

The Surrey Hills Gliding Club

Cabletalk

What a year this has turned out to be, the weather just doesn't want to improve. A small group of us went to Shobdon just after Easter. Fortunately not all of us could go at Easter so we postponed our visit for one week, the weather at Easter did not allow any flying but we had two days of flying out of four. The picture below shows Philip Skinner piloting the Shobdon Twin Astir towards the hills behind their aged tug. Shobdon plan to replace the tug later this year with a Eurofox Microlight which promises to give much cheaper air tows.

Our charity day on 6 May was probably the first good soaring day of this year. We had all our instructors on site, a unique occasion, and we were able to complete all the charity flights as well as fly members. We did 85 launches on the day , well done to all those that helped make this such a great day.



Club News

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members who have joined us this year. We are looking forward to the summer weather that we did not get over the last two years, so on average this year will be good.

Adrian put the following note in the Club News section of the latest edition of *Sailplane & Gliding*.

The year started on a sad note: flying was only possible on 34% of days in the first quarter; some vandalism of equipment; but most of all the death of Alan Rennison in March. A plumber by trade, he was introduced to gliding by a customer in 2008 and the club became his second home. He used his many skills to improve our facilities, happily finding things that needed attention and mostly leaving flying to others. His wife Linda joined our office team in 2010. In a short time, Alan made his mark here and will be greatly missed.

The ATC have booked the airfield for their glider training during the next couple of months. Therefore we will be closed on the Friday 14 June and Friday 21 June. We will be closed for a week from 19 to 28 July and from 23 to 30 August.

We will be able to use the airfield on Saturday 31 August and Sunday 1 September, so we will have a Friends and Family weekend. We will have more details nearer these dates so look at the notice board in the clubhouse for the latest information.

Surrey Hills Gliding Club Team

Club Chairman—Adrian Hewlett

Secretary—Marc Corrance

Membership Secretary—Russell King

Safety Officer—Michael Pointon

Club Instructor—Steve Codd

Chief Flying Instructor—Richard Fitch

Equipment—Steve Skinner

Cabletalk Editor — Richard Fitch

You can contact any member of the team through the club at:

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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.

EASA Changes are Coming

The new Light Aircraft Pilot Licence (LAPL) will come into force in April 2015 and will affect solo glider pilot who want to fly unsupervised.

From April 2015 all solo glider pilots who currently use the GP endorsed self-declaration medical will experience a change. GPs who issue the LAPL medical certificate will be required to carry out a medical examination. For your first application for a LAPL certificate or renewal after age 50 years a general examination is required, to include:

- Pulse
- BP
- Urinalysis
- Visual acuity/fields
- Conversational hearing

This medical will need to be renewed every 2 years if you are over 40 years. From the initial examination until the age of 50 your NHS GP will be able to undertake an assessment based on your medical records and an examination will only be required on clinical indication.

The BGA state that there are of course challenges which will need to be worked through before we fully understand the impact of the LAPL medical, including;

- *GPs will be as new to the EASA requirements as we are
- *Some GPs will be nervous of being asked to certify "fitness to pilot" under the EASA requirements as opposed to certifying the absence of recorded DVLA disqualifying disease under the existing UK requirements
- *The expression 'aero-medical best practice' is a bit vague
- *The GPs fee for carrying out a LAPL medical will be determined individually by each GP.



It's inevitable that a medical examination by a GP will result in a higher fee than would be the case for checking a medical record.

Details can be found at <http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/easamedical.htm>

Tibenham Gliding Weekend by Mark Elliott

Friday Afternoon - 24 May

As a 'born-again newbie' gliding enthusiast, I had no idea what to expect from the weekend ahead as I watched Steve Codd decisively seize a piece of the rain-soaked M25 to join a queue at Orpington. Weather aside, any niggling reservations stemmed mainly from the presence of the air-bed and sleeping bag in the back of my van - a consequence of my determination not to be out-done by Paul Hayward who was also sleeping in his van and claimed it was 'character-building'.

All arrived safely at Tibenham with trailers intact in a little over three hours, and after a brew from the back of Steve's van, we helped rig his Discus and Paul's DG500/20M before retiring to the warmer climate of a local pub for food and drink.

Saturday - 25 May

As a bright, sunny and breezy day dawned it was time to take advantage of the Clubhouse facilities for a hot shower and an excellent full English breakfast, cooked by Rachel who ran the ever busy onsite catering service. Suitably refreshed, we assisted David Kirby-Smith and Mark Kidd with rigging both of their K6e's before joining the Tibenham Club Members for the day's flight briefings. Beyond routine local flights it was proposed to set differing tasks daily, the aim being to score those wishing to participate against the BGA ladder in a 'friendly' mini competition. Back outside to the welcome sight of some cloud formation and final glider preparations before the day's flying, which proved to be one with a 2,200ft.cloud base and unpredictable thermals for most.



Steve set out but made limited cross-country progress so decided to keep local to Tibenham, whilst Mark made it over to Rattlesden Gliding Club and David commendably achieved his targeted 50Km flight to land at Wormingford Airfield. Paul and I in his DG500/20M had to prepare for a field landing but found a last minute thermal and went on to stooge around locally for just under three hours, and some much needed flying practice in my case.

Later that afternoon we landed to be greeted by Russell King who had arrived with his Vega, after which Steve went off to retrieve David,

whilst Paul and I headed off for Rattlesden to retrieve Mark. Thankfully after some extended searching locally for Mark, Paul and I were rescued by a Rattlesden Gliding Club Member who had come out on his motorcycle to find us.

After assisting us with the de-rigging and trailering of Mark's K6e, we were invited into their US Bomber Squadron Clubhouse for a welcome complimentary drink with them before being escorted via a back route to the A14.

Once back at Tibenham, we all headed off for fish and chips locally before returning to the Clubhouse bar for the evening.

Tibenham Gliding Weekend

Sunday - 26 May 2013

A hot and sunny day hosted a buzz of activity at the Tibenham Clubhouse - members, families, plane spotters and pilots visiting in various aircraft provided plenty of interest and spectacle; the lineup including three Pitts Specials, an old U.S Piper Cub, and what resembled a 'blinged-up' disabled scooter with a wing and an engine strapped to it!

Most of us flew at some point in the day, and again with Paul I enjoyed some of the best gliding I have ever experienced with another flight close to three hours, some intensive thermalling practice to just shy of 5,000ft., and my first opportunity to practice some aerobatics.



Reflecting on the day and weekend as a whole on the sun-drenched Clubhouse bar terrace with a beer, it was with some regret that I reluctantly said my goodbyes and headed home.

The weekend certainly surpassed my gliding expectations by opening up an entirely new dimension to my previous experiences at Kenley and Challock, but other benefits included the chance to find more than a snatched five minute conversation with other SHGC Members



between glider retrievals or launches, and a change of scenery to fly over of course.

I think Paul summed it up quite well as we strolled across the airfield by saying that in general, gliding seems to attract such nice people, and from my perspective, everyone we met was so enthusiastic and accommodating that I really couldn't disagree.

Would I go again? Definitely!

Would I sleep in the back of my van again? Maybe!

So, if you missed out on making it up to Tibenham this time, look out for the next opportunity, it's highly recommended.

Mark Elliott

My Silver by Bruce Grain

I planned to go gliding on April 20th and checked the weather 22:00 hours the previous evening and saw that RASP was predicting a reasonably good day with a light south-easterly wind.

"Why not?" I asked myself, "Why not attempt my 50k cross country?"

So, charts out, a 50k between Wormingford and Tibenham was drawn up and NOTAMs and weather briefings were found online the following morning. I arrived at Wormingford hoping that one of the Astirs was available, and they both were. Looking good so far. My enthusiasm for the day could not be matched by other senior club members, who moaned about easterly winds and sea breeze and said the day was not looking as good as RASP had suggested.

By chance, Steve Cod had decided to visit Wormingford that day, and so I told him of my heroic quest, to which he responded; "You don't want to go to Tibenham, go inland to Cambridge or somewhere like that." So now my well planned flight over familiar territory turned in to a hurriedly put-together foray in to the unknown. With charts and water at the ready I sat at the take-off position ready for my launch, and the final words from the club CFI were "Don't get your hopes up, it's not that good up there." By this time, I was somewhat apprehensive of my dubious task. I thought back to Steve's words, "Just get on and do it, and if you land in a field hopefully it will be more than 50k away and I'll come and get you!" Fingers crossed.

