

CABLETALK

SURREY HILLS GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016

Editor's notes

Chris Leggett

As I prepare this edition of **Cabletalk** the good weather seems it might be just around the corner. We have had some days where coats can be left in the cars but then a week later everyone is sheltering from the cold. At least all the gliders are now able to take off from the grass again thanks to the drying ground.

In the last edition I asked for people to supply copy for future issues and I am delighted to say that one of the air experience people has actually done that and his article 'Ageing Flegling' is included in this issue. To the rest of the members

please consider writing something for inclusion in the summer issue as I am fast running out of original material. Photos would be great as well.

Paul Hayward (Safety Officer) has started monthly meetings for members and these have been very well attended (despite having to move a piano, but that is another story!). These are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm in the clubhouse, seats are on a first come, first served basis. The last one in April (the third of these meetings) was packed as Steve was kind enough to give away some of his thoughts and tips on how to thermal properly. An added addition at this meeting was a Fish and Chip supper organised by Shona – seemed to be a real



hit and the food was excellent. If there are things you would like discussed at these meetings then please talk with Paul.

The winter has also seen a lot of work done on the club fleet (see Steve's notes below) and on a number of the private gliders – most of which have now passed their Annual Inspections. One of the K6 private gliders has had a major fuselage refinish and it is nice to see it back in the air after so much work.



From the Chairman

Adrian Hewlett

2016 – a Leap Year – but will it be a leap into the unknown? So far this year we've had some grim weather, along with most other clubs, but we have something many don't – hard runways. So while the first of the Grobs went away for its annual and some extra work, we were able to 'borrow' a K13 from ESGC, which also gave their members a chance to fly while Ringmer was the nearest thing to a bog! The second Grob then went to Poland – but Steve can tell you about that.

My main concerns at this time relate to matters outside our control. The first relates to the EU influence on gliding matters, especially pilot licencing and the new arrangements for training instructors. We at the Club are especially at risk of not replacing instructors mainly as a result of the new regime for training instructors.

The second relates to our use of Kenley Aerodrome. As you will know, Air Cadet gliding was suspended two years ago for reasons not explained at the time. In March this year, a statement was presented to Parliament about the future of Air Cadet gliding. In short, the cost of bringing the whole fleet of 146 aircraft back into service has been deemed too expensive. So the plan is to bring back at least 73 Vikings (Grob 103s) and to disband about half the Volunteer Gliding Squadrons (VGS) but to have larger VGS with a regional focus with regional VGS hubs with the facility to provide overnight accommodation. The next stage in the relaunch will be an announcement of 'MoD estate rationalisation' later this year. Given that Kenley is the only VGS location in the South East, it seems very likely that we shall see some development which may have a limiting effect on our activities especially in the summer. The key unanswered questions are therefore 'If, When and How much?'.

I end, with fingers crossed, by thanking the members who have rejoined and wishing that you all have fun and stay safe!

Steve's notes

Steve Codd

Cold, windy, rain, hail and snow – that's not winter, that's just the weather experienced in one 1 hour flight today. This sport of ours is just great.

As you all know one of our two seaters has been away most of the winter, fortunately we had the Ringmer K13 in its place, but that had to go back. Well the good news is that the Polish factory have just about finished a complete refurbishment of



T40 and I'll be going back to Poland to collect it next week. We're hoping to have it back flying over Kenley the week commencing 9th May.

Earlier this year it was good to see many of you at our annual dinner and awards presentation. A good night was had by all. I could list who got what but if you look in the trophy cabinet you can read the names on the trophies.

It's great to see so many of you flying new gliders, hopefully this is going to result in many more badge claims and some real x-country from our site, and also, more expeditions to other sites.

Some of you will have seen the poster in the clubhouse advertising a vintage week in June. This is a week when hopefully we will have a number of pilots from all over the country turn up with a large variety of older gliders to fly from our site. With a bit of luck there will be some two seaters including a T21 and T31 for those of you who may have flown them when Pontius was a pilot to reminisce.

