

Cabletalk

February 2009

Welcome to the first edition of your club newsletter for 2009. For those new members who have not seen it before, welcome to the club. This newsletter is not just a way for the club's officer to get in touch with you. It is also a way for you to get in touch with your fellow members, to relate any interesting or embarrassing experiences which you may have had.

The Club AGM will take place on 27 March. We are trying to find an alternative venue to the club house as it was rather crowded last year.

Please see the separate note that Marc has sent out with the details. This will be your chance to influence and help the club.



...that was a nice landing

Chairman Notes

At this time of year, it is traditional to look back at what has been, and forward in the hope of what might come. 2008 was a year that we probably want to forget - with disappointing weather and a rash of minor damage to aircraft, which not only lost us the flying opportunities, but perhaps more to the point, cost money to repair which we can ill afford. Despite the poor weather, the club managed a very respectable 4003 launches in 2008 thanks to the instructors, winch drivers and members. But we did recover the hangar, last done in 1990, thanks to the generosity of members with the time and donations to the Hangar Fund.

On the fight against bureaucracy, we have challenged an attempt to revalue our buildings for Business Rates purposes, we are waiting a reply to our application for Discretionary Relief from the balance of our Business Rate bill not exempted by our status as a Community Amateur Sports Club, and continue to negotiate with Defence Estates in our requirement to be able to use the whole airfield and we have failed to get an increase in airspace from the CAA.

Looking forward, the immediate good news is that the Trustees of the Philip Wills Memorial Fund have approved our application for a loan to help with the purchase of our "new" Skylaunch-built winch despite lending a big chunk to Southdown to buy their site. This will give us the twin benefits of a modern, efficient winch, and the luxury of two winches, enabling maintenance to be carried out without stopping flying. And our thanks are due to the majority of members who have contributed to the Winch Fund - which is still open for donations! Coincidentally, this Wills loan will replace an existing loan for our first Grob which we finally pay off at the end of this month - so at least we have a known track record of paying our debts!

All we need to do in 2009 is to have perfect weather, increase our launches, keep the aircraft accident-free and enjoy safe gliding!

Adrian Hewlett

Wednesday Talks

There will be a couple of Wednesday talks in the clubhouse with the aim of helping you to improving your flying. They will also help you to make the most of the soaring season this year.

British Summer Time will begin on the 29 March and should coincide with better soaring weather

The dates of the talks are:

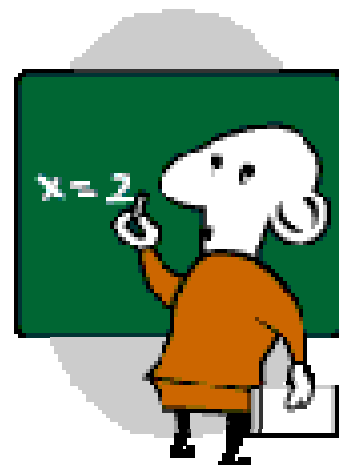
Wednesday 18 March 7:30 to 9:30 pm

Wednesday 25 March 7:30 to 9:30 pm

Steve Codd will talk about how to improve your thermalling techniques, so

if you have ever wondered why some members get longer flights than you, come along and learn how you can beat them.

Richard will talk about preparation for cross country flights and what weather to look for. But as ever, there will be plenty of time for questions and answers.



SHGC Team

Club Chairman—Adrian Hewlett

Secretary—Marc Corrance

Treasurer—Ed Brown

Membership Secretary—Russell King

Safety Officer—Michael Pointon

Club Instructor—Steve Codd

Chief Flying Instructor—Richard Fitch

Equipment—Steve Skinner

Cabletalk Editor — Richard Fitch

You can contact any member of the team through the club at:

The Surrey Hills Gliding Club
Kenley Airfield
Kenley
Surrey
CR8 5YG

Telephone Number -
020 8763 0091

Website -
www.southlondongliding.co.uk

Email -
surreyhillsgc@gmail.com

Comments on this newsletter and any contributions and photographs are welcomed and should be sent to the "Cabletalk Editor" at the club.

