

# Cabletalk

## Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

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June 2018

### Editor's notes

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*Chris Leggett*

I was struggling for copy for the last issue and now I have more copy and stories than I know what to do with, thanks to some remarkable achievements – hence the bumper issue – could not leave any of these out. First 300k flights for Mark Kidd and Tim Horbury, Silver for Andrew Woolley, plenty of field selection practice for Jonathan Hill and a first solo flight for Sam Coole. Well done to everyone – fantastic achievements.

### Steve's notes

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*Steve Codd*

Didn't the boy do well, to coin a phrase. Mark's achievement flying around Gatwick from and to Kenley under all the airspace for a 300k flight, let alone being his first 300k has got many in the BGA sitting up and taking notice. Let's try and keep the ball rolling... Well done Mark.

Another achievement was young Sam Coole going solo on Monday 23 June and he followed that milestone by soaring for 20 minutes on his second solo.

The club fleet is all up and running and I've even seen the gliders getting cleaned at the end of the day; please continue to look after the kit. The Vega has a canopy cover, please can you ensure it's used when the glider is in the hanger and when the glider is not being flown. The cover helps protect the valuable canopy and also helps to keep it clean.

Practice doing this for the Vega because we have covers on order for the Grobs.

Finally I'd like to thank all those of you who are volunteering to fill the various slots on the rota, ably managed by Chris. It would be nice to see some different names on the rota, there are over 60 members but the same 10 or so heroes keep stepping up! Due to various reasons, the two stalwarts of the Monday and Friday winch driving are not able to continue to the extent that they have been in the past years. Many thanks go to David and Bryan. Why not get yourself trained to drive the winch – if nothing else as winter approaches the winch has a heater!!! Solo pilots only please – those still not solo have enough on their plate already.

That's all for now folks, fly safe and have fun.

### A trip to the seaside – AKA Kenley 300

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*Mark Kidd*

For some time now I have been trying to achieve my gold C, but despite several trips to Bicester, Sutton Bank and Shenington, no luck. On a recent trip to Shenington, during down time, we discussed trying to achieve the distance leg by flying around Gatwick's class D airspace. Several discussions over the years have rejected this as too difficult given height and airspace restrictions. However, not to be deterred, Tim, Jon and I came up

with a plan that would see us leaving Kenley and attempting this feat.

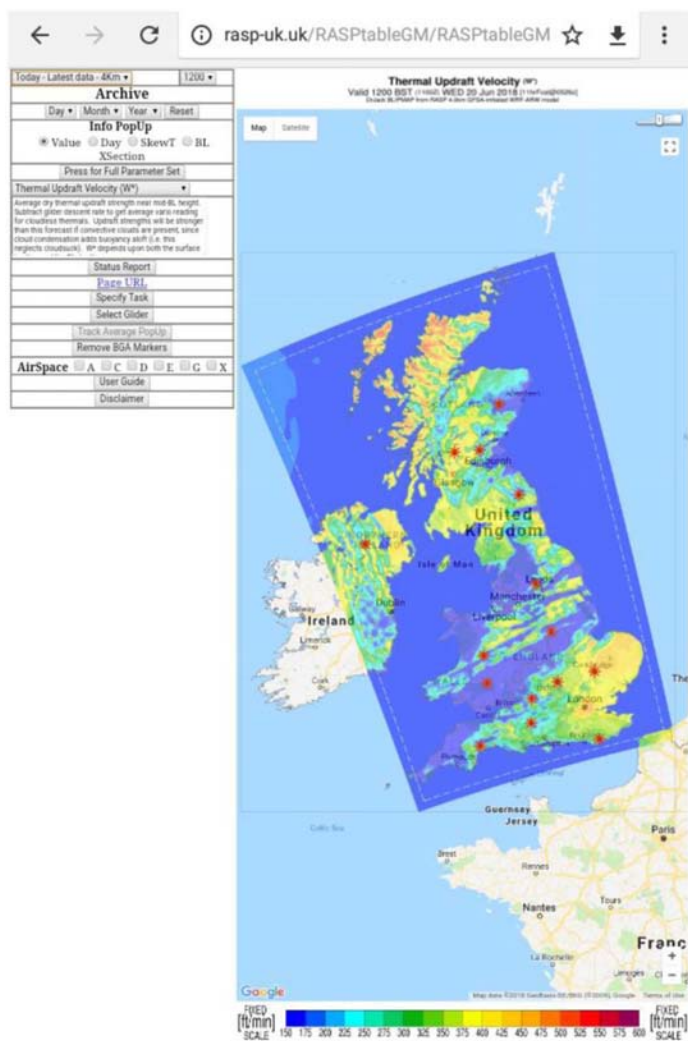
A few days later the weather was looking stunning and the attempt was on. The route being, Kenley, Ashford South, Ringmer, Micheldever and back to Kenley. I looked to see what would make it a diamond 300 but that would only work with Crystal Palace as remote start, I soon abandoned that idea as it would be a struggle just getting back to Kenley. Jon had work to do on his glider so looked like out of the three of us that had initially discussed this, it was just Tim and me.

