

Cabletalk

April 2012

Welcome to the spring edition of our club magazine, and a special welcome to our new members David Webb, Jason Salim, Simon Johnson, Ted Edgar, Amie Keenan, Wayne Bailey, Robin Brock Pratt, Samuel Jones, Sue Schofield, Alan Donnelly, Andrew Harrison-Sleap and John Roberts . We hope you all enjoy flying with our club and will enjoy the warmer weather and better conditions that spring usually brings.

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Grob in the snow, taken by
Chris North

Club News

Our annual Club Dinner and Prize Giving was a great success and well attended, many thanks again to Marc Corrance for organising this event for us. We are lucky to have a very nice K13 two seater glider on loan to us which is proving to be a popular training glider. It spins (and recovers) very well so if you need to bush up your spin training then make the most of it while we still have it.

Well done to all our members who have been staying current throughout the winter months. Although very cold at times it has remained dry which has enabled the club to do a lot of flying.

Our other K8 HCZ had been sitting in the back of the hangar for 2 years gathering dust, but now it has gone to Ringmer to be spruced up and brought back into flying condition, they have it on loan until we need it (much like the K13 we have). While flying at Kenley will be restricted during the Olympics, solo pilots should be able to fly it at Ringmer.



The Club AGM will be held at the club on Friday 11 May at 7:30 pm

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.

2011 Club Awards

This years awards were again presented at the clubs annual dinner at the Woodcote Park Golf Club. The CFI's trophy was presented to Tom Arscott. Tom completed his silver badge last year in one flight in our K8 (see page 6) and will be competing in the Junior Championships at Lasham in August.



Philip Chapman was awarded the Alex Wright Trophy. Alex was a founder member of our club and this trophy is given to a member who assists the smooth running of the club. Although Phil is our winch driver he is always doing the little extra things that keep the club operation sweet.

The Chairmans Shield was presented to Richard Fitch by Steve Codd (Couldn't have gone to nicer chap - Ed). Adrian, our chairman, was away on the southern seas at the time. Richard has been our Chief Flying Instructor for the last seven years.



The cross country award went to Chris North. Chris entered his first competition last year and was delighted to complete a 200 km flight. You can read all about his endeavours in the last edition of Cable Talk. Well done Chris and we look forward to great things for this year.

From our Chairman

Well - here's a surprise - I'm feeling very bullish about 2012! Those of you who know me well will find this a bit difficult to believe. So why the change? To begin, while Pam and I were taking our customary winter break on the briny (from Southampton to NZ via the South Pacific - the smoothest voyage we'd ever been on - not enough wind to rustle our grass skirts) you turned out in record numbers to the Club's Annual Dinner and prizegiving. I trust there was no connection - but thanks to Marc and the other organisers and thanks to all who enjoyed the evening.

In my message to the Annual Dinner, I pleaded for members to fly their socks off during the Olympic restricted period - to get value from our planned investment in transponders necessary to keep the Club in business. It seems that you have been practicing for this as the total launches in the first three months of 2012 were 951 - members 753, (2011, 719 and members 606). Our total membership at the end of the 2011/2012 subscription year was an astonishing 101 - which speaks volumes for the way in which you make visitors and folk taking trial lessons welcome and make them feel that we really are a Club for all and not just for members! The challenge is to work hard to ensure as many as possible of those 101 continue their membership and continue to enjoy the sport.

Each year I promise myself that I will complete my bronze badge - but each year, I've tried in vain to get the two half-hour flights needed to complete my Bronze badge, so have had to go back to square one! In my message to the Annual Dinner, I said that my wish for 2012 was for soarable Tuesdays (all of them) but predicted this would not happen. Well, I bagged my two legs on the same day in March, so I've got eleven months to do the remaining bits. Fingers crossed!

Now two appeals - Charity Day is on 7 May - so please can we see as many of you as possible to help so we can get a lot of flying done - weather permitting.

On the Friday of the same week (11th) we will have our AGM at 8pm in the Clubhouse. Your opportunity to contribute your ideas for the future of the Club. And finally...the latest issue of S & G (page 69) has details of 2 incidents of canopy breakage resulting from hands being through DV panels. Our K8 canopy has been damaged in the past few months, but fortunately repairable. As we only use the winch hooks, perhaps we should always remove the tow cable by backreleasing?

Have fun - stay safe!

Adrian Hewlett

Dennis Henley

1925 to 2012

Dennis, who died on 2 March, was not so much a member of the Surrey Hills Gliding Club, more an institution. He flew regularly, usually in his favourite K8, but was much more obvious as the Club's winchmaster and chief engineer. His introduction to the world of aviation came at the beginning of the war when he joined the Fairey Aviation Company at the Great West Aerodrome on the A4 (which subsequently became Heathrow) where he managed to scrounge the occasional flight in Fairey Firefly. After Fairey's he moved into engineering and moderate success eventually gave him the means to learn to fly powered aircraft at Biggin Hill.