Steve's Column

I keep getting asked why we are only using one winch cable instead of two (some just grumble quietly in the background). There are a few reasons, so let's start with the easy one, well done everyone we did 4000+ launches last year on one cable, we don't have enough volume of gliders at the launch point to require two cables. Skylaunch's own figures show that the difference between two cable and single cable operation is three to four launches an hour, we don't get anywhere near the fifteen launches an hour that can be achieved with just one cable.

The main reason for using just one cable comes down to launch point discipline/ground handling, for some reason we seem unable to place even one glider on the same

spot more than once. Come up and watch the Air Cadets at the weekend, six gliders in a line with the front glider in exactly the same spot every time. If you've ever seen the result of a glider ground looping because it's picked up the "other" cable you would want to make sure that the gliders are launched from the same position every time. This is doubly important when we are operating off the R/W edge because it is too wet to use the grass.

So to sum up—our operation doesn't require two cables most of the time and for launch safety, until we can tighten up launch point discipline, one cable is the easier way to do things.



Grumbling out of the way, January saw the first thermals of 2009, could this be the sign of a good year to come? Hopefully we will be running some lectures on various subjects soon, I'll try and impart some hints and tips on getting more out of every flight, why some pilots soar and some don't, what signs to look for, thermalling technique etc. To help with this I've put in a bid to hire the Duo Discus for a week early May (this depends on whether it's been sold or not).

Looking back over 2008 we did very well, 4000 launches puts us up with much bigger clubs that operate 7 days a week with larger fleets and many private gliders, 5 first solos is above average to.

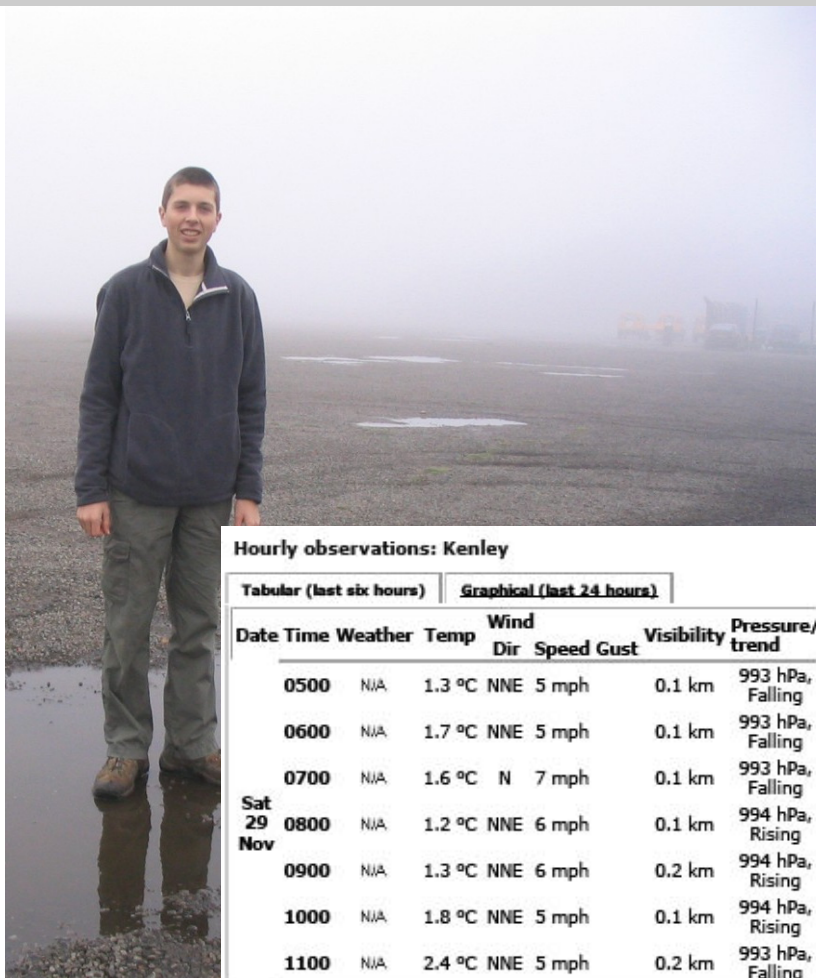
So let's get soaring and see if we can top 5000 launches this year and increase average flight times, but above all let's do it safely and make it fun.