Steve felt the route we had chosen was a bit too challenging and that a remote start from Lasham may work better and would give us a better chance of success. Challenges included getting back to Kenley at the end of the day with a high cloud base, dying thermals and having to stay below 2,000ft (all heights QFE Kenley), all of which would be against us making it back. Plus, and not

least, violating any airspace was obviously a no no. However, for several reasons we stuck with plan A.

Thursday morning I'm awake before 6am – check RASP and its gone to pot – looks like it won't be happening both the 'today' 04:20 forecast and a bit later the 06:00 'latest' forecast look rubbish for the task.

Well RASP can behave oddly, the following run at 07:40 looks mega again so over to the airfield, Cu is developing very early, over-development looks likely but we get on and rig. By the time we are online the Cu has dissipated and the Kenley blue hole is established. Steve volunteers to be sniffer and is soon soaring in the blue.



Leaving Paddock Wood



So time to get on with it – I have the second cable – Tim will have to wait for the next pair. I agree to hang around for him to mark a thermal. I launch at 11:09 to 1,150ft and find a climb over Whyteleafe, all looks good. So I fly around locally awaiting Tim's launch. Tim fails to get away first try (The SZD is renowned for low launches) so I wait again for him to get another launch. Fly around sizing the situation up – lots of sink, down to 600ft at one point but a 3k climb gets me back to 1,800ft quickly.

Around 30 minutes later Tim gets a second launch and this time he gets a climb. I'm still circling round using airbrakes to stop climbing – sky is superb if a bit blue. A bit later I



*Hastings*



*Brighton*

mistakenly think he has landed again (I saw two glass gliders – actually someone had brought the second Grob out) and at 11:51 I send Tim a message saying I'm going to start, I'm in a thermal so seems a good time to get phone out. Of course I then fall out of the sky and takes me 10 minutes to get sorted out.

12:06 I start – not sure if Tim is following, can't raise him on the radio but game on – quite blue on track but enough Cu to work with, just stay high! Sevenoaks and I'm down to a 1,000ft checking fields out, amazing what 7–8kts down does! But I had pushed through the sink to a likely cloud –