A good winch launch got me up to 1700ft straight in to lift and up to 2800ft over the winch. A look towards the north-west, my destination, saw other gliders struggling and returning to the field, but nevertheless I set off on course for Waterbeach, just north of Cambridge. As I reached the outer limits of "safe-glide-back-to-Wormingford" I had to make the decision to go for it or not; using a small private strip as my safety net I set off. I was then either going to complete my task or land out, and an incredibly liberating feeling it was. I was lucky; I kept picking up reasonably good thermals on course, keeping me around 3000-4000ft and soon passed Ridgewell on my left and could soon see the big wind farm just south-east of Cambridge. With the tail wind and good thermals I was soon over Cambridge and spoke with Cambridge approach as I entered their airspace. I soon spotted Waterbeach, or was it? It seemed awfully close, so I looked further north and saw another military airfield; that must have been Waterbeach, surely? Off I went, and was soon over Wyton airfield, a full 19k further than I'd needed to go, and got a good thermal all the way up to 4000ft.

"This cross country lark's not that hard" I thought to myself as I turned back south-east and headed for home. I did a position report to Cambridge approach; "Five miles north-east of your field, 3900ft," and then the lift disappeared. "Never mind, it'll soon come back, I'm sure I'll find something," my mind raced as I carried on towards Wormingford.

3000ft.

2000ft.

Time to pick a field perhaps; a nice square field near a road presented itself, but surely I wouldn't need it? So I circled round overhead.

1000ft clicked past on the altimeter.

Perhaps I was going to need that field after all.

My Silver by Bruce Grain

600ft on the downwind leg.
I had a feeling I was going to be landing out.

Suddenly, I turned in to a slight thermal and made a 360 turn without losing any altitude, but not gaining any either. "Never mind," I was determined to stick with this, which I did for what seemed like eternity, probably only five minutes, but I gained a couple of hundred feet. At this point, Cambridge approach decided to ask me for another position report. "Aviate, navigate, communicate," I thought, so I duly ignored him.

The thermal began to increase in strength and with more concentration than I'd ever applied to anything before I managed to stay in it while it slowly lifted me to 1200ft. Still far too low to leave this field, I continued to circle in the weak thermal. It seemed, however, that luck was on my side. I felt the lift suddenly kick in, and started to see two up on the vario. Past 2000ft the vario started to scream and I saw four up. I was going to take full advantage of this thermal and in no time at all found myself climbing to 5200ft. "Not bad," I thought, "I've just achieved my height gain." Then, I turned south-east for home again, and my heart went back down to only jackhammer pace. Sweat pouring off my hands, I drank some water, a litre in one go, and tried to relax a bit. Now at the very least I was going to land nearer to Wormingford. I contacted Cambridge approach and apologised for missing their calls due to workload; they seemed very understanding.

As luck would have it I started to find the thermals again, and soon the windfarm came back in to view on my right, and with only a couple of stops for thermals, Ridgewell soon appeared. As I passed Ridgewell, I turned on to a more southerly heading and could see Sudbury, and then Wormingford. I suddenly felt like Christopher Columbus. Well, not quite so magnificent, but ego demands.

The remainder of my flight was uneventful, thankfully, but thoroughly enjoyable. I landed at Wormingford and just sat in the glider as a very happy chappy; this had been the best day's aviation of my life.



When downloading the logger I noticed that I had indeed mistaken Waterbeach for Wyton, some 19km further away, but I did need to make sure I completed my 50k. I also noted that I'd gone down to 530ft QNH. Learning points from the flight were: pay far more attention to the map and consider getting a GPS!

Also very grateful to Steve for his advice and support for the day. As for the rest of the year, a BI beckons and a 300k, possibly 500k, by the end of the year.

But I'm easily pleased.

Something Different

Seeking for something new to do in flying myself and Philip Skinner took ourselves off to France for a weeks course in flying a flexwing microlight.

We took the easy option of travelling on Flybe from Southampton to Limoges, it only takes 1 hour and a quarter, where we were met by David who runs the flying school.

We stayed on his farm in the middle of France between Limoges and Poitiers. The farm

has its own runway set in 65 acres. We took a package that included 5 hours of flying together with full board accommodation. It was a brilliant experience with breathtaking views. Unfortunately the weather became too thermic by midday, making it very difficult learn to control the flexwing, so we spent the afternoons cycling to nearby villiages. Details of the flying school can be found at www.wanafly.co.uk .