Unable to obtain a full licence because of breathing problems he, together with Margaret, his wife, took a gliding course at Feshie in 1973 and subsequently at other



sites. In 1990, after retirement gave him more time, he joined the Surrey Hills Gliding Club where his engineering skills were soon called upon. His masterpiece was to build a new twin drum winch from scratch, powered by an air cooled Deutz truck engine, which served the club for many years. He regularly joined in trips to other clubs,

and on one such trip to Husbands Bosworth, he explained that the reason for his continuous use of the K8 was the wish to get 1000 launches on type in his log book. He achieved it. His health put paid to his active gliding career a few years ago but he will be remembered as a careful pilot and superb engineer, albeit happier with an angle grinder and a welding torch than with more precision engineering. Margaret regularly attended club events and trips away with Dennis, and our thoughts are with her and their two daughters.

Peter Bolton, formerly Chairman SHGC

The Long Road to Silver - Part 2

by Tom Arscott

This is the second part of Tom's successful attempt to complete his silver C gliding certificate, the trace of his journey can be found here: <http://www.bgaladder.co.uk/dscore.asp?FlightID=33997>

Take 2

It was now the end of August, the summer was nearing to an end and I still had not completed any of my goals. Chris North had entered (completely voluntarily...) the Gransden Lodge Regionals competition, and Steve was going to be crewing for him and flying one of the Tugs for the week. I was going to help crew for Chris as well and so Steve kindly offered to drag the K8 up there so that myself, David Kirby-Smith and any other member who wanted to venture to a different airfield could fly it. The weather for the first two days was flyable, but not particularly fantastic so I just did some local soaring and some grid squatting whilst the competition pilots waited to launch.

Monday 22nd August arrived, and the weather was looking good. Again, the winds were meant to be light and a full day of decent soaring was predicted. I met a Cambridge GC junior member who was also looking to do his five hour flight as well, and one of their instructors helped ensure that we were going to be able to launch before the competition was launched. However, this did not leave a lot of time for me to get ready all the equipment, forms etc. that I had needed on my previous attempt. Speaking to their duty instructor, with some advice from Steve I initially decided to attempt a cross country to Husbands Bosworth which is about 70 km from Gransden. However, after a bit of thought, and seeing as I wanted to try and 'kill' five hours in the process I decided to declare and out-and-return, to Hus Bos and back again, which was therefore 140 km.

With everything finally ready, I sat in a short winch launch queue with minutes to go before they had to stop launching to allow the competition grid to launch. They also had to significantly shorten the winch run due to the grid of gliders on the airfield. I sat and watched as the glider ahead of me launched to about 700 feet, promptly flew a circuit and landed again. I felt a bit under pressure knowing that I would only have one chance to get away. If I landed, I would have to wait until after the whole competition had launched which would make a five hour flight difficult to say the least. So with seconds to spare, I launched at 11.03 am, trying to squeeze every foot out of the launch. At 950 ft I was on my own and saw the other five hour pilot thermalling and managed to reach him at about 700 ft. The lift was not that strong, but good enough to gain some height. My plan was to try and soar locally for about an hour, to give the thermals a chance to develop before setting off.

After about 50 minutes or so, the cloud base had lifted to about 3500' and with the whole competition of about 30 to 40 gliders all flying around me I decided to start. Carefully flying over the clubhouse to make sure I logged a valid start, I headed towards my first aiming point, the left hand side of Graffam Water, a massive reservoir about 15 km from Gransden. I had a slight tail wind which was useful and I stayed fairly high jumping from cloud to cloud. I started to lose a bit of height when I reached Graffam though, finding myself at about 2500' AGL. There was a good looking cloud over the centre of the reservoir which I thought I would try. It was then I realised how massive Graffam Water is when you are not that high. Thankfully the cloud worked and took me back up to about 4000' AMSL. Having lost sight of the airfield completely, I was now only focused on reaching Hus Bos.

I soon found myself within about 10 km of the airfield, however the weather ahead of me did not look as good as it did behind. The cloud had filled in and it suddenly felt grey and cold. I pushed on in a straight line for what felt like a lifetime, with the altimeter constantly descending. The airfield came in to view and I flew around the back of it to ensure that I rounded the turn point. The problem was that I now found myself at about 1300' above the airfield, and I had not found any lift in a long while. I started to resign myself to the fact that I may just have to land here, and at least I would have got my 50k. Then, all of a sudden I found something. It was not very strong, but slowly I started to climb. The other problem was that I had now turned around back into the wind, and so was drifting further and further away from Gransden. After about half an hour of slow progress, constantly ending up over the airfield when I tried to gain any height, I found a thermal that took me to about 5000'.