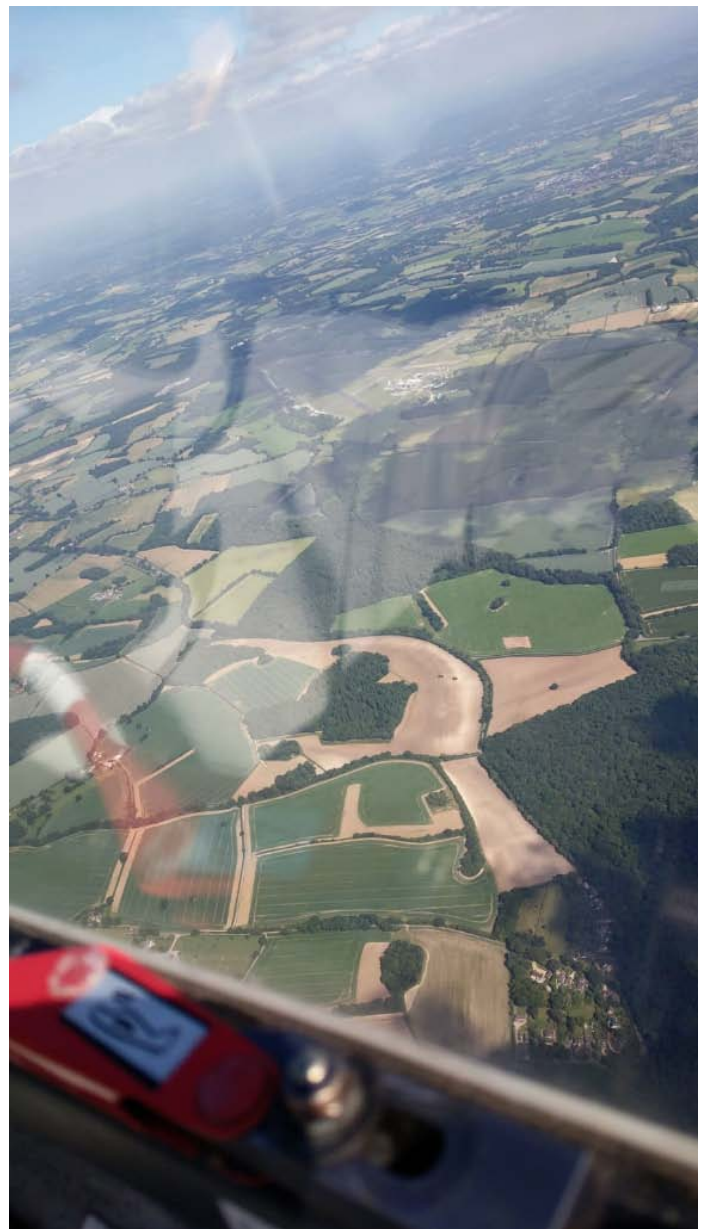
not working well initially but eventually centre and get back up.

Pass Tonbridge and again heavy sink – push towards Paddock Wood and I’m now down to below 600ft – I have a field selected and am trying to climb over a solar farm. Struggling, low here is 300ft. Waste a lot of time, over 20 minutes before I climb and get back on track now at 2,700ft. Pass south of Headcorn in good air, climb at Tenterden to 3,600ft drifting south of track. Turn Ashford at over 3,000ft – this is more like it.

Great glide from east of Hasting to almost Ringmer 31km at L/D of 53! But waste more time getting into the turn sector for Ringmer (Oudie had us at a 3km sector when it was



*Solent with Isle of Wight*



*Lasham*

actually infinite). Push on, Brighton, over the top of Shoreham airfield then Worthing – Cu is well out to sea, very tempted to try it but take the safe option. Pass well to south of Parham then a nice climb at Goodwood – well south of track but airspace here is better.

North of Portsmouth approaching Southampton airspace – sky looks better west but I need to go north – snake along east side of Solent CTA, need to ensure I don’t drift in whilst climbing – can see Lasham now. Turn Micheldever at 15:48 just have to get back to Kenley.

Over the top of Odiham’s ATZ – but knowing that I need to be back down below





2,000ft at Guildford – easy bit done, now it gets harder. Oudie and LX bit suddenly warn me about airspace – stupid I forgot I need to be down below 3,000ft before Farnham. Almost cross at 3,300ft but a rapid U turn and acceleration. Overdone it though, now cross at 2,500ft, wasted 500ft.

Approaching Guildford, down to 1,000ft weak climb to 1,300ft so push on, again picking fields as I go – will be like this all the way to Kenley. Climb from 700ft to 1,800ft and arrive at Leatherhead about 1,000ft. Just trying to find a climb and there is a terrific

throbbing sound – Chinook straight ahead 200ft below me – I promptly turn left before getting a climb – I did try and snap a picture once he was passed and I was climbing, unfortunately could not see screen in sunlight and had managed to switch to front camera – doh.

So now Epsom racecourse is clearly visible, head towards it as good landout option – get a climb south east of Leatherhead and I’m on glide – have to be careful some of the sink is over 5k but once I’m certain I start to pile it on. There’s a Grob over the airfield – I’m



keeping a good eye on it as I cross the line at -60ft (according to trace – air pressure has changed in 6 hours) pull up, drop the wheel, quick circuit and land.

Within seconds Steve lands the Grob alongside me and is first to offer his congratulations – Wow I really managed it!

I did not take many pictures during the flight – but I had a video camera running the whole time – so Chinook should be on there along with other interesting shots. I turned it off on landing along with the other electronics. Unfortunately when I got home and downloaded the video I actually turned it on after landing and the only footage is towing the glider back to the club – doh – I had not recorded any of the flight. But managed a few shots on my phone and definitely a flight I won't forget in a hurry.

## Gold Distance

*Tim Horbury*

They say that to get a distance flight you need the right glider, in the right place, on the right day. The weekend of the 19–20 May was looking good weather-wise and I was itching to take our SZD-55 for a proper long flight. The plan was to take it to Lasham on Saturday morning, bring it back Sunday evening and hopefully get a flight of 100k or so.

They also say that successful gliding is about planning. This is where I was not great. Some things I did ok: I booked a room in the bunkhouse for Saturday night and went to Kenley on Friday, where I flew the 55 for an hour, then Chris very kindly helped me get the glider ready for travel and gave me a trailer driving lesson. The forecast still looked ok, I checked the NOTAMS and charged the battery and Oudie IGC for an hour or so and went to bed, but I didn't

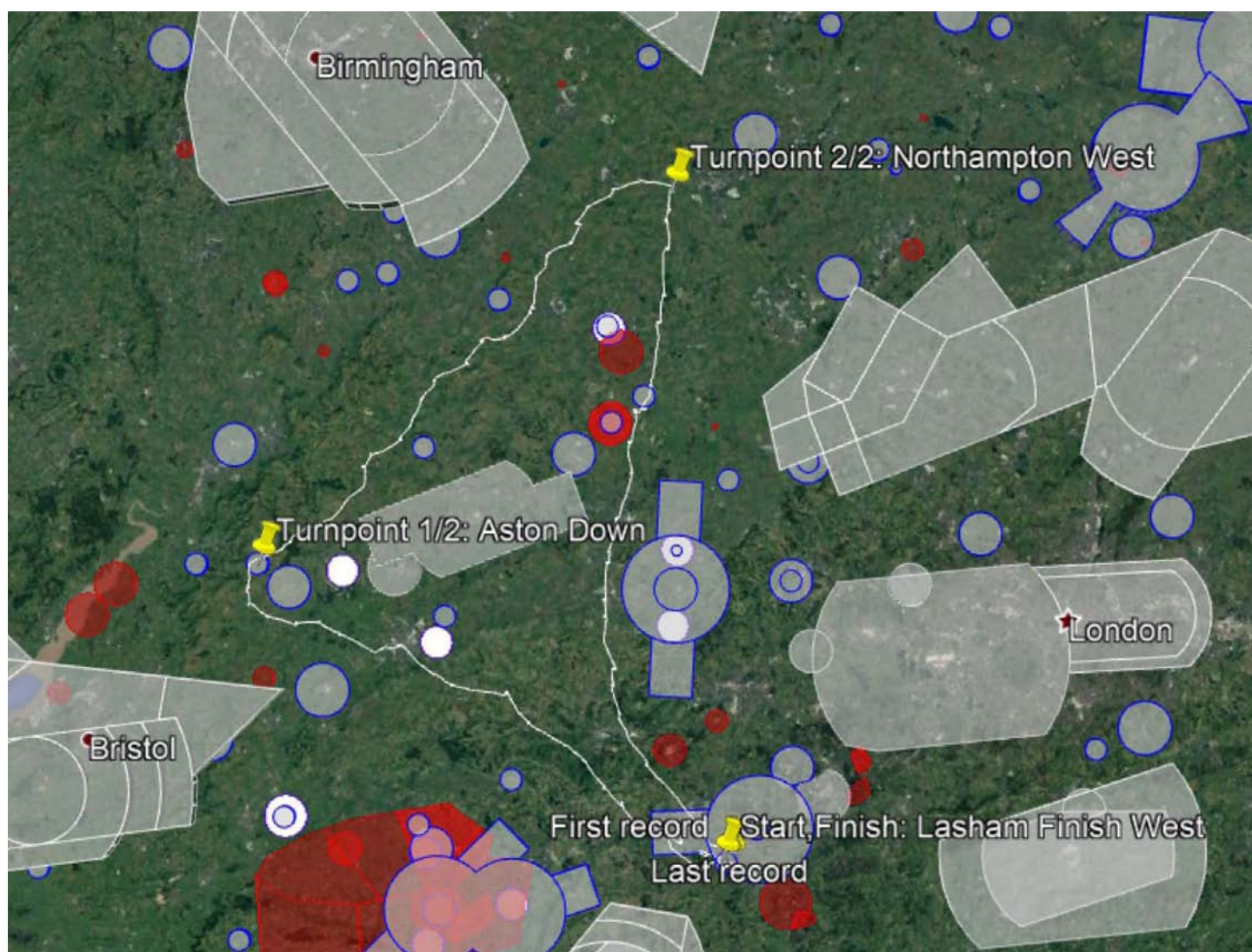
really sleep. At this point I'd already made my biggest mistake: batteries take more than an hour to charge!