As for our flying program for the rest of the year, things are looking busy with a good smattering of evening groups coming up. Please look on the calendar in the club house and help out as you can, these are a very important source of income for the club and can be great fun.

That's all I've got to say for the moment other than fly safe and enjoy.

Solo to solo, 1982–2015 (Part 2)

Jon Hill

... continued from February

So there I was, sat in the front of our Grob T40 with the first of six instructors behind, Mr Codd gave the guided tour, pointing out the standing wave of Coulsdon Downs, yes wave at Kenley but unfortunately we couldn't get there. Visibility was amazing, Hampstead Heath to the north of London down in the Thames basin, toy aeroplanes

landing at Heathrow and the South Downs past Gatwick, but now I had to learn to fly one of these slippery glass gliders! Launch two, 'attitude... look ahead... yaw string' came from the back... and quite right too as recent thermalling attempts have shown. I was obviously more rusty than I'd hoped.

My plan had been to fly through the winter when the fair weather flyers were snoozing by the fireside to go solo again in the spring, but I had some work to do. Come the New Year Mr Hayward climbed in behind me, 'what are you doing Jon'?... 'launches all the way, trying to get the hang of circuits in a glass glider and landings... and not closing the airbrakes after touch down because it takes off again'... 'Sounds like you've learnt a bit then, fly me round, you have control'. Just a five minute up round and down, a few turns sniffing at thermals that eluded me, though I didn't hear any tuts from behind! It's easy to visualise a box circuit but the 45 degree adjustable leg was taking some getting used to, as was speed control on the approach. Input from the back seat usually came in the form of, 'do you think you are in the right place', or 'watch your speed', or 'no, wait a little longer till you turn in', the guidance made you think and only when I'd got it quite wrong did, 'I have control', come from behind.

Now, flying by Mk1 eyeball is for a reason. Our two Grobs have different altimeters, so when with Mr Swan I found myself low at high key I realised I'd misread the altimeter to which I owned up, which if I'd stuck to eyeballing the height wouldn't have happened. Obviously well within Mr Swan's capabilities, who announced, 'I have control', and flying an abbreviated circuit put us back on the grass. Immediate admission on my part earned me a, 'well at least you recognised it immediately', and another lesson learnt.

Something which helps me is to 'talk' what I'm about to do and why, it seems to help my thought process, so when I 'talk' the wrong thing, 'are you sure?' comes from the rear. Instructor feedback is

that they like it, they worry about the quiet ones, I guess it gives them less thinking time to work out what us student pilots might do or not do!

I don't know why it took me so long to work out that once trimmed correctly the glider will fly its self, even round thermal turns and it certainly reduces the work load. The other frame of mind thing was to appreciate, they're not air brakes they're lift dumpers. Mr Swan had me start a final approach long and high, maintaining the attitude with the air brakes out gave me confidence. I still had to crack consistent circuit planning and so realised at this early stage whilst sat in the cockpit pre-launch if I thought through where my high key areas should be followed by what a good circuit should look like it gave me a plan, all-be-it a fluid plan.

27th February, it really is all worth it. With Mr Codd, thermalling with a buzzard, Jct 5 to Epsom Downs at 2000ft porpoising from cloud to cloud at 80 knots losing just 100ft on the way back, it really is worth all the effort. Come early April at

700ft up the launch he pulls the plug on me. Stick forward to gain attitude for approach speed and the cockpit was full of grass, quite took me by surprise!

Late April once again with Mr Swan who had me practising blue thermalling, surely a dark art! 25 minutes later after lots of recovery from various attitudes and more thermalling, feeling a little rough, I was happy to complete a satisfactory circuit and landing.

