

Cabletalk

October 2010

Welcome to the autumn edition of Cabletalk, the Surrey Hills Gliding Club magazine.

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and much, much more.



RAF Kenley Entrance
Now Victor Beamish Avenue

Christmas Dinner

With Christmas only a couple of months away, the Christmas Dinner and Prize Giving has been booked for Saturday the 4th December at the Woodcote Park Golf Club, Coulsdon. This is our most



popular social event of the year and we look forward to seeing as many members and friends there as possible.

An invitation will be sent out shortly so please keep this date free in your diary.

Surrey Hills Gliding Club 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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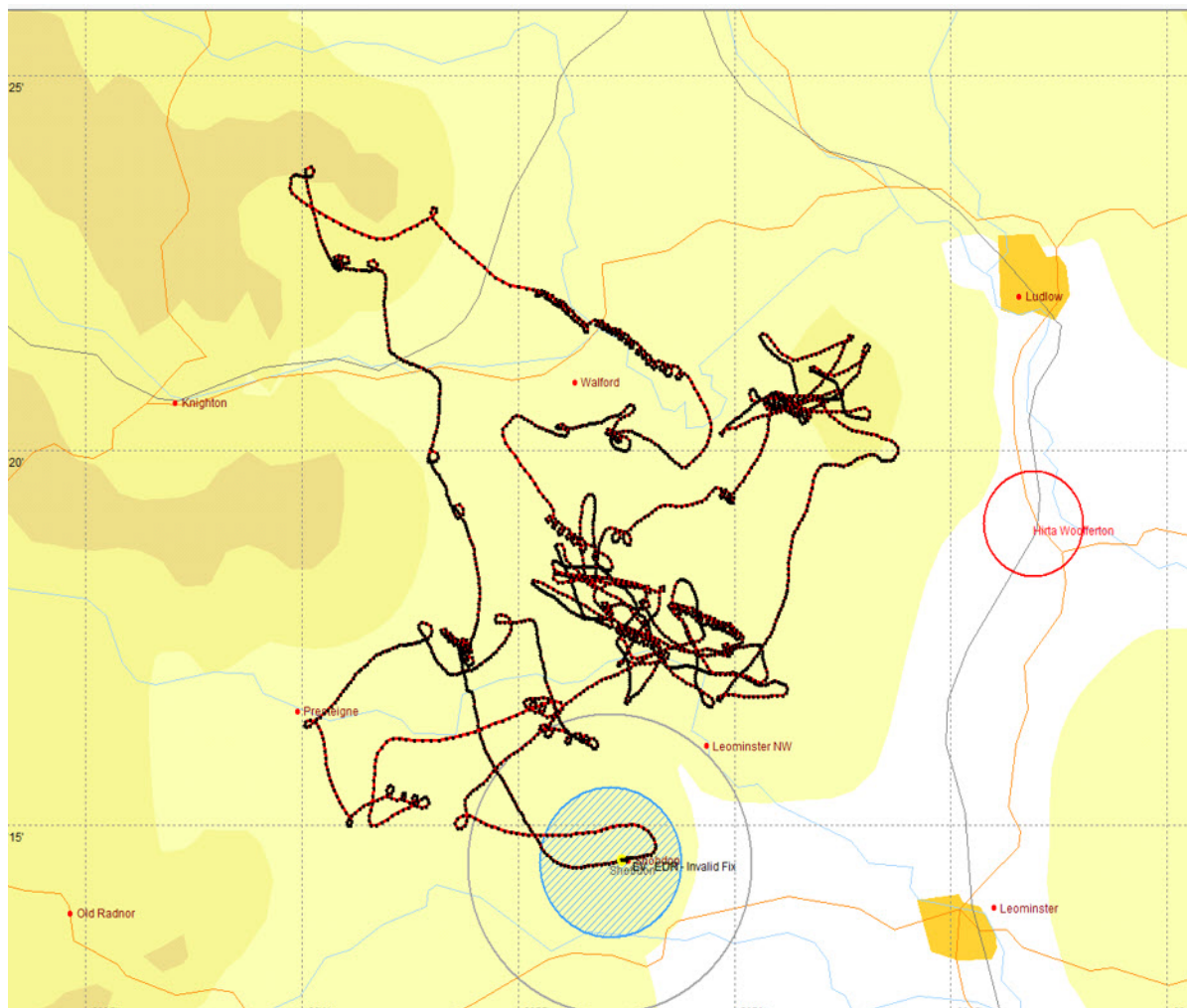
Comments on this newsletter and any contributions and photographs are welcome and should be sent to the "Cabletalk Editor" at the club.