I got up at six on Saturday morning, drove to Kenley to pick up the trailer, carefully drove to Lasham and rigged in time for the 9:30 cross country briefing. Colin the CFI talked through the weather forecast (very light winds, blue to the North East but better to the West and the thermals should last until quite late) and showed the day's club tasks. The 300k was Lasham/Aston Down/Northampton/Lasham which looked enormous but sort of possible – and a couple of people had offered to retrieve me if I landed out – so I sidled up to Colin: 'I've brought my glider over from Kenley today – how about the 300 task?' A thoughtful pause, then 'Ok' which was good enough for me, so much extra faffing about: make sure everything's in the trailer for a retrieve, I've got people's mobile numbers, sunscreen and hat on, buy a sandwich, lots of water in the CamelBak, task in the Oudie, draw it on the map, check the airspace ...

I finally got to the launch point about 10:30 but didn't get an aerotow until 11:30. It was fairly blue, but there were thermals. I finally left on task about 12:00 but the Oudie didn't start properly and kept showing me the direction back to Lasham: not a great vote of confidence. I flew back over the start line but the same thing happened again. I had no idea what the problem was, but I guessed it meant I wouldn't have a valid badge claim. No time to land and fiddle though, so I just flew off North-West in a huff.

It was a bit hazy, there weren't many clouds and I made slow progress past Newbury and Hungerford. There were a few other gliders around, all going faster than me, but the lift wasn't great and I really didn't want to land out so I stayed high. Swindon had a storming thermal, I skirted Kemble and then I was over Aston Down where there were lots of gliders floating about and the clouds





were much better. No time to hang around, so I pushed on North-East and the lift just got better and better so I tried to speed up, flying at about 80k between thermals. After a while I realised that I had only a vague idea of where I was (the Cotswolds all look the same from the air!) and I was grateful to the Oudie, not for the last time that day. There were a lot of other gliders around, sometimes too many and I gave up on a few thermals that were too crowded – I was glad to have FLARM. Before I knew it, I was passing Shenington and Banbury. Everything was going so well!

Of course, that's when it went to worms. As I got close to the turning point in Northampton the clouds started disappearing and so did the other gliders: this was the blue from the forecast. Then the vario flashed: low battery. We've got a LiFePO4 which are supposed to last forever, but not if you don't

charge them for long enough! Ten minutes later everything went black. No radio, no FLARM, no audio vario. In the blue, and I couldn't find a thermal. The Oudie has a big battery so was fine but then it beeped, said it had lost GPS signal (from the dead FLARM) and stopped updating the map. I'd been flying for 3½ hours by then, I was over 100k from Lasham and needed to climb over 9,000ft to get there. I must admit, it was a bad moment and home seemed a long, long way away.

Time to focus. I pulled the USB lead out of the Oudie, which made it flip to its internal GPS, so we've got a map again. I remembered an obscure menu option that beeps out an audio vario based on changes in your height: not great, but better than nothing. I was at about 3,000ft and I couldn't really think of anything to do but head South towards Bicester, which I reckoned I could

make. I arrived at 2,000ft and the lift was really weak. I found a puff which kept me up while I looked at the airfield, tried to work out where to land and have a think about a retrieve. My brother lives in Oxford: could I leave the glider overnight, stay with him and get it tomorrow? By now I'd climbed a bit so flew further South, keeping in range of Bicester, in case there was another thermal – and there was! So a bit further, then it was Oxford which had a really strong one, and it was looking like maybe I'd get back, or at least past Didcot where the retrieve is quicker.

I started meeting other gliders again and a Libelle in particular saved me. He was centring in the thermals – it's alright for some, with working varios – so I just copied his circle. I decided to find out who it was when I got back and thank them. The Libelle raced off into the distance but by then it was looking ok, I'd climbed to 4,000ft so I took it slowly at best glide, cruised in over Basingstoke and got to Lasham with 2,000ft to spare. I landed after 5 hours 38 minutes (and yes thank you, I did put the wheel down) and was met by Tom Arscott who had arrived minutes earlier after doing 500k. I was fairly certain my trace wasn't valid because of the GPS gap and the Oudie not starting the task properly, but I was just so happy to be back at the airfield. I was shattered and Tom very kindly invited me to the Juniors' barbecue that evening, so beers were taken, and I didn't fly on the Sunday, just slowly and carefully drove home.

I know there are quite a few Kenley people who have flown lots of 300k tasks, but for me it was a huge achievement and a big step up from 100k. There are a few of us at Kenley who are starting to fly further, so in case it helps anyone here are my lessons learned, particularly from things I did wrong. They all come from one obvious fact: 300k is quite a long way and it takes ages, so you have to think a bit differently:

- Charge your battery properly: this was my biggest mistake.
- Charge your second battery: I didn't do this at all. Idiot!
- Get a moving map with a big battery. The OudieIGC carried on through everything and got me home.
- Learn how to use your kit. I now know which button to press to start the task.
- Plan several possible tasks beforehand. Even better, ask someone experienced to plan them for you.
- You cover enough ground so the weather can be quite different around the task. It really helped to get a good gliding weather forecast in the morning, I wouldn't have dared press on otherwise.
- Plan everything, make lists. There is a lot to remember on the morning and it's easy to forget something.
- Have in flight plumbing. I didn't have to use it, but I was glad to have it just in case.
- Buy a SZD-55! It was so good, especially in weak lift. What a star!

I had a look at my trace afterwards and it seemed ok. Colin agreed so I have now submitted my paperwork for Gold distance and Diamond goal – I don't really understand how I got the Diamond as well, but apparently it's true and I'm not complaining.

Oh, and that glider I met over Didcot? One of the instructors came up to me that evening to thank me: he'd lost both batteries in his Libelle so he was grateful to have been thermalling with a glider with a working vario. It turned out that neither of us had a working instrument, but we both assumed that the other did. Still, it seemed to work . . .



# Finally Silver!

*Andrew Woolley*

I looked at RASP and the following day, Thursday 10 May, looked very promising. A strong westerly wind suggested that a flight to Challock in the Discus should be possible. Having done the 5-hour leg of my Silver in April 2014, it was time to be brave and go for the distance and height legs, so I started my planning, firstly recruiting Richard Fitch as my retriever and then doing the flight planning. The distance to Challock is 65.5k and it sits higher than Kenley at 600ft so there wouldn't be a problem in achieving the required distance. Just before Challock the class G airspace goes up to 5,500ft so, again, given good thermals the required 1,000m height gain should be easily achievable. But as we all know, the tricky bit is staying below 2,500ft (QNH) without ending up in a field, until you can go up to 3,500ft just before Maidstone.

Rising early on the Thursday the weather looked great so I quickly breakfasted, checked for NOTAMS and headed for the airfield, meeting Jason Barton who had a similar plan to fly to Challock in the K6E. We explained our intentions to Steve Codd who

was supportive and gave us both a thorough briefing on field selection and airspace violation before we set off.

I was ready to launch first, so with some trepidation I hooked up and launched but I only got to 900ft and found myself in heavy sink. With not a sniff of lift I landed after 3 minutes! That was not how it was meant to go! The sky still looked great so I put that down to experience and took another launch at noon, this time reaching a much more reasonable 1200ft and found myself immediately in a strong thermal that took me straight up to the legal limit. Ignoring Steve's sensible advice to soar locally for a while before starting the task, I rolled out of the thermal, reset the altimeter to QNH and headed south east, very quickly finding myself over the M25 by Oxted at just on 2,000ft. I found a reasonable thermal and left that at 2,400ft. Looking ahead there were plenty of good looking cumulus clouds on my planned track so I followed the motorway to Sevenoaks. Initially I was still in strong lift so put the stick forward to avoid breaching airspace and found myself cruising all the way to Sevenoaks at 80-90k arriving there with plenty of height just 20 minutes after my launch from Kenley. But





suddenly I was in sink and was down to 1,600ft and looking for a good field before I hit a strong thermal over the town centre. I was seeing 6k up on the averager so after only 5 turns I was back up to 2,400ft and heading off east following a cloud street, which, with a bit of dolphining, allowed me to keep my height and fly straight until I crossed into the higher airspace just south west of Maidstone. I then took another climb before pressing on to the east again. I gradually lost height though but found another strong thermal climb over Sutton Valence that took me up to 2,600ft.

Pressing on towards Challock I was gradually losing height and with the airfield just in sight was down to 1300ft. I reckoned I was just high enough to do a straight in landing but that wouldn't get me my Silver height gain and probably wasn't advisable at a strange airfield. So, I found another thermal and took that to 2,600ft before flying on past Challock and finding a really strong thermal (8k up!) that took me straight to cloudbase at 4,500ft. Some slow and very rough mental calculations suggested that this probably wasn't quite enough for my height gain, based on my lowest remembered height. I figured that I'd have to wait for cloudbase to go up a bit, so I enjoyed flying around East

Kent for another couple of hours looking at the sights while I waited for the clouds to go up. The views around me were magnificent. Looking north I could see the Isle of Sheppey and the Essex coast across the Thames Estuary. Looking south I could see Ashford and the nuclear power station at Dungeness. Flying further east I got a good view of Canterbury Cathedral and Dover Harbour. I then flew back to Challock and found a good thermal that took me up to just under the 5,500ft airspace limit, so I reckoned I'd got my height gain and, after throwing the Discus around the sky to lose height, radioed Challock to tell them I was arriving soon. I landed just before 3pm having flown for 2 hours and 57 minutes and rolled to a stop just in front of the clubhouse, where one of the Kent Gliding Club instructors kindly offered me a welcoming cup of coffee and signed the landing certificate on my badge claim form.

Phone calls were made back to base and I was told that Jason had landed out just east of Caterham. Richard Fitch confirmed that he would come and get me when flying stopped. He and Chris Poole soon arrived with the trailer and we got the Discus safely back to Kenley by 6:30. It had been an amazing day, made even better a few weeks





later when the BGA confirmed that I had gained my Silver! A big thank you to Steve for his wise guidance, Phil for launching me, Richard and Chris for the retrieve and all the SHGC members who have been so helpful to me since I joined the club in 2011.

## A salutary land out lesson

*Jonathan Hill*

... they say age and experience go hand in hand, I'm not so sure, but it certainly can come at a price. Shobdon in Herefordshire with the Welsh hills away in the west has a small ridge to the north with further ridges beyond, more of these during Wednesday's adventures. Following a site familiarisation and aerotow refresher with Marc C, incorporating a bit of ridge soaring on the local ridge in a northerly, I aerotowed the Cirrus for the first time – no problem. Tuesday 1st of May promised reasonable soaring punctuated by showers with an approaching front later in the day. Towing to 2,000ft I'd pencilled in Talgarth as a 60k out and return task into the westerly breeze. Having locally soared to gain height an area of rain

approached from the west, but to the south was some promising looking sky so I turned south attempting to cross in front of the rain feeling 3,200ft should be enough to cover 10k to the better sky arriving at around 2,000ft to find lift and climb away. Unfortunately, generous sink had me at 1,200ft and beyond range of Shobdon... and there was a large empty flat grass field. I scratched over a nearby ploughed field to no avail, time to break my land out duck. A nice big circuit landing into wind left me in a point-to-point horse racing field with contractors erecting marquees to one side, one of whom came over to ask, 'have you landed mate?' ... I hesitated, resisted a quick reply and asked what the field access was like, 'OK with a 4-wheel drive', I was told. Marc C, Richard CFI and Michael P duly arrived with my van and trailer and once loaded up were duly saved from the clutches of a very soft field by the contractor's foreman and his 4x4 fork lift who dragged van and trailer out of the field and up a substantial incline certainly earning his beer voucher – what a diamond geezer.

