



## Soaring Achievements

*Gliding - an Introduction*

### **Commentary:**

For thousands of years men have watched the birds in flight and dreamed of the time when they too could leave the Earth and fly through space. But it was not until the first half of the 19th century that the pioneers of flying began to experiment scientifically with gliders, that is, aeroplanes not provided with an engine. The early efforts of these bold experimenters prepared the way for the modern aeroplane with gliding as a fascinating form of sport, and today all over the world men and women are learning the ways and moods of the air at flying clubs.

### **Narrator: (Francesca Hunt)**

From the earliest days of gliding to now there's been a constant process of changing and modifying designs. That process has involved making and refining mathematical models to make a glider that performs as well as possible. Having no engine, a glider needs a hand to get airborne. After that it's at the mercy of gravity and air currents, but that's not as restricting as you might think. There are many factors which will affect the ability of a glider to fly from one place to another. Not least, there's the weather and, in particular, the speed and direction of the wind. There's the glider's mass and also the angle of glide to be taken into account. And, as if this wasn't enough, the pilot has constantly to see out sources of lift to compensate for the glider's otherwise continuous descent through the air.