The Long Road to Silver

(Continued)

Having reached Hus Bos, my priorities had now changed. Firstly, I had to not break any airspace so that my 50 km would be valid. Secondly, I had to stay airborne to try for my 5 hours. Finally, without taking too many risks, it would be nice to get back home again. By now the sky had brightened again and cloud streets had started to form. I followed these, making sure that I stayed well north of Sywell ATZ. Stopping occasionally, I reached my maximum height of the flight of 5048' and then continued to fly under this street at cloud base at about 65 kts. I suddenly felt like a proper cross-country pilot, covering ground quickly and in a straight line! It was at this stage that I popped off the end of the street into a blue hole, surrounded by puffy clouds. For a moment, I forgot about the flight and just took in the breath-taking view of some of the most beautiful countryside that Cambridgeshire has to offer, all over the nose of our little K8 that spends its life stuck under the TMA, occasionally venturing across to the other side of the valley!

Anyway, back on task, I cleared the hole and hooked up with another street where I managed a straight glide of about 15 km into wind in a K8 which I was definitely pleased with. With Graffam Water once again in view, it felt like I was nearly there. But I spoke, or rather thought too soon. I reached Graffam Water after a long glide with no lift and found myself down to about 1500' AGL. This time there was no airfield beneath me, and Gransden was still just out of view. I found a weak thermal and was joined by a K 13 that had maybe come from Bedford or Sackville gliding clubs. It was just nice to see someone else. Although I was slowly gaining height, each time I did so I only drifted further downwind increasing the distance I had to fly. At this stage, I had been in the air for just over four hours, so I did not want to rush back to the airfield anyway for fear of wanting to land. So staying alongside Graffam, I just concentrated on trying to get as high as possible. After about half an hour, I continued along track, finally back up near cloud base, trying desperately to see the airfield. I finally caught a glimpse of lots of shiny glider trailer shaped objects in the middle of green fields and with about fifteen minutes to go, made the final push toward home. I was trying desperately to ignore the now incredibly uncomfortable pain in my legs, and the ever increasing need to use the toilet.

Finally, I arrived over the airfield, with about 3000' to spare, and set about the process of counting on my fingers to make sure that I had completed five hours. After double and triple checking, I increased my speed to lose height and soon found myself in circuit, still checking my watch. Thinking to myself, 'just don't mess up the landing', I touched down by the launch point and a sense of relief came over me. I staggered out of the glider, nearly falling over, and hobbled quickly over to the bush at the side of the airfield. I then checked that the logger was still recording which thankfully it was, and some friendly members towed me over to the trailer. I didn't want to celebrate yet, not until I had seen the logger trace as definite proof that I had done it, without hitting airspace. At the same time, a white van appeared, and Steve and Chris (who had already got around his task) arrived, also both looking at their watches.

We retreated to the clubhouse, where Chris downloaded the trace, and we all nervously crowded around. 5 hours and 12 minutes, with no airspace infringements, and one successfully turned turning point!!! Now I could relax. The total distance was 139 km, which I was more than satisfied with, especially when we worked out that it equated to a handicapped distance of over 200 km! We then spent quite a while filling out the mountains of paperwork for the Silver distance, duration and the first part of the 100 km diploma. It was such a great feeling to have achieved the Silver badge, after three years of trying as a Kenley pilot. As for my goals for this year, I have a few possible ideas. I am now flying down at Lasham regularly as part of Imperial College University GC, but of course I hope to still fly at Kenley whenever I can, as I think I will always be a Kenley pilot. I would like to possibly complete a Basic Instructor's course over the winter/spring (which I know Imperial are very keen for me to do), and I also have my sights on entering my first competition in the summer. Congratulations also to Mark Kidd who made his first cross-country attempt and field landing a few days later. Last of all, I would like to thank everyone that helped me, but particularly Steve for encouraging me, pulling me out of a field and dragging the K8 all the way up to Gransden.

Quest for Glass

By Marc Corrance

This is a reprint of an article that first appeared in Cable Talk in spring 2006 , and a reminder of the hard work that went into acquiring our first Grob

As most of you know, nine years ago the club decided that it would be a good idea to modernize our fleet, and to this end we decided to approach Sport England (Lottery Fund) for a grant to buy a new two seater training glider. After much pleading and begging, they unfortunately said they had no money for us so we decided to see if the club could afford it off its own back. The members were asked if they were willing to fund a new glider, much as we did with the Motor Faulke, and the general consensus was that yes, people were willing to put forward some money. It was at this point that Peter Poole asked me if I could trawl the internet to see what second hand gliders were available, especially in Germany where he had bought gliders in the past at quite good prices. I posted a couple of ads, one on the British site, www.gliderpilot.net, one on the German site, www.segelflug.de and one on the French site, www.ffvv.org. Within no time I had offers of various gliders in France and Germany and there were two that stood out. Both were Grob Twin Astir II, one being an Acro and the other not. We decided that we should act quickly as the Acro seemed to be in very good condition with very few hours and we decided that myself Peter and Steve Skinner would drive to Germany that weekend to see both gliders (much to the dismay of my wife as this was another Bank holiday weekend I would be spending away from home!). We also decided that we should take with us the means to buy a glider if we liked one of them which meant carrying quite a lot of cash in euros with us just in case.

