

The Surrey Hills Gliding Club

Cabletalk

The Olympics passed off in great style and we managed to fly throughout, well done to everyone that took the opportunity to fly in our very quiet airspace. A warm welcome to the following new members of our club - Leon Allen, Arron Maddox, John Verheary, Mark Elliott and social member Martin Emery who rejoins us after a long break and used to enjoy flying our K8's.

Although the weather now can be less pleasant we are open throughout the winter and it is a good policy to try and fly regularly and keep current. We do get some good days with spectaculars views even if it can be rather cool at times.

I think this picture best reflects our summer (and autumn) weather. This is at the Long Mynd in Shropshire, home of the Midland Gliding Club. I was there at the beginning of July to crew for Marc Corrance (left) and Ben Watkins (right). They had entered Competition Enterprise. There was some flying on three of the nine possible days and Marc came a creditable 8th overall.



Club News

Last Tuesday, after much heart-searching, your committee, for good and sufficient reasons, decided to dispose of our T21 ARM. As part of that decision, it was also agreed that the proceeds should be ring-fenced, and used as and when a suitable opportunity arises to update the existing fleet. We shall be looking at what we might need and when, to enable the Club to continue to provide the gliding experiences sought by our members.

On 28 October 'Daylight Saving Time' ended, we used to call it 'British Summer Time', maybe the name was changed because of the poor summers. Anyway, to make the most of the daylight we should all try to make the most of the mornings and start flying earlier.

Our annual dinner and prize giving event is fast approaching. After some very icy weather a few years ago, it was decided that January would be a better month for most members, so it has been arranged for Saturday 26 January 2013, please keep this date free and come and join us. The venue will be the same at Woodcote Park Golf Club Coulsdon. Detail of the cost will be sent out nearer to the date.

Our club web site is in need of some modernisation. Our current one has served us well but is looking rather dated. Is there any member that could help us to achieve a better looking shop window for our club. Please contact Steve or the office if you are able to help with this.

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

There's a saying - "May you live in interesting times"! I can't remember whether it's a blessing or a curse but since I last put finger to keyboard for the previous Cabletalk, we seem to have suffered both blessings and curses in equal measure.

First the blessings: I have to take this opportunity to again express my thanks to those stalwart members who either made significant donations, loans or topped up their flying accounts to help the club through a very worrying financial period when cash flow became a very serious worry. Thanks to you we were able to pay our way with our suppliers. Bless you all! A long way from the news that Derby & Lancs GC had managed to get the promise of £50,000 from the Sport England's Inspired Lottery Fund Fund. I started to get quite excited - until I read on to find that the grant was dependant on the Club raising £170,000 themselves - the total to build a hangar to save the daily rigging and de-rigging with all the hazards inherent in such a regime. And yes, they do own their site - often referred to unkindly as "Damphill". Elsewhere in this publication you will read of flying successes - in particular by a young man who in the April 2012 issue of this publication described himself saying "I think I will always be a Kenley pilot."

The curses have probably outweighed the blessings! I need hardly remind you of the appalling weather in the months of April and June with the effect on operations - and income at an important part of the gliding year. And yes, those infernal intertwining rings! I'm unsure which generation was targeted for inspiration, but the target for us was the bank account - about which I've written before. Nevertheless, had we not spent the money on the transponders, we would have had to suspend operations for some 8 weeks which takes into account the prior claim on the airfield by 615VGS. But there is a modicum of good news! Work has commenced on a trailer for the Tost winch so that we will have a workable spare if the Skylaunch winch has a problem. I may have been able to find a buggy nearing the end of its leasable life for a little less than a king's ransom, which again will give us a much-needed spare.

It would not be my piece if I did not end with a moan. There may be some of you who are unaware that a) money can only be spent once and b) the cost of energy is set to continue to rise! So, please let's not leave the hangar lights on when no longer required - oh, and the toilet light isn't motion sensitive - sorry for the double entendre!



Have fun - stay safe!

Adrian Hewlett

I'll start by saying **STOP STOP STOP !!!!!!!**

Hopefully the reaction to hearing that being called is for anyone acting as P1 to immediately and without question pull the yellow bung and release the cable from the glider. It was noted in our recent safety review that we need a positive method of stopping a launch, we have in principle this in place, but it will only work if the person calling stop does so with enough volume and authority for the pilot to hear and the pilot to release the cable straight away. So please can we be a little louder when calling take up slack and all out so that all members are aware that a launch is taking place and then anyone who can see something that may require the launch to be stopped can do so by shouting STOP STOP STOP.