End of April, stand by your beds, CFI approaching! I'd by now paid my full membership but hadn't met the clubs CFI, Mr Fitch. We went thermalling, 'just open up here for a couple of seconds, now turn again', we squeezed thirteen minutes early one morning, then we tried spinning... to no avail (no problem in the old Bergfalke!)

Blue thermalling with Mr Codd finally got us to 2000ft from where with some quite positive control inputs we got the Grob to spin twice,



though the maestro recovered rather quicker than I managed, dramatic and exciting but all in control.

15th May, after inconsistent circuits, yo-yoing speed control, indecision regarding the airfield's vicinity, instructors plug pulling, thermalling till dizzy and not forgetting the launching and recovery of fellow members, it came together . . . again. There came a point when it became easier, planning happened ahead and though my flying was far from perfect it became consistent, well I presume so because Mr Hayward said, 'how do you feel about going on your own?' I've always reckoned instructors don't let you loose with an expensive glider unless they are confident you'll bring it back for the next person to have a go. So launch 58, after returning to gliding, the canopy closed and no-one replied, my straps are secure. I felt relaxed as the slack came out of the cable. I did smile as I went up the launch remembering the quiet in the Swallow at the top of my first solo all those years ago, thankfully that experience and the hours of instruction all our instructors freely give ensured my modest 4 minute re-solo was uneventful and safe. The second solo flight of the day I eeked out to 9 minutes, most satisfying.

Thanks must go to all our instructors (Steve, Steve, Paul, Roger, Mark and Richard) including the ones visiting from other clubs without whom I'd never have achieved my goal. They all instruct differently which really fits with no two day's gliding are the same and being adaptive is important. That goal was to get back to where I left off in 1984, in a K8. I've now achieved that, converting to our club K8 late in May with a thirteen minute followed by an eighteen minute flight.

Where now? Having really only scratched the surface gaining time in the air improving my thermalling skills, cracking half an hour would be nice and becoming more precise at landing would reduce the walk back! I'd also like to take opportunities to fly at other sites. Finally, thanks to all who run SHGC.

Ageing Fledgling

Julian Wolchover

The first time I flew in a glider was 1959 and I was a 14 year old pupil at Leighton Park School in Reading. It had the distinction of having built its own Slingsby T21, called Min, under the aegis of John Simpson, one of the Physics teachers and a massively experienced instructor and pilot (he was also the author of "Tackle Gliding This Way", a very accessible handbook on gliding and soaring which was illustrated by another teacher at the school, Robert Gillmor, who is a world renowned bird artist). I was hooked from the moment I see-sawed my way round my first ever circuit and as a result was a very poor student in school time and, I must admit a mediocre, but committed student pilot.

Aside from John Simpson another advantage we had was flying at Lasham and being affiliated to the Surrey Club. Derek Piggott was the CFI and indeed it was he who sent me off on my first Solo during a week's flying in the summer holiday of 1962. I had learnt to drive the tow car and the winch cable retrieve tractor (an old Ferguson with water filled tyres to give it enough traction) and had a whale of a time aged just 16. I left school the following year and started work. Thanks to my parents and the encouragement of one of my father's customers, Dan Smith who flew a Skylark 3 at the 1964 Nationals with me as retrieve crew, I was able to continue gliding for a while and Derek put me in the Swallow in June of that year and enabled me to achieve my C Certificate. However, it was all getting too expensive for my meagre article clerk's salary and I had to admit financial defeat and stop flying.

Fast forward 50 plus years and in May 2015 I hung up my overalls and retired from work. My lovely partner, Maureen, knowing that I hankered after gliding again, bought me a 4 launch experience voucher at Surrey Hills. I developed Parkinson's a few years ago but have learned that it does not have to stop me living and doing what I want! My



Min over Lasham 1958, John Simpson in P1 seat



This is me running 'Rudolph's' wing in 1962/3



consultant and the BGA are happy that my faculties are un-impaired and so, after 3 cancellations due to adverse weather, Monday 4th April 2016 saw me back in the cockpit of a Grