

Cabletalk

November 2011



Welcome to the November edition of our club magazine, and a special warm welcome to our newest members Jason Barton, Bryan Farrow, Carol Bacon and Gary Plunkett . We hope you all enjoy flying with our club and make the most of being able to train throughout the winter.

A very Happy Christmas to all our members and let us hope that the weather will be fantastic next summer (but not only when the Olympics are in progress).

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Club News

Our annual Club Dinner and Prize Giving changed last year from Christmas to the New Year because of the severe weather in December (it was very, very cold and icy). The date next year will be Saturday the 28th January 2012 and will be held again at the Woodcote Park Golf Club in Coulsdon. This is a great venue and the main social event of the year so please come along and join us.

Next year promises to be a challenging time for us because of the impact the Olympics will have on us. Marc and Adrian are busy trying to negotiate to keep us flying for some of the time but it is not easy. So try to make the most of the early summer when we will be open as usual.



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 or photographs are welcomed and should be sent to the "Cabletalk Editor" at the club.

From our Chairman

Most of you will know - and others may have guessed - that one of the requirements of being the Club's chairman is to be depressed most, if not all of the time. Take last Tuesday: for a change the sun was smiling on us (where had the Tuesday rain gone to?) and I was looking forward to a great day's soaring, perhaps to get that elusive half-hour for my bronze badge. By 2pm, the inversion made the visibility too dangerous to continue.

But I digress. The present concern is the

impact of the Olympic Games in July and August 2012. Not only will the security arrangements preclude "normal" flying from 14 July to 15 August inclusive, but 615 VGS have revised their usual training slots, the result being 15 weekdays available to us in June, 3 days in July and 3 days in August. But the only way, (at the time of writing) to comply with the security arrangements, is to install transponders in each aeroplane which flies. They will "speak" to the security controllers, identifying the radar return as a glider from Kenley. Great- no problem then. But transponders do not grow on trees - and purchase prices are not much short of astronomical, especially for the Surrey Hills budget! But Marc Corrance has been actively pursuing a hiring option for the period of the Olympic security constraints, to enable us to earn necessary flying revenue to support our operations.

The latest plan is to temporarily source three transponders - possibly four - to enable us to continue operations. The downside is the cost! Say £500 for each box, and if you do the maths, this means an extra three flights a day to break even! However, there is the option of weekend flying, as 615 VGS is not permitted to drill holes in their gliders. So, continue to watch this space, as the saying goes. On a related topic (money), your committee has decided a "bad news, good news" policy for 2012! The bad news first: subs will increase by £1 a month from March 2012. It doesn't sound at all bad put that way! The increase is needed to support the ever-increasing fixed costs of running the Club. The good news is that there will be no change in launch and soaring fees.

On a serious note, we send our sincere condolences to Ross Charlton, whose wife Jenny died on 6 November. I know all Club members will join with me in expressing our sympathy to Ross and his family at this sad time.

Adrian Hewlett

The Lost Airfield

A friend of mine bought a voucher for her son-in-law and came to Kenley recently. Valerie was surprised and delighted by the surviving history of the airfield. Later, at home, she wrote this poem of her moving experience. (Richard)

On a grey October day
To Kenley airfield we made our way
As we drove through leaden light
We saw a most surprising sight
It stretched as far as we could see
Transported back in time were we.

Where two world wars have left their ghosts
The historic earth was trod by hosts
Of men and women building planes
Then flying off in ordered skeins
With a loud distinctive roar
These aeroplanes flew far to war.

The airfield is quiet now, only gliders fly
Soaring swiftly high so high
They silently, secretly glide through the air
The dog walkers below don't see or care.

The War Memorial carved in stone
Three figures standing all alone
Look out on this nostalgic sight
Gleaming in the pale twilight.

We enjoyed our visit and yet
Wear scarlet poppies, so we don't forget.

Valerie Coleman 11-11-11

Steve's Ramblings

Hi All. Another year is coming to an end. It's been an interesting one despite the weather feeling it was against us all year we have flown on more days than last year. This has resulted in slightly more launches overall and a big increase in member flying. This has come about by the fact that we are bucking the trend and have a large proportion of ab-initio members, many of whom have recently gone on to solo. Well done to all of you.



Hangar landing
in the T21

A big thank you must go to all the instructors who have put in the time to pass on there skills. On one day in September there was one student and eight instructors for him to choose from. Please don't forget that just because you are solo it is still worth flying with an instructor to brush up on your skills or learn new ones.

