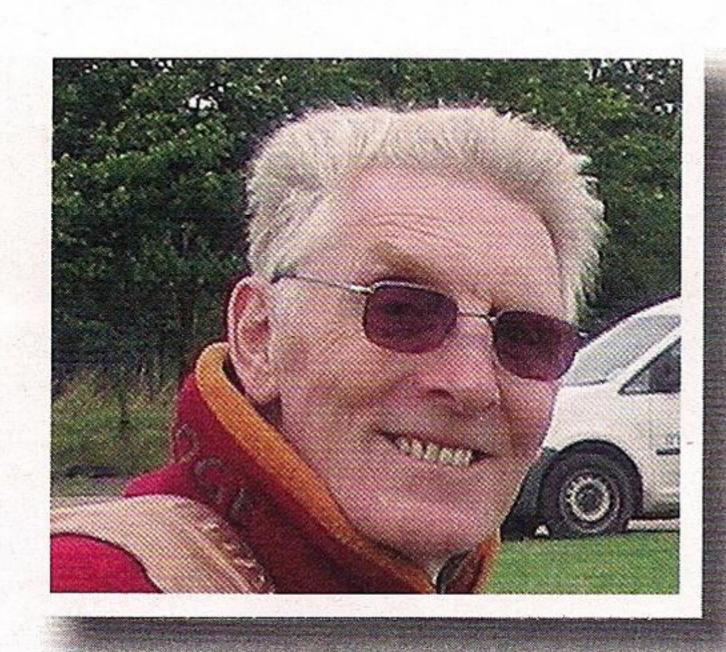
It's fascinating being part of these competitions and I recommend you have

My grateful thanks to Condor flyer TF1 and Hitzi for proofreading my text and for their helpful suggestions.

FROM A LEARNING PERSPECTIVE THERE'S THE CHANCE TO 'FLY' ALL MANNER OF GLIDER

FEATURE

CONDOR COMPETITIONS



Tony Lintott first flew on an experience at Marchington donkey's years ago, but didn't take to gliding seriously until the late '90s. He now has a Silver badge, 100K Pt 1 & 2 Diplomas and is scorer for HUS Task Week. Tony shares a lovely Libelle 201B and enjoys the fun and the challenge of cross-countries and fettling. A Condor user for several years, Tony 'competes' in tasks via the internet. Lately, with a growing interest in simulators at HUS, he decided to host tasks for club members and others for the winter season. This proved to be not as easy as first imagined.



Even on a summer day there's snow on them there hills!

Experiencing Provence on a thermic day