Shobdon 2010

By Richard Fitch

A group of Kenley members went to Shobdon in Herefordshire this Easter to experience once again the lack of airspace restriction over the airfield. As many of you will know Peter Poole, our previous CFI, moved to the area and was keen for us to visit his new club.

The weather was cold and a bit damp for most of our stay but we all managed some flying. I was lucky and contacted wave lift to the north of the airfield. It was fairly weak but took me to 7000 feet before I lost it and slowly returned to the airfield. I was airborne for just under 3 hours and my feet were freezing. Later when I downloaded the trace of my flight I was surprised to see that it looked like a welsh dragon.



The weather on Saturday was wet with low cloud, so no prospect of flying. We opted to go to the RAF museum at Cosford and spent the day, in the dry, looking at the fantastic collection of planes. All the cold war fighters were there including a Lightning that is suspended vertically from the ceiling. Both Cosford and Shobdon were used for training glider pilots during the Second World War which is why Shobdon has a very wide runway which allowed two gliders to be towed up together (see picture on page 10).

The Lincoln Run

We have recently used the Lincoln Run for launching gliders and several members have asked "why the Lincoln run"?

It is named after an Avro Lincoln which lay on its belly with the undercarriage missing. It was a Lincoln 1 RE242, coded ZQ-V which served with the BBU (Bomb Ballistic Unit). In 1955 it was fairly complete but later it was used for fire practice and eventually became just a pile of scrap. Does anybody know why this bomber was left at Kenley?



The Avro Lincoln was a four engined heavy bomber which first flew on 9 June 1944 and was developed from the Avro Lancaster. The Lincoln became operational in August 1945, too late to see action in the Second World War but it did see action in Kenya. In all 604 Lincolns were built. The Avro Shackleton marine patrol aircraft was derived from the Lincoln, as was the Tudor airliner, which used the wings of the Lincoln with a new pressurised fuselage. The Shackleton

remained in service with the RAF until 1990.



Avro Lincoln

Club News

Congratulation to Marc Corrance who this year achieve his Gold Distance and Diamond Goal flight whilst completing in Competition Enterprise. I cannot remember any other Kenley member getting a Diamond badge. I will try and get Marc to tell us how he did it!.

Congratulations also to Chris North who is now our latest Basic Instructor. And Tim Horbury who flew without the talking ballast and achieved his first solo in September.

If you have some spare time during the half-term closure please visit the club and help with painting and other jobs around our compound.



Closure Dates 2010

These are the closure dates that we have been given by the ATC.

Friday 22nd October - Sunday 31st Oct 2010 (Autumn Half Term)

Monday 27th December - Friday 31st

From our Chairman

Your Editor, by virtue of regular badgering, has at last shamed me into putting two fingers to the keyboard. But what to say ????

I'll start with the serious issues. The BGA are struggling on our behalf against the dead hand of European bureaucracy on the following topics:-

- * Pilot licensing
- * Standard European Rules of the Air (SERA) which could involve you filing a flight plan with ATC before you take every launch
- * Flying outside VMC

And those in the BGA with hopefully more clout than me, are pushing the CAA (before we have to surrender our independence to Europe) to get the lower limit of the London TMA raised from its present 2500' amsl. Much of the pressure comes from the cross-country brigade which sees great benefits in opening a corridor North of Gatwick. Keep everything crossed! By the way – I live some 200 yards East of the main London to Brighton railway line, and it is worth mentioning the greatly increased amount of helicopter traffic following this route in both directions flying at relatively low levels! Keep a good lookout!

Nearer home – good news and bad news! Starting with the bad – our total launches October 2009 to September 2010 are 10% down on the previous year - (same % for member launches) – with a similar reduction in income. Mondays and Fridays continue to be “thin” on members, so much so that Dorcas and Linda are now fully trained wing-holders – and the same applies to occasional members of trial flight supporters clubs!

Few of you can have escaped the fact that HMG will soon be publishing its “Comprehensive spending review”. Your committee is also reviewing the Club's income and expenditure patterns. Among the concerns are the forthcoming VAT increase to 20%, increases to National Insurance, fuel and electricity costs, and now the need to pay for our water usage. You can do your bit by turning off lights when not needed, and only using the retrieve buggy when a push-back is not an option. I'm sure each of you will have ideas of your own of not wasting our scarce financial resources!