The winter programme this year includes refurbishing the launch point caravan and taking the tost winch off the lorry and putting it on axles like the skylaunch. So even if the weather doesn't play ball we can find things to do on site. Another job that will start in late January and will be labour intensive is preparing T40 for its 6000 hour check. The good news is that I've arranged for a K13 to spend its winter with us so we will not be short of two seaters. Also, we can do spin training with the K13, something that we can all benefit from.



No moans this time so let's fly safe and enjoy our sport into the New Year.

p.s. Where is Keith in T40?

SPECIAL OFFER - SPECIAL OFFER - SPECIAL OFFER -FROM THE BGA

Here's a great deal!! Some of you may have let your subscription to "Sailplane & Gliding" lapse. Others may not have discovered this bi-monthly magazine which always provides something of interest.(I always look first at the Accident & Incidents page - "schadenfreude"- I think it's called).

So here's the deal: log on to the BGA website - www.gliding.co.uk and click on Sailplane & Gliding Magazine (6th button down on left hand side of the home page). If you sign up for a new subscription for S & G, pay by Direct Debit and take your pick of either 50% off your first year's subscription, or a limited edition Sailplane & Gliding Polo shirt, personalised with your glider's identification markings (a SHGC glider will do).

Idea: an inexpensive Christmas present from your nearest and dearest??????

Adrian Hewlett

Pickett-Hamilton Fort

The Pickett-Hamilton fort (or more commonly known as a 'Pop Up Pillbox') was designed for runway defence. Its small reinforced concrete structure was sunk into the ground so that it did not obstruct aircraft using the airfield. In an attack the fort could be raised by compressed air and hydraulic systems. It was manned by two or three men armed with rifles or light machine guns. They were never used in anger.



Inside one of the Kenley forts

Kenley airfield has two Pickett-Hamilton forts sunk below ground, one close to the

windsock and the other at the north-east end of the main runway. The one near the runway is intact and still contains the hydraulic system although it is waterlogged.



The Imperial War museum at Duxford has this top section on display. This is the part that is raised above ground and shows the machine gun slots. At the museum at Headcorn Airfield in Kent they have a fully excavated example on display.

For further details see:

<http://lashendenairwarfremuseum.giving.officelive.com/dddd.aspx>

Richard Fitch

The Long Road to Silver

by Tom Arscott

At the beginning of this year, I decided that I would try and focus all my efforts on completing my Silver Badge by the time that I went to University. For anyone who might not know, to achieve this you have to fly a solo:

1. Height gain of 1000m (3281ft)
2. Cross-country flight where the longest leg is at least 50km (it can just be one straight line)
3. 5 hour duration flight.

Flying from Kenley obviously makes these difficult, and the height gain impossible. Thankfully, I had already managed to do my Silver Height Gain two years ago, whilst up at Gransden Lodge helping to crew for Steve and Russell in a competition. However, I knew that given the right weather and air-space, this was probably the easiest of the three to achieve. I also knew that nobody had done their first 50 km flight from Kenley in quite a few years, but Steve told me that if the right day came, then I should give it a go.

Take 1

So on the 14th July, the forecast was looking good, little clouds were just starting to form when I arrived at Kenley and the wind was fairly light. The only dilemma though was that the wind was westerly, however the weather to the west was forecast to be much better than to the east. Therefore, I decided (with permission from Steve of course) to get ready for a cross-country attempt of 66.4 km

The Long Road to Silver

(Continued)

from Kenley to Lasham in our K8. When I say 'get ready', this is because there seems to be an endless list of things that you need to do before you can even attempt a cross-country badge flight.

Firstly, we got the K8 out of the hanger, Df'ed it and found a suitably uncomfortable parachute. I then I checked the NOTAMS for the day to make sure there was nothing that would stop me flying to Lasham. Once I had drawn the task and annotated the map, next came the job of finding all the various bits of equipment and making sure the logger was charged, and the GPS had some batteries. It was then time to try and squeeze all of this equipment and other essentials into the cockpit: Logger, logger aerial, GPS, map, pens, Camelbak, snacks, jumper, paperwork, battery and the all-important emergency plastic bag. Nearly ready but it had taken about an hour already. All I needed now was an O.O (an official observer) to sign my declaration form. So then another half hour ensued waiting for Steve or Richard to land and sign my form. Finally a last dash to the toilet and I was ready to go.



