

Cabletalk

June 2009

Your new winch arrived during April. After teething problems with the gearbox it is producing some excellent and smooth launches even when there is no significant wind.

This is another huge improvement to our club facilities. The move away from wooden training gliders to the heavier Twin Astirs left our old winch short of speed in light or cross winds. The new winch copes very well in these conditions. Another change is

our use of rope as opposed to steel cable. We are watching with interest to see if it will stand up to being towed out across the runways but so far it is performing well with no obvious signs of stress. The rope is the same strength as the steel and much lighter but does have an uncanny habit of relaxing some tension after it is towed out, it will suddenly move a few inches by itself. It is also much more pleasant to handle than the steel cable.



August—Family Day and Fly-Past

Following on from the very successful Family Day last year we are planning a repeat this year on August 19th. This will be a day for members where we do not anticipate booking any trial lessons. We expect to have the BBQ up and running so put a note in your diary for this day.

Also in August there will be a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) fly past on Sunday August 16th. We are not sure of the time at the moment but we will put a note in the clubhouse when we know.



This picture of a BMFF Spitfire was taken last year as it flew very low over the Kenley Memorial.

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

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

Chairman - Adrian Hewlett

Your editor has regaled you with news of our "new" winch. I feel it's the right time to pay thanks to those Club members who have made possible much of our improvements to the Club's facilities and equipment.

Many of you may not realise that 18 members loaned £18,000 while 2 donated a further £600, to help fund the acquisition of Grob T40. Some of these loans have been repaid but £10,000 remains outstanding.

When Steve Codd hatched the plan to get the Club a re-engineered winch we went to the members for donations to a "Winch Fund". By 5 April 2009, 38 of you had chipped in a total of £3,640 from which we can claim nearly £1000 in Gift Aid relief from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. Please don't think that the winch fund is now closed - donations of whatever sum (and Gift-Aided) will always be welcome!

We were also very fortunate in securing a 5 year loan at an interest rate of 3%pa, of £17,500 from the Philip Wills Memorial Trust which made the purchase of the winch possible. Loans are very welcome, but have to be repaid at some time! I hope that the improvements we have achieved will encourage more flying from members while your committee plans how to manage the Club's resources so that by 2014 we shall be debt-free!

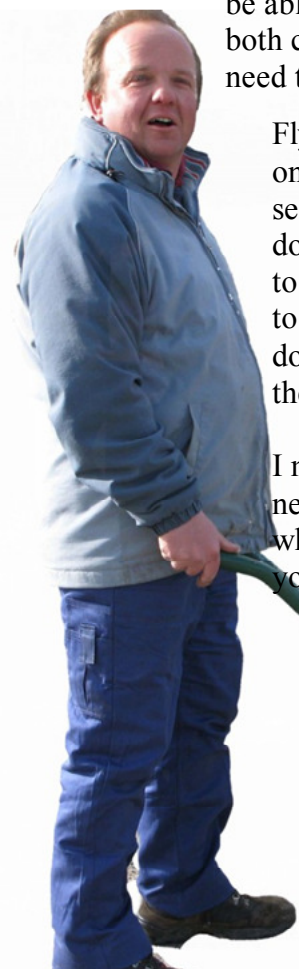
This will be easier to achieve if we remain accident-free. 2008 was expensive in repairs to gliders, so let's aim to keep a clean sheet and make our insurers happy. The beginning of June has been a sad time, with four fatalities reported, either in gliders or in glider-related accidents. Surrey Hills has been a relatively safe Club so let's all keep it that way.

In the words of Patrick Naegeli, the Chairman of the BGA, "Have fun. Stay safe!"

Steve's Corner

Hi everyone, it's me again, I am going to start by saying thanks to everyone who helped make charity day such a great success. We operated with two cables and this is now the norm. The new winch is up and running and, if we all keep the launch point discipline as good as it has been then we should be able to carry on using both cables. One thing that I need to remind everyone

about is that handling cables should be kept to an absolute minimum. With the lighter rope cables laying on top of the grass there is a greater risk of the cables being picked up, not only by the launching cable and landing gliders, but also any vehicle that may cross them. So before you pick a cable up to move it to a glider have a look up the field to see what is happening.



Flying, that's what we are about. This year is shaping up to be a good one with some really good soaring days in the bag already. It is good to see many of you trying to get bronzes. If you are struggling to soar why don't you consider flying in a two seater with a selection of instructors to see how they soar. Soaring is an art not a science and it is like trying to teach someone to ride a bike, you give advice and ideas as to how you do it, and the pupil then uses the bits that they like and they work out there own method that works for them.

I must finish by congratulating Mick, Ingram and Stephen on their newly acquired instructor ratings and hope you will all support them in what is a very big undertaking with lots of responsibilities for ensuring your safety and enjoyment of our sport.

Must go and fly.

Steve

Congratulations

To Ray King for his first solo in a glider on 5th March this year and also Brian Yates and Adrian.

To Ingram Gavan and Steve Skinner on completing their Assistant Instructor rating. Also to Mick Ely for his Basic Instructor rating. This is very good news for the club as we have had to rely on very few instructors to cover all the instructional flying that we do.

The club members who put themselves forward for instructing have to put in a great deal of their time and money to achieve a successful completion of their courses, so it is very gratifying to have three members who have been prepared to put themselves forward.

Congratulations also to all the club

members who helped us to field another very successful Charity day on May 4th, well over £1000 was raised for our nominated charities. Although the



weather could have been kinder (and warmer) we did manage to complete all the flying on the day. Trevor Fielder has worked with the charities to find a formula that works well for everyone and allows us to concentrate on providing the flying, while the charities handle the sponsorship and ticket selling.

Closure Dates

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

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)

Surrey Hills Gliding Club

More Pictures from Charity Day



Still a Beginner

by Steve Skinner

I'm not a climber. For me, getting to the top of K2 is best done from the comfort of my arm chair. I am quite happy to learn about the joy of 80 mph sub-zero winds and frost bite second hand. However, I do quite enjoy climbing the odd hill on a Sunday afternoon and if it's high enough to be called a mountain and has a cairn on top, all the better.

Having set off to climb the mountain, it's not long before, when looking up, I can only see the top. It's quite steep, but only a few hundred yards more to find that cairn. Just as I think I am nearly there, and the slope starts rounding off for the top, the next higher peak comes into view. This experience is repeated several times more before finally finding that cairn.

To me, gliding has many parallels. I remember my first taste of gliding. It was a short, but soaring flight in a K7 with, I think, John Northen on a charity day in the mid nineties. I remember being impressed at the skill this chap had to achieve to actually pilot this machine round the sky, make it defy gravity and climb higher and, after I had blundered around the sky a little, bring it back and land somewhere like where he wanted to. I also remember feeling fairly air sick!



I resolved to give it a go. It took me another 3 or 4 years and a little cajoling from my cousin to get around to it, but I did and I started climbing to reach that first peak of going solo. On the way up to that peak, it was hard to imagine that anything beyond could be quite as challenging: it must be plain

sailing after this. But, even before soloing, the next peak comes into view and it is just as challenging, be it learning to soar, flying a new type, aerotowing, Bronze leg, Silver distance, BI rating etc. This is one of the things I like about gliding - there is always a challenge, and no matter how big the challenge seems, the next one somehow seems just as big and so it is with the latest peak I have climbed. I now have

a small piece of card that tells me I am an Assistant Instructor and an email from the BGA National Coach wishing me luck and reminding me to follow the advice given on the course I attended.

So, I look forward to this next challenge: that of using the skills I have been taught and hopefully helping others to enjoy and progress in our sport and, yet more importantly, stay safe. From where I stand at the moment, this next peak to climb looks just as daunting as the first and yet I look forward to it with some enthusiasm, firm in the knowledge that I am still just a beginner. No cairn in sight yet.

Changes

The Clubhouse has been modified to produce a much better layout which is lighter and more open . It will now accommodate bigger meetings. In the past some of the committee meetings had been a bit of a squeeze.

The transformation took place over the half-term closure last month. A big thank you to everyone who helped in this major improvement to our facilities.



Competition



Who is this aviator?

Not a recent photograph but he is still an active member of the club. If you think you know the answer contact the Editor, there may be a prize.

If you have any mystery pictures for a future edition Cabletalk please send them to the Editor.



Russell received a parking ticket for landing out on Epsom Downs on the last day of April.

Actually, the Downs Conservators turned out to be friendly and very helpful in assisting Russell to retrieve his glider from the downs.

His flight lasted half an hour from take off to landing and, although he made good progress towards the downs, he was unable to find sufficient lift to make the return journey.

Shobdon at Easter

This Easter a small group of us visited the Hereford Gliding Club at Shobdon at the invitation of Peter Poole. Peter moved to Hereford after retiring as our CFI. Shobdon is a busy general aviation airfield with light aircraft, microlights and gliders all operating side by side. It is situated a few miles from the Welsh border in very dramatic scenery.

Marc organised the trip with Richard Fitch, Philip Skinner, Russell King and Ben Watkins making up the group. We took with us three gliders, a Discus, a Vega and an Open Cirrus.

The weather was wet on the Saturday but very good on Sunday and OK on Monday. While the east of England was grey and damp, the west was sunny and very thermic. We all enjoyed very good flights in airspace free from restrictions and thermals taking us to over 6000 feet.

The only landing away from Shobdon was by Marc who found himself low and landed at the Midland Gliding Club at Long Mynd. Marc will be returning there for Competition Enterprise at the beginning of July and we wish him luck and hope that the weather is favourable.

Easter trip to Shobdon

Marc with the Discus, he managed the only cross-country flight when he landed at the Long Mynd



Above—Shobdon as seen from the west.

Left—Russell with his Vega

Right—Ben Watkins (who soloed on his sixteenth birthday at Kenley) with Hereford Gliding Club's Junior



Left—Richard with the Discus over the border country at 5,800 feet. The highest he managed was 7000 feet above Shobdon.