So, Friday evening after a hard day at work Sue dropped me off at Peter's and we left to pick up Steven and the cash, which we distributed amongst ourselves in small envelopes, and then we headed for Dover for a 9pm ferry. We had decided to drive through the night to our first destination Sontra in Northern Germany, about 100 miles North of Frankfurt, where we hoped to arrive first thing so that we could view the glider and then go onto the second one in the afternoon. We took turns driving and navigating the 500 miles through Belgium and then Holland into Germany and we made good progress arriving at Sontra's airfield (with the use of GPS coordinates) at 7am. The airfield was a small strip cut into a hill in the middle of a forest on the outskirts of a small town and it was not surprisingly deserted. The strip was about 100m wide and 100m long with a fixed winch at one end and a hangar at the other. This was a typical winch site in Germany Peter told us. I was amazed at the site as it was very small with very few land-out or emergency landing options. We had a little snoop around whilst we waited but everything seemed very well locked up. We were eventually greeted at 9 am by a man who showed us into the hangar where a de-rigged glider awaited us, as apparently they would be carrying out a C of A on it that day! Peter put on his overalls and starting given the glider a once over. It was very apparent that the glider had been well used in its 20 year life, and was starting to look a bit tired. It had also suffered from a couple of accidents, mainly where someone flew it into a tractor. The tractor came off better! We looked at the glider for a couple of hours and tried to negotiate with the club's manager who was very unhelpful and we eventually left in a disheartened mood wondering if the trip would be worth while if this was all we could get for our large amount of cash.

We had a 200-mile drive ahead of us to Nordlingen near Stuttgart in Bavaria Southern Germany, which we spent in near silence wondering what we'd find there. We arrived at the small grass strip at about 3pm and we wished we'd all worn shorts as the temperature had risen to 30 degrees. We arrived to find a very friendly bunch of

Quest for Glass

Continued

men around a very nice glider waiting to be flown. The men immediately made us welcome, and took us to the bar to inspect the glider's paperwork and log book whilst they waited for a tug to arrive so that we could have a test flight. It was an amazing contrast to the frosty welcome we had received at the other club. They couldn't have been more friendly or helpful if they'd tried. The paperwork seemed in order so we went out to the glider so that Peter could have a go in it. Before he could though, the local instructor had to renew his currency on the aircraft by having a check flight himself! This involved him flying solo before he could take a passenger. Strange way of doing things, but these were the German rules, so we watched the glider take off behind a very underpowered tug that only just scrapped over the trees at the end of the runway. The glider hung on for a few more minutes then released and returned quickly to the airfield. It was obvious that the glider would never get off the ground with two people on board, so they called another airfield and asked for another tug. This eventually arrived an hour later and Peter had a very nice test flight. Then came the tricky bit; how much could we get the glider for? We haggled as best as we could and succeeded in obtaining a discount which



pleased us and seemed to please the Germans as the beer then started to flow. After our second Weiss Beer (very nice!) we decided we should de-rig the glider whilst we could still see it in anticipation of our return to England the next day. Luckily the only person who new how to de-rig it was still around, and we carefully packed it away in the trailer before returning to the bar. Our newfound friends then booked us into a local hotel for the evening, and then invited us to a small barbeque they were having that evening. This proved very entertaining as we tried to communicate as best we could with our hosts, and although I had warned Peter in advance, he still



managed to mention the war! (but I think we got away with it). We eventually staggered back to our hotel for a well-deserved rest (after an unknown amount of local Weiss Beer) as by this point we had been awake for over 36 hours. Amazingly we awoke the next morning fairly refreshed and ready for the long drive home. We arrived back at the airfield to find it had been taken over for a car rally, but luckily we managed to drag our new purchase out, and after some short goodbyes (where one of the German men was nearly in

tears saying that we were taking a piece of his heart with us!) we headed for the motorway and the 500 plus miles home. This fortunately passed without incident (well except for the ramp on the ferry nearly collapsing in front of us. The car in front got lifted off the ground by it!), and some 15 hours later we arrived back at Kenley.

The following morning a crowd appeared to see the new machine and we eventually managed to piece it back together with a fair amount of effort, and from then on we have had nothing but joy from this lovely aircraft. I hope it will give us many wonderful years of service.