We made significant increases to our trial flight prices about a year ago which fortunately have only had a minor effect on take-up. Our other key sources of income are donations, subscriptions and launch and flying fees. We – like HMG – face some difficult decisions! Reading the latest S & G, I see that Alison Randle has again raised the suggestion of including a bequest to your gliding club in your will! Not that I'm looking for an untimely reduction in the membership, but such bequests to us as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) raise the level at which Inheritance Tax begins to be payable! I think this is called a “win-win” situation! The same principle applies to donations, so next time you get an unlooked for win on your Premium Bond holding, the treasurer will be very pleased to accept your spare cash! By now you will know that we have been extremely fortunate in having the Club accounts for 2009 prepared and accepted by Companies House a few days before the deadline of 30 September, all thanks to the efforts of Tony Hamilton – who had been a member of the Club up to recent times. He has now not only returned to the fold but also generously offered to continue to prepare our accounts in the coming years. We all owe him a great debt of

From our Chairman (continued)

gratitude for saving us from the wrath of Companies House. On this topic, you should by now have seen my note which I trust explains more fully the actions we had to take and the alternative method of providing you with the opportunity to ask questions about the accounts. My renewed thanks to you all for whatever you do for the Club. You must be doing something right, for in browsing through the Old Coulsdon Residents Association magazine recently, I came across an article about the rain-affected 70th "Hardest Day" anniversary which also referred to our activities – and described the Club as BRILLIANT! Well done!

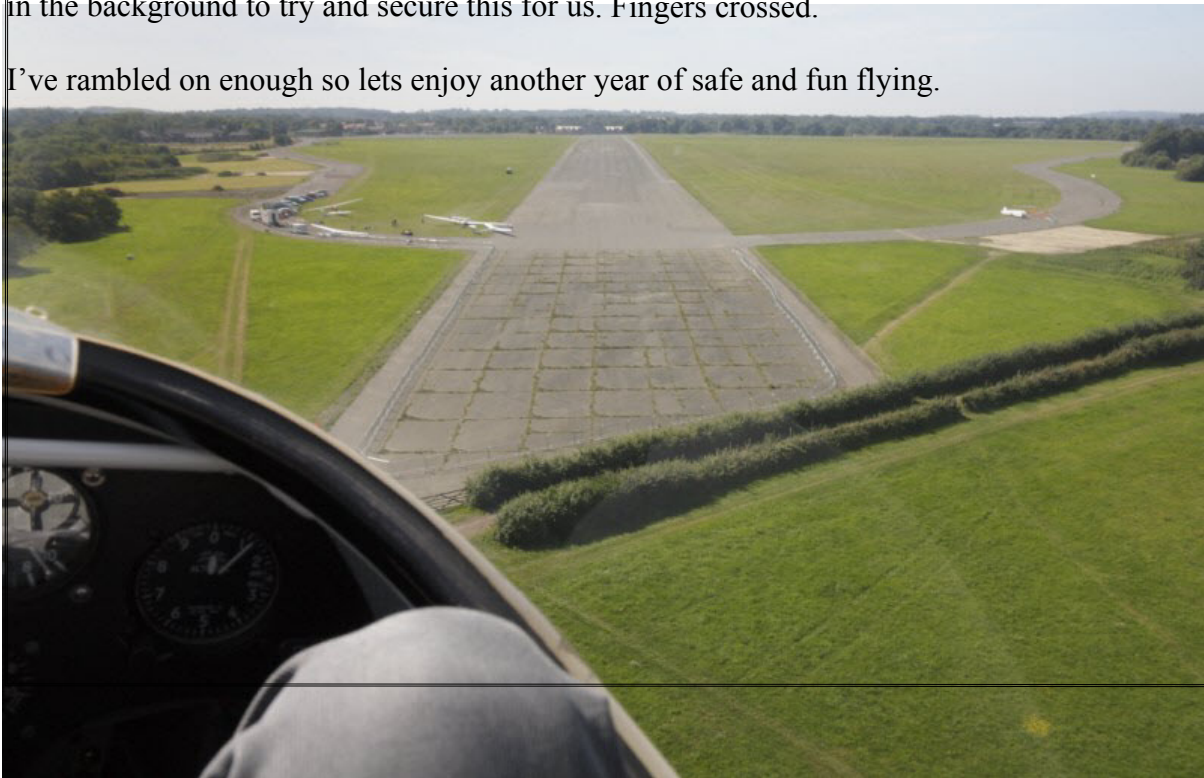
Adrian Hewlett

Steve's Bit

Hi all, its been another year since I wrote something for cable talk, but what a good year it has been. Starting back in April I sat in the office having just planned out the work required to complete the final stages of the workshop/store room re build. I was convinced that we had bitten off more than we could chew, how wrong I was ,the turnout and effort put in by you the members was fantastic. We achieved every thing and more. There' s still a lot off jobs to be done and these are being carried out in the background. Phil has a list off things to do and would like some help over the October break.

Cream cakes have been in abundance this year with many of you achieving firsts, be it solo' s ,bronze' s, gold' s, even a diamond. Its good to see members extending their horizons, both by flying here and at other clubs. Launch numbers were slightly down this year but average flight time' s have risen yet again. Must be doing something right. Launch point discipline has been improving and with the new ability to use any part of the airfield, the Lincoln run was used a few weeks back, we should be able to keep on increasing our launch rates. It would be great if next year we see more cross country from Kenley. The possibility off increased airspace is on the cards again and the BGA is working in the background to try and secure this for us. Fingers crossed.

I've rambled on enough so lets enjoy another year of safe and fun flying.



Spot Landing

By Hilton Thatcher

As any cross country glider pilot will tell you, “landing out” on a strange strip can be a memorable experience, certainly for the pilot and probably also for the retrieve crew. No matter how many times you mentally practice the event there is nothing quite like doing one. I promise you, every time will be different and something will certainly crop up which will be totally unexpected. Hopefully, your experiences are pleasant which you and your colleagues can laugh about at a later date. Let me tell you what happened to me a long time ago when gliding from my club in South Africa. It was certainly a memorable occasion for me and my crew.

On February 2nd 1980 the Met office forecasted a good day for soaring in the sky over the Transvaal and in particular the West Rand. Light to moderate NNE winds were forecast with excellent visibility. Good fluffy Cumulus's forming with strong lift by mid day with a remote chance of localised summer thunderstorms by late afternoon. By mid morning the Cu's over the airfield were dutifully forming. By lunch time they were “popping” and falling in line like soldiers standing to attention on parade. The Met office forecast was right this time! The perfect “streets” stretched in a westerly direction from the airfield out towards Koster as far as the eye could see. Wind strength was approximately 7 kts in a North/Easterly direction blowing towards us over the tops of the Magaliesburg ridge which meant our field, Orient, would soon start to benefit from a cooler much welcomed breeze straight down our grass strip. It was barely mid morning and already baking hot, a typical South African summer day. A few of us pilots felt we should do something and make good use of the excellent soaring conditions. After a little debate we decided to go west for an “out and return” task. Orient to Koster was agreed. Its about 170 km (out and return) and quite a pleasant jaunt. The task would take us over some lush agricultural farming land with crops ranging from maize, fruit and tobacco. It was regarded as an easy “stroll” with plenty of safe open countryside and a good tarred road to Koster. This made navigation simple and trailer towing easier (if required). I had done this task twice before without too much difficulty and in fact, the previous April, I had landed at Koster airfield to complete my “Silver C” badge.

After lunch three of us decided to go and the usual preparations got underway. I was last to leave. This time I was flying an old faithful friend (36) the club's K13. A very forgiving lady and I was very fond of her. In fact the only ever forgiving lady I have ever met. I already knew that I would be left behind as the other two pilots were more experienced and they were flying their glass ships. True to form they soared like homesick angels and left me standing but I did benefit from their wake as they sniffed out some useful lift down the track and pointed me in the right direction, so to speak. Gerald Hugo was the duty tug pilot for the day, a superb pilot and instructor who took me under his wing during the early days of my flying in South Africa. At 2000ft I released from the 180 Super Cub. Gerald had dropped me right in the middle of a terrific thermal and I quickly soared to 3000 ft without difficulty. At the first opportunity I turned her onto my course, waved goodbye to our field and set off.

I bounced along the cloud streets with great ease and made superb progress, refueling here and there to keep my precious height but probably being a little over cautious. After about 90 minutes I was in sight of my turning point, the three huge white grain silos just east of Koster stood out on the landscape resembling the three great Pyramids at Giza. I crept up on them at about 2000 ft, banked the glider and took my photos. Job done, now for home. It was obvious the weather was changing. Those wonderful “streets” that helped me down to Koster so quickly were “blown” by now and the sky was getting darker. I was not making the same quick progress over the ground as before as the head wind back was strengthening, much

Spot Landing (continued)

stronger than expected. I soon realised getting back to Orient would not be so easy. I'm not going to bore you with all the details of my emotions and experiences over the next 10 minutes or so but suffice to say, when the flash storm hit me and the first thunderbolt crashed in my ears and lighting flashed ahead of me, I was scared witless. I found myself decending very fast in violent sink and almost uncontrollable turbulence as a result of a sudden heavy localised tropical storm. The Met office was right again although their timing was a little out this time. It was blatantly clear I needed to find a place to land – and quickly, very quickly.

I flared out over the large, recently ploughed maize field and gently touched down coming to a halt quite quickly. I opened the canopy and was instantly aware of the silence compared to what had just gone before. I breathed in the fresh clean air and climbed out. I can't tell you how relieved I was to have got down safely with no damage to my old friend or me for that matter, although my nervous system was shot.

Summer thunderstorms in the Transvaal start very quickly and can come to an end just as fast, as in this instance. By the time I landed the rain had stopped and the storm had passed over. There was a welcoming smell and taste of freshness in the air. The parched, arid ground I landed on had quickly sponged up the rain as there were hardly any signs of the recent deluge.

“Goede Middag” someone shouted behind me. I turned round to see a very sun kissed red faced middle aged man sitting on a tractor about 20 metres away. Judging by his dress and status I guessed this guy was the boss man - land owner . He was not alone, he had his foreman sitting next to him. I had been living in Southern Africa for a year or so and got to recognise by sight the status of some of the many indigenous tribes. I guessed this guy must be a Matabele . He was sitting next to his boss on the tractor so he must have status from a high ranking tribe. There were about a dozen or so lesser tribes people working the field. “Goede Middag ”, I replied in poor Afrikaans , “Ah, an Englesmaan”, the boss replied . The Matabele man just grinned, displaying his large white teeth from ear to ear. “ Have you flown all the way from England?” the boss man asked. “Yes, sorry I mean no, not today anyway” I replied . “Only from the Magaliesburg Gliding Club about 60 ks that way”, pointing in the general direction. “ I got caught in the storm, so sorry to drop in on you like this, it was an emergency”. Just slightly understated I thought, infact my landing was vital. Can I use your phone to call my crew”. “Ya, nie probleme” was his reply. “ Jump up on the tractor, your aeroplane will be safe here”. How very civilised I thought, “ Thanks very much” I replied. Before I could close the canopy I was totally surrounded by piccanins (small children). God only knows where they came from or how the word got around but they arrived on mass. I can assure you this procedure is quite common when landing out in the bush in this part of the world. I now know how Livingstone must have felt during his epic paddle down the Nile. Leaving my lovely lady (36) in the middle of this field, alone and unattended, was a major concern . However, they seemed to obey my instructions when I asked them not to touch !! Frankly, I think the boss made the biggest impression when he barked orders at them in their own language.

On arrival at the farm house my first priority was to make the call to the club to inform them of my situation. I was told the other guys had returned safely, well ahead of me. I handed the phone to the farmer, who was able to explain in more detail the exact location. It would be at least an hour or so before my crew got to me so I settled down to the obligatory PR lecture on gliding. The time passed quickly and the farmer's wife made sure I tried her latest fresh baked production from the kitchen. I had no problem with that challenge.

Spot Landing (continued)

“Time now to look out for my crew”, I said, got up and walked to the door. As I passed through the entrance into the farm yard, to my amazement the foreman and his team were carrying my lady (36) out of the field. They had carried her from the middle of the field, a distance of at least 200 metres, at shoulder height like some Pharaonic goddess into the farmer’s small yard! “Gently please” I cried out as they passed it over the wall and fair enough they put her down like a baby onto the firm ground. (36) occupied every square centimetre of space in the yard! I was obviously relieved to find it had survived the last leg of its journey intact and thanked the “porters” for their hard work. Some small remuneration was required at this time as they had saved me and my crew some considerable hard work.

Needless to say when my crew arrived, they stood in silence and looked at each other in absolute amazement at the wonder of seeing a glider landed and intact in such a confined space! “How on earth did you manage that”, a fresh young face helper asked. I noticed he was a new member to the club and raw to gliding. “SPOT LANDING” I snapped in reply. “You will practice these in your training”, I said. His mouth dropped wide open and said softly, “I don’t think I will ever be able to do that”. “You will, its just practice, I replied. I felt 10 ft tall.

HILTON THATCHER



Horsa Gliders coming into land - 1944. RAF Cosford

Please send contributions and photographs for the next Cabletalk to the editor at the SHGC clubhouse.