

perfectly straight. It was still wonderfully sensitive to pitch control; it didn't do steep turns on lateral control but reacted immediately and predictably.^{6,7}

It became clear that Lilienthal had found the answer to a key question: how to combine a large wing surface and keep the controllability of a monoplane. He had struggled before whenever he tried to increase the wing area by increasing the span. Then, in October 1895, he had finally overcome this problem – the *Grosse Doppeldecker* flew majestically in low winds.

For the very first time Lilienthal handed the glider over to a man who had no flight experience to give it a try. American physicist Robert W. Wood met Lilienthal at the Gollenberg flying site and flew and landed the glider on his own. He immediately made plans to buy one, and later described his afternoon with Lilienthal and his own flight experience in an article. The two had met a week before Lilienthal's fatal crash.

One could say that Andy and George's flights were similar to the flight made by this American flight enthusiast 124 years ago. George had flown on the second day but had to return to work on the third. Andy flew each of the days. It took him only a couple of attempts to fly higher,

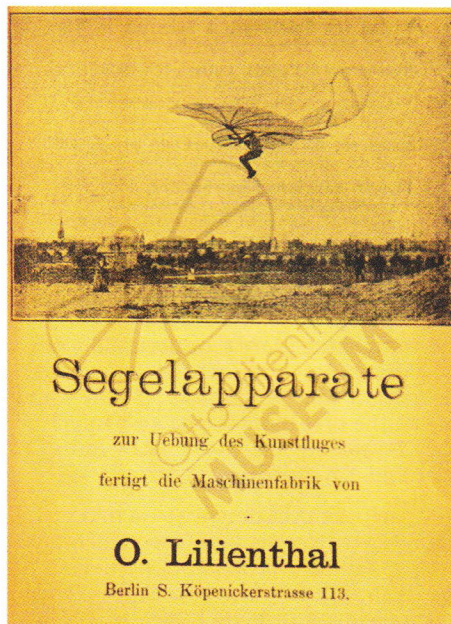
longer and in a more controlled way than Markus, but it was Markus who had brought them all together and spared no effort to bring the glider to this point – authentically made, perfectly trimmed, and transported to just the right place to be tested.

Andy weighed 55 pounds less and had 25 years more experience in hang gliding, and it showed; he was able to perform perfect flights. Not high enough for full turns but always safe, always stable, and under full control, lasting up to 14 seconds and sailing more than 100 yards.

Seeing the *Grosse Doppeldecker* in flight inspires tremendous respect for the man who designed, built and successfully and repeatedly flew a series of aircraft before anyone else. We would therefore like to conclude this article with the words of Wilbur Wright⁸ who, in an article published about Otto Lilienthal in 1912, wrote:

'No one equalled him in power to draw new recruits to the cause; no one equalled him in fullness and clearness of understanding of the principles of flight; no one did so much to convince the world of the advantages of curved wing surfaces; and no one did so much to transfer the problem of human flight to the open air where it belonged.

'As a missionary he was wonderful. He presented the cause of human flight to his readers so earnestly, so attractively, and so convincingly that it was difficult for anyone to resist the temptation to make an attempt at it himself, ... he was without question the greatest of the precursors, and the world owes to him a great debt.'



German newspaper advert for Lilienthal's monoplane glider