Wednesday dawned bright with a good NW breeze and a reasonable looking sky, but we all know how the thermals get broken up in these conditions. Local gliders launched





ahead of me and didn't come back. I towed out behind HGC's Euro Fox, concentrating hard on the tug in the turbulent conditions so when at 2,100ft I released under a reasonable looking cloud with a Libelle above me. I turned under the cloud but found nothing as the Libelle disappeared south. With 'push forward' ringing in my ears... I put on 60kts towards a cloud up wind... 5 down... 5 down... bong bong... and two turns under the cloud... bong bong... Hmm... position check... not over the local ridge but over the valley to the north of the ridge beyond... above ground 600ft higher than Shobdon... urgent field selection time... two possible... over a small valley some lift... one turn... nothing solid... but a buzzard above... don't like the ploughed looking field (later I learn it's a potato field... bad choice... deep furrows of soft earth)... or a

big moderately uphill green field with tram lines into wind beyond a farm house in the valley... one turn under a buzzard... clipped the thermal... the green field's mine! Focus, uphill, more wind shear, more speed... 65kts approach... line up on the tram lines... over the farm house... start to deploy airbrakes... power lines across bottom edge of field... close brakes maintain speed over lines... focus on rising ground... half brake... field has an additional slight rise... increase round out... fully held off touch down... two three what the ...!!! I'm facing from whence I've come, battery off, silence. I've broken the tail off, Ho well, what's done is done. Methodically I undid my straps and clambered out not daring to look back, aside of being a bit shocked I was fine, a glance at HKC's tail revealed it to be attached, on closer inspection I found no cracks though the tail skid



had come off, probably absorbing much of the energy possibly saving the tail boom.

I eventually found the farmer as he walked towards me in front of his manicured Edwardian house with adjacent Porsche and Range Rover, behind him several substantial barns and a fleet of artics, he was not wearing wellies! 'I'm sorry, I've landed in one of your fields, I'll have to arrange a retrieve crew, we'll not do any crop damage as we'll walk it down the tram lines'. 'I hope not', he replied dourly. 'At least you went over the power lines, the last one went under them, flattened some crop then promised to make it up to me with the offer of a glider flight, after he'd just tried to kill himself!' Anonymously with beer vouchers intact, I retreated to await the trusty trio assisted by Phil S, and HKC was retrieved to Shobdon and we to the local hostelry where the beer vouchers were duly consumed whilst I nursed my dented pride.

Lessons learned ... be aware of your exact location especially on the tow ... when you release into sink probably better to retrace your path, especially if there was lift experienced whilst towing as it'll take you back towards base ... don't be embarrassed to land back, simpler and safer than a land out ... when looking for suitable fields look further afield ... field spot earlier, though I wasn't immediately aware of the higher ground I was over ... I could have turned left towards a large flat valley which could have given me better options ... hind sight! ... but I made my decision and executed my plan ... and had I ended up facing where I was going I'd have been pleased with what was a challenging field landing. Thankfully aside of my pride there was but a few minor scratches and hopefully I'm a little wiser.

The picture looks up the gradient towards the additional rise as I'd have seen it on approach, my ground run is visible and I'd removed the tail plane.

## AGM

The AGM was held on 18 May and we managed to get to the pub within the hour! Martin Emery stepped down from the committee at the AGM and we would like to thank him for his input over many years. In his place we are delighted to welcome Terry Hagerty to the committee and I know his down to earth common sense will make him an invaluable member. Sadly, after over 13 years on the committee, Russell King resigned after the AGM and again we would like to thank him for his long and committed service, looking after Membership and IT for most of that time. At the committee meeting following the AGM, Chris Leggett was re-elected as Chairman for the next year.

## Caption competition

Can anyone think of a suitable caption?





## Solo at 16!

Congratulations go to Sam Coole who went solo in KFG on 23 June 2018. Having spent

the last few months revising for exams he soon got back into flying and Richard sent him on his first solo flight.

# Contact Details

*The Directors of the Club are:*

Jill Oake,  
Jason Barton.

*The Club Committee is made up of:*

Chris Leggett (Chairman),  
Marc Corrance (Secretary),  
Stephen Skinner,  
Trevor Fielder,  
Shona Fenion,  
Terry Hagerty.

*Reporting to the Committee are:*

Richard Fitch (CFI),  
Steve Codd (Club Manager),  
Mark Kidd (Treasurer),  
Paul Hayward (Safety Officer).

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