I took off at about 12.00, with the weather not looking quite as promising as it had previously. Oh well, it was still looking good down-track and so I thought once I reached 1800' (which was as high as I dared to go with a logger on-board), I would have a sniff towards the Epsom area and see what it was like. However, with the into-wind component fairly strong it took me quite a while to even reach Epsom and so I thought to myself, there is no point turning back now. Pushing on, the climbs were fairly good but I only had enough height available to jump from one cloud to another, constantly keeping an eye out for the limited number of fields that this

time of year offered. This worked fine until I reached Dorking where I started to struggle. The surrounding hills started to look fairly large, and after some unsuccessful scratching I committed myself to my first ever field landing. Thankfully, it was the best field I had seen all day, and although it was long grass/hay on a slight uphill slope, it levelled out at the top and was perfectly into wind. I did not really think too much about it, and everything was just instinctive, showing that the Cross-country training obviously works.

Having phoned Steve, letting him know I had landed and not broken anything, I went to find a farmer or owner and find out exactly where I was. Nobody was really sure who owned the field, but I got a post code for the cottage next to the field. After a couple of hours, Steve and Mark Kidd turned up with the trailer and instantly regretted wearing shorts. It turned out the field belonged to Surrey Wildlife Trust and the gate was open so we soon had the glider on the trailer and were back at Kenley in time for the evening group flying. It turned out that I had only managed 18.6 km, but I was still really pleased to have made my first successful field landing.



Take 2, Tom's next attempt, will appear in the next edition of Cabletalk.

My First Competition

By Chris North

Earlier this year when Steve suggested I enter the Gransden Regionals I did wonder if he was losing his mind. Over the last few years I have discovered that when Steve suggests something it is normally a good idea to do it, and it is wise to do it without question! So I entered the competition.



I was very nervous about entering a competition as I have, or rather had, very little cross country experience. I was also particularly nervous about the prospect of having to do a field landing; that is a real live field landing. I know we have done field landings with instructors who say "well done", then they open up the throttle and so off to the next simulated field; but on a comp I was setting myself up to do a real landing in a glider on my own in an unknown farmer's field.

Luckily I have have previous of experience of competitions having crewed at three comps before. At least the mechanics of a competition are now pretty much second nature to me. It was just the prospect of flying a long task on my own that remained rather daunting, with the possibility of landing in that scary field. Gransden regionals last summer were, however, the perfect starting point for any budding competition pilot. On the first day they set a task which looked like it was pretty much impossible. The grid launched, we flew around for a while, most of us decided it was impossible, and nearly all of us came back and landed. Three did set off and promptly landed out in fields. Day two didn't look much better, but I bravely set off and soon realised that my first real life field landing was now inevitable. Field selection in the last week of August in Cambridgeshire is not a problem and with my field duly selected I managed a very acceptable field landing. I made my phone call to Steve to ask him to pick me up and my first psychological hurdle of the field landing was now in the past.



Day three was the day it all had to happen. An assigned area task was set. I decided this was very good news for me because the pundits could go off on wildly long flights and all I had to do was make an attempt at getting round the task and landing back at Gransden. And that is what I did; my first proper cross country flight of just over 200km. It was one of the most exciting moments in my gliding career suddenly seeing Gransden again after three and a bit hours and landing back safely. Another long task was set for day four and I had a really enjoyable flight. It was early on in the flight when I was looking down to Milton Keynes on my left and Northampton on my right that I had one of those "now I know why I like gliding" moments. Then a run up to Grantham and off down to the fens to a rather blue sky! Another field looked inevitable, but I noticed there was a field called Crowland airfield (the home of Peterborough and Spalding Gliding Club). I landed there, took a 6,500 foot aerotow and glided all the way back to Gransden.



Gliding in competitions is a really good way to start doing more serious cross country flying. There is no fear of cutting the umbilical cord and leaving the airfield. If you do happen to run out of steam early on in the flight and land back, then you are landing back to an airfield where your crew are busily bullying you back onto the launch point to take a relight. This is why I will be entering competitions in the future: a task is set by someone who knows more about weather than me, I have my crew already to come and pick me up if I land in a field, and basically it is just fun.

A big thank you to Steve for suggesting and encouraging me to enter this competition.