Anyway onto other things, as we come to the end of another soaring year (what there was of it) I would like to congratulate those of you who achieved firsts or just improved some aspect of their flying, special mention going to Tom Arscott for flying in his first competition and coming a credible 9th in the Junior Nationals. Larry Lawes also flew in his first competition with Marc Corrance and Chris North also flying in competitions.

Just because the summer has ended (if it even started) does not mean that we can't soar anymore, looking back in my logbook I note that I had soaring flights in all months last year, I just had to work a little harder to stay up. Staying current and in practice is very important so that when next season kicks off you are ready to take advantage of the good weather the moment it arrives.

The club single seat fleet may soon be changing a little to bring it up to scratch, the first thing you may note is the return of our other K8 HCZ (assuming we can get interested members to assist Stephen Skinner) back into the air. Then watch this space!!!

That's all for now folks. Safe flying, have fun.

Nympsfield

As some of you may be aware four of us, Phil Chapman, Mick Ely, Mark Jacobs and myself Bob Sluman, had a weeks gliding holiday at the end of August with the Vega. Ben Watkins joined us for four days at the end of the week with his glider, it never came out of the trailer. He did not want to spoil his averages.

As gliding holidays go it didn't get off to a good start. We had intended to go back to the Cotswolds Gliding Club at Aston Down. We had been there the year before and thought it a nice club with friendly members. Four rooms were booked in early January and

we were looking forward to the week away. Unfortunately we were informed four days before we were due to go that our rooms had been double booked.

We decided to try and find another gliding club. It is surprising how few clubs are open all week, have accommodation, are within a reasonable driving distance and most important of all, have a bar. Eventually we found Bristol & Gloucestershire Gliding Club at Nympsfield which is only seven miles down the road from Aston Down.

The club is very friendly and they trusted us with the bar in the evening. The accommodation left a lot to be desired. We were in the attic, both Phil and Mick were sleeping under the eaves, if they rolled over they would have got stuck under the slope of the roof! They certainly had to be careful how they got out of bed without banging their heads on the ceiling.

Needless to say Ben went shopping in Gloucester, this time for walking boots, last year it was for a tent, but as usual he never bought anything. We managed to keep him off the subject of glider types but we did learn all about the making of the TV programme "Escape from Colditz"



Nympsfield

Phil spent his non flying time drooling over the club's lawn mowers. His reputation of taking unused and unwanted mowers away must have preceded him as Nympsfield had theirs chained up.

The weather was probably the worst since I started going away on gliding holidays thirteen years ago. The cloud ceiling over the airfield never got above 1800 ft during the week. If you flew it was £12 per day reciprocal and £9 a launch. This made circuits a bit expensive which was all we were doing off of a winch launch. Phil got the longest launch flight, twelve minutes. I had an aerotow in the Vega to 3000ft out from the ridge to where the clouds were broken and flew above and around them which was fun.



Never-the-less apart from the bad flying weather we had a good time. The company was good, we found an excellent Chinese restaurant, had a few pints, and many a laugh along the way. The members at Nympsfield said we livened the place up and looked forward to seeing us next year - I think they were being polite.

If I had to make a choice between Aston Down or Nympsfield, I think I would choose Aston Down. It is much easier there, the airfield is so much bigger with no wind sheer or curl

over, and it is very easy to find from the air with it's long runways and large ex-RAF hangers. Another plus side for Aston is the combined reciprocal and launch fee is £14 compared to £21 at Nympsfield.

For those of you who remember Mick and Pauline Hughes we called in at Aston Down to see them. Mick was the course instructor there this year, they both seemed well. Mick is returning to Norfolk as their course instructor.



The Surrey Gliding Club

The club received a letter from George Mann who lives in Auckland, New Zealand. He had intended joining the 'Surrey Gliding Club' in 1947 which at that time operated from Redhill airfield. The club eventually moved to Lasham but had started up after the war in 1947 at Kenley before moving to Redhill. George has had a copy of the Surrey (& Imperial College) Gliding Club Year Book for 1947-8 in his bottom drawer for years which he kindly sent to us. I contacted Wally Kahn who is compiling a history of the now named 'Surrey and Hants' Gliding Club at Lasham who said he had several copies of the year book and we should keep the copy sent to us by George.

George is planning to visit the UK in 2013 and hopes to come and see us.

THE LONG MYND TO REDHILL.

D. F. GREIG, *Olympia*, 21st September, 1947.

(This is the second time that this flight has been made. The first time was by C. J. Wingfield in a Kite in July, 1946. His average speed was 30 m.p.h. approximately and his total time in the air was 4 hours 55 minutes.)

Steve and I had reached the going-home day of our holiday at the Mynd. It was my turn to fly cross-country if possible. The wind (at cloud height) was NW., so if a cross-country was possible, it would take one exactly on the route home. The strength was about 25 m.p.h., I should think, near the edge of the Mynd. Early there was a lot of false cumuli, but about 09.30 hours an active one appeared at the south of the ridge. Steve was flying for an hour before breakfast. He landed at 10.00 hours, saying that he had been to 4,800 feet in that cloud and that everything was going up.

So I made my first mistake and got launched too early, at 10.15 hours, with barograph, sandwiches, etc., etc. I told Steve that I would try to make Oxford (Kidlington) as this was on the track home, and that if I did so I would then decide that if any further flying was possible, I would try to make either Dunstable or Redhill. The whole point being that to get anywhere, even Craven Arms, was on the way home, so no more petrol would be used than the trailer journey was going to take in any case.

However, during the three hours that I flew over the Mynd it was clear that what Steve had found was the isolated cloud of any early morning flush of activity, and that to have got launched at 12.00 hours would have been much wiser. As it was, I first got tired trying to get away too early; once, at about 11.15 hours, I got to cloud base only to see Charles Wingfield go into the cloud first, so that was that one; then again, about 12.00 hours, I got some height but could not get into the cloud, so did not go away (I wish I had now); base was by this time about 2,600 feet over launch, i.e. 4,000 feet above sea level.

At about 13.10 hours I started to gain height pretty slowly and reached cloud base 3,000 feet above launch, and owing to the slow climb, I was over Wenlock Edge, so I had had it in any case and was away for better or worse.

Visibility was first class and the Malverns clearly were the first point to make for, if possible; this proved difficult, and I saw fit to hang on to every bit of lift, however poor, until I began to sink, before venturing on the next rather poor, thin cloud ahead. About ten miles short of the Malvern range I began to despair, and when possibly five miles short of certain safe slope lift I had to choose what appeared to be the last possible landing field before the hill itself. While holding gliding distance to this field I found gentle lift to the lee of it and started to climb from 200 feet above launch; then lift improved, and when I crossed the Malvern range (at the northern end) I was perhaps 1,500 feet

above the top and still gaining height. I reached cloud base again (now about 3,500 feet above launch) over Tewkesbury. Since Malvern I had changed tactics and was pushing on at speed, flying at 50-60 m.p.h. between thermals (few and far between).

Leaving Cheltenham about five miles to starboard, I lined up on the aerodrome at Little Rissington, some miles away in the Cotswolds, and began a long, gentle descent in smooth air; for some time I doubted if I would get there, but about a mile short and at a height of 600 feet above launch I got the best thermal of the whole flight to 3,000 feet above launch. From there to Witney and Oxford I lost about 1,000 feet after a bit of up and down, and as Kidlington was far below, decided to continue in the general SE. direction and lined up on Benson as the next step.

Before Benson I got a fierce thermal while quite high, and reached best height of the flight, 4,000 feet above launch, and remained high until Henley to port was passed safely.

From there over White Waltham and across the large tree-covered area on the way to Fair Oaks was a long, steady descent with not a ripple in the air. I was pretty worried about reaching Fair Oaks at all, and wondered if a possible crash-landing on Chobham Common would be too expensive. But in the end I entered the Fair Oaks circuit exactly level with height of launch and decided that, as I was well known there, it was not a bad ending after all.

While flying round the lee side of the circuit I found a little broken, weak lift and allowed the Olympia to drift in it without gaining height until Wisley (Vickers airfield) was in range. At Wisley I had gained 200 feet, so took the plunge when I could see the Dorking gap clearly, but the few miles over the thickly wooded area between Wisley and Dorking was pretty exciting as a safe landing seemed impossible.

I slid over the North Downs just west of the gap, and over Dorking, now 400 feet above Fair Oaks' lowest height, I got a fair thermal to 2,600 feet above launch which made it a piece of cake to Redhill. A few loops, etc. and a landing at 16.45 hours beside the tea wagon of the Surrey Gliding Club and the flight was over.

Average ground speed was 42 m.p.h. exactly.

One hundred and forty-seven miles on the map, but a greater distance was flown as I was ten miles south of track at times.

The cross-country took 3½ hours, but I was in the air 6½ hours in all.

The lessons learned?

1. Don't get launched even over a good soaring hill too early if you intend to go away, because so much energy is used up while waiting for the day to develop.
2. If in an Olympia, when the day has become good or you don't care much anyway, "Press on" between thermals and don't trouble when high about chicken feed, but rise in big stuff only.
3. Step from airfield to airfield if at all possible.

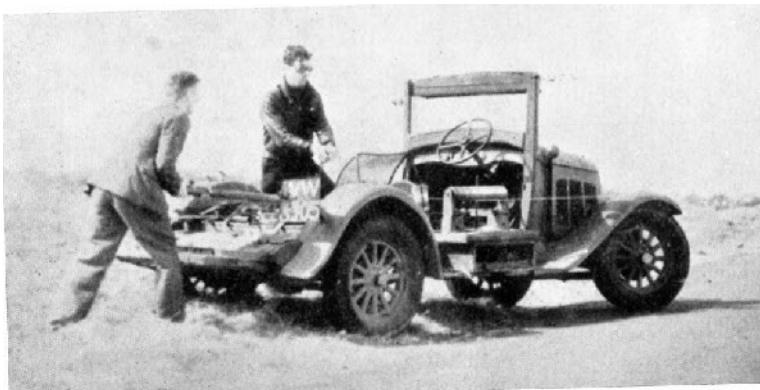
The last day of Competition Enterprise is always a fly home day and this year Marc was looking forward to attempting to fly from the Long Mynd to Kenley but as you see from the cover picture taken on our last day, the weather was not as kind as it was in 1947. There was also very little controlled airspace around at that time making cross country flights more direct.

A Little Something About a Winch

This article by F. G. Irving is from the Surrey (& Imperial College) Gliding Club year book 1947-8.

Probably the most striking aspect of gliding club activities at Redhill is a certain piece of venerable and weather-beaten machinery which performs the invaluable function of launching intrepid aviators. Built from a 1927 De Soto car for the Essex Gliding Club before the war, it was never used by them, and sat out in the open for seven years. About a year ago the Imperial College Club bought it for £10, brushed off the dead leaves, pumped up the tyres, and whisked it off to the college for a little rehabilitation. It will be appreciated that depreciation is the least of our worries, considering that the De Soto has now done over 2000 launches. This performance makes it difficult to refrain from composing Churchillian phrases, commencing "Never have so many launches...." The Chief Flying Instructor would doubtless compose an ending very different from those of certain members of the I. C. Club, to whom the sound of its rather asthmatic tick-over is as the sweetest music.

The rehabilitation process caused a certain amount of alarm and despondency in certain quarters. One night, for example the silencer exploded with a mighty roar which brought the night watchman rushing up from the dark recesses of the college. And certain people, in their innocence, have assumed its appearance to be an index of its efficiency. There was, for example, the Air Correspondent, who turned up in a very big, shinny car and after gazing in horror at a few cadet launches, murmured, "Don't get much for their money, do they?" And there was the Consulting Aeronautical Engineer, who argued that the business of getting airborne was much the same, whether it was done by an engine on the ground or by one in an aeroplane, and wanted to know how the reliability of the De Soto compared with a light aircraft engine.



Time was when it plied between South Kensington and Redhill, in spite of the misgivings of the insurance company. Even with a large proportion of the I. C. Club aboard, it went like a bomb, terrorised Rolls-Royce chauffeurs, and was the envy of taxi drivers. This side of its activities came to an abrupt end of one of the occasions when it was a little reluctant to start, and the time-honoured procedure of pushing merely produced a broken half-shaft. In a way this was probably its salvation, for even with its present

sedentary life, its average expectation of life had been about a fortnight for the last eight months or so. Nevertheless, it continues to march, as the C. F. I. Would say, in spite of a fairly steady drizzle of odd bits falling out of its innards.

In a few months we hope to have a new winch, a machine of the greatest efficiency, with all modern conveniences. In view of the circumstances under which this article is being written, one design requirement should certainly be a windproof caboose for the driver. So, instead of a rather forlorn old car perched at the end of the aerodrome, there will soon be a real winch, obviously bulging with urge. But the De Soto, for all its little idiosyncrasies, is so much part of the scenery and contributes so much to the atmosphere of Redhill (albeit somewhat blue on occasions), that it will doubtless be patched up yet again, and will live to confound its critics with a few thousand more launches.

The caption for the photograph above reads " ...this piece of venerable machinery did 2,500 launches out of the club's total of 3,682 for 1947". A winch launch cost half-a-crown (2/6d)