Congratulations

A small group of members assembled at Kenley on 29 November to help Tom Arscott achieve his first solo on his sixteenth birthday and thus become the youngest pilot in England.

As his birthday was on a Saturday we had gained special permission from the ATC to use the airfield until 11am. As you will see from the chart the poor visibility did improve at 9am but then closed in again and the attempt had to be abandoned. It was horrible weather.

Tom successfully soloed shortly after on 19 December.



Hourly observations: Kenley

Tabular (last six hours)		Graphical (last 24 hours)						
Date	Time	Weather	Temp	Wind Dir	Speed	Gust	Visibility	Pressure/trend
	0500	N/A	1.3 °C	NNE	5	mph	0.1 km	993 hPa, Falling
	0600	N/A	1.7 °C	NNE	5	mph	0.1 km	993 hPa, Falling
	0700	N/A	1.6 °C	N	7	mph	0.1 km	993 hPa, Falling
Sat	0800	N/A	1.2 °C	NNE	6	mph	0.1 km	994 hPa, Rising
Nov	0900	N/A	1.3 °C	NNE	6	mph	0.2 km	994 hPa, Rising
	1000	N/A	1.8 °C	NNE	5	mph	0.1 km	994 hPa, Rising
	1100	N/A	2.4 °C	NNE	5	mph	0.2 km	993 hPa, Falling

Congratulations are also due to Brian Smith who achieved his first Solo a few days later on 22 December, well done Brian.

Tom and Brian have progressed since soloing and are now flying both the K8 and the Vega.

Closure Dates

The dates when the airfield is currently expected to be unavailable to us this year are as follows:

Thursday 9th April - Sunday 19th April 2009 (Easter)

Friday 1st May 2009

Friday 22nd May - Sunday 31st May 2009 inclusive (Whitsun Bank Holiday/ Summer Half Term)

Friday 19th June 2009

Friday 17th July - Sunday 26th July 2009 inclusive

Friday 21st August - Monday 31st August 2009 inclusive (Bank Holiday)

Friday 18th September 2009

Friday 23rd October - Sunday 1st Nov 2009 (Autumn Half Term)

What do you do next?

I have tried to set targets for progress in gliding. With a bit of luck and with help generously provided by those of greater experience, I have been fortunate enough so far to achieve something each year.

2008 presented a bit of a problem. Weather conditions always dictate ideas about extended durations or long cross country jaunts and, sadly as many of you will know, it is often the case that the right conditions come along at precisely the wrong time and you are obliged to gaze at a brilliant sky with both feet firmly stuck on the ground.

So what to do? Since moving to Hampshire I have kept a flying account at Lasham as a reciprocal member. This results in the receipt of various E-mails from the Office there, one of which, early in 2008, advertised a couple of aerobatics courses. It was too short notice for me to consider the first date, and, in any event, in April there was no way of knowing that almost the whole season was going to be soggy. The pessimist inside me urged me towards a back-up plan for the year so I fired off a reply asking for a provisional reservation on the course at the end of September. Apparently there is no such thing as a provisional reservation, it's money up front or nothing. Embarrassment obliged me to follow through and off went the cheque with a completed application form. Shortly afterwards there was an article in S&G extolling the virtues of having aerobatic experience which helped me come to terms with the rather rash commitment I had made.

The due date arrived and there were three students on the course. The first task was to get the aircraft out and inspected prior to flight. The plane was an ASK 21, one of the regular club fleet at Lasham. Very particular attention was paid to areas of greatest stress at the airbrake boxes, the wing root, rear fuselage and the stabiliser.

The Instructor then explained that the course was aimed at teaching manoeuvres to competition standard and not just for the purpose of personal entertainment. This got to be serious when he posted a six element Aresti diagram on the panel and said, "That's what you will be flying by the end of today". I confess to thinking I might have let myself in for more than I had appreciated – but you can't back out at that stage can you?

Next up was the appearance of a strange metal frame with a shoe attached to it in the profile of a leading edge. The frame was a 45° right triangle with a wire from the apex to the centre of the base. This frame was taped onto the wing tip and adjusted into place with the base wire in line with the horizontal axis of the fuselage. Briefly it was explained that this frame was the reference for manoeuvres. Straight flight would put the base wire in line with the horizon, the two other sides provided references for 45° up lines and 45° down lines, whilst the perpendicular gave a reference to the horizon for vertical up and down attitudes. All very logical but all very daunting for a complete novice at aerobatics.

Soon enough the glider was on the field and the first "mug" was away on the first flight. Not much to see from the ground as it was a bit hazy and the manoeuvring area was some distance away into the sun. All too quickly it was my turn and I climbed in with the departing words of the first student ringing in my ears "That was most interesting!" – not said with great conviction, I must say.

To begin there was a long aerotow to 4500ft, then there were HASSL checks and clearing turns, as one would expect. The first real shock was the "45° down line". Initially almost zero "G" and basically it then felt as though the glider was being pointed almost vertically at the ground. My big concern was about the VNE. A quick glance at the wing tip frame told me we were only "at 45° down despite my perception that it was much steeper. The ASI was showing rapid gain of speed until a firm pull out to just 50 down brought the speed up to a steady 105kts and from there it was into the "45° up line", also checked against the wing tip frame. Breakfast had by now travelled firmly back to its intended place, only to be re-positioned again by the reduced "G" transition back to horizontal flight with speed restored to a sedate 50kts.

The 45° down line was then repeated and at not less than 110kts the nose was pulled up, and up, and up - - - over the top at just above 40kts and then the crazy rush down back through vertical and a firm pull out to horizontal flight followed by the 45° up line. All the time the Instructor was explaining exactly what he was doing and the sequence of scanning ASI, "G" meter, attitude, reference points, etc. until each manoeuvre and the transition to normal flight was completed.

This process was repeated for the range of manoeuvres set down which included wing-overs, a humpty bump and a 2G, 270° turn. The really interesting bit was the vertical down line of the humpty bump which has to be flown with the glider having the zero lift line vertical, not the fuselage vertical. In other words, the plane is held beyond the vertical line so that it does not travel forwards relative to the airmass.

What do you do next? (continued)

All too soon the magic words, “You have control” were pronounced from the back and it was my turn to have a go. Needless to say the first attempt at a 45° down line was not exactly textbook but it certainly concentrated my mind on what needs to be done. The extra things to monitor, including the absolute priority for keeping control of the speed, adds hugely to the workload. However, after a few minutes it all seemed to make sense, not least because the aerobatics Instructors at Lasham get lots of practice and there is probably nothing they have not seen by way of errors made by new students.

Despite my anxiety at the start, the end of the first flight was the beginning of thorough enjoyment of the rest of the course. As with many at their first attempts, there was obviously much more still to learn and the opportunities for practice were seized with enthusiasm. I had some difficulty with the wingover and it seems that is not uncommon as it requires really good co-ordination to get it really clean, with the exit parallel with the entry and at the same height.

Two days and several hundred pounds later, the course concluded with lectures on safety aspects, aerodynamics and physiological aspects of aerobatic flight. Some of the latter was quite scary, especially the consequences of high “G” manoeuvres following on quickly after reduced “G” manoeuvres, when the blackout threshold can be drastically lowered. Believe me, its dangerous stuff - don't go there! There are serious issues about what particular aircraft types can and cannot do and what actions you must take if it all goes pear shaped – apart from praying that is!

With one final visit to polish up on the wingover, I eventually came away with a progress card signed up for all manoeuvres required for the BGA Basic Aerobatic badge, except the one turn solo spin. That particular manoeuvre cannot be done in the ASK 21 (Lasham's rules forbid it) so a further contribution to Lasham's funds will be necessary – its all a plot you see! I was a bit lucky on the second visit because the Instructor wanted to practice other manoeuvres and invited me to be ballast on his flying account. Full roll, quarter clover-leafs, inverted flight and vertical entry humpty bump were on the agenda. Afterwards I confessed I'd just love to have a go at a Cuban Eight one day.

If anyone had said to me, at this time last year, that I would be interested in flying aerobatics, I would have said they were bonkers. It's a good job I never took any money on that one. Now my perspective is very different.

It is not just about aerobatic manoeuvres, it is about understanding (within a safe environment) the limits of the aircraft we get to fly, what we can and cannot do with them, and why. There is a lot more to it than I had appreciated and I am sure that the experience has added a dimension to my understanding of gliding that I would be the poorer for not having. If you get the chance and have the money, I can recommend you take a course, even if it is something you never bother to do again.

So what about 2009? Ah, now that's a good question!

Ingram Gavan

Just a cautionary note, aerobatics must not be attempted by anyone unless Steve Codd or Richard Fitch have discussed it with you on the day. A glider can get out of control very quickly unless you have had proper training and know what you are doing. Richard Fitch.



Mick's Silver Distance

Mick Ely's account of his 'Silver C' badge flights.

I had a fantastic week at Husbands Bosworth. Straight into flying on Monday 6th August armed with a logger, map and a bit of Dutch courage. I released from an airtow at 1800 feet and went straight into a 5 knot thermal! Now this was good. I took it to 4000 above the airfield and stayed there for a while trying to muster up the courage to turn my back on the airfield. Yes-no-yes-no YES!! I set off and managed to see the Wind Farm near Fine-



Mick at HusBos
With the Junior

don about 35k from HusBos. I got there relatively high so I was definitely not going back. I sighted Grafham Water and headed off again towards a nice strong looking cloud and thought 'go for it'. What happened next was what I had been warned about, sink, sink and more sink -4 -6 -8 the needle on the vario disappeared. But wait a minute, what did the instructors say, expect large amounts of sink in between the lift (it seemed like an echo in my head). After what seemed a life time in sink and getting nearer to the unsuspecting cows grazing next to a field that I quite fancied for myself (and not for grazing I might add), the glider became a little unstable, then BANG, oh I thought it really works, 4 knots lift so I tucked the wing in quite aggressively and seemed to be turning on a knife edge, 5 up, 6 up, 8 up in total and up to cloud base at

about 4500 feet in no time at all. I calmed myself down after all that adrenalin pumping excitement and headed SE towards the south side of Grafham Water keeping Sackville and Little Staughton in view just in case any problems arose.

Anyway, St Neots appeared in view and knowing the glide ratio and height, and all the rest of that stuff one apparently needs to know, I knew that I was home and dry. I arrived above Gransden Lodge after 1 hour 40 minutes from HusBos and at a very respectable height of 4000 feet, as everybody does on their first cross country apparently, so I thought why be different. I had a little cruise around only to be made aware nature was about to call and with no aides on board I commenced my decent into Gransden Lodge (that sounds quite good I thought). Gear down, oh silly me no retractable undercarriage on the Junior, down wind checks complete and adjusting the 250 feet height difference as I was still on HusBos QFE, I landed safely.

On Tuesday I did not fly.

On Wednesday I tried to psyche myself up for the intrepid 5 hour duration flight. I managed 4 hours but then made a mistake by picking the wrong cloud, struggled, got to about 1500 feet above the airfield and then landed after 4 hours 19 minutes. I felt a bit like I didn't want to try again due to the boredom factor of trying to fly for five hours and staying local to the airfield. However, I was hurled into the air again on Thursday where the weather was predicted to be not as good as Wednesday's. RUBBISH, plenty of strong thermals of 6 and 8 knots up with a cloud base of 5600 feet. Later in the afternoon I had some nice 1 and 2 knots up (get high stay high, some good advice I took on board). I had a ball of a time with an impressive 5 hours 33 minutes, I didn't want to fail on a marginal BGA time decision, it has been known.

A height gain of 1140 meters was achieved on my Wednesday 5 hour attempt but I did not find that out until Saturday afternoon. So, all in all, a great time with all parts of my Silver 'C' badge complete and more fun to come hopefully. Basic Instructor rating will be my next goal to achieve.



...and at Gransden Lodge after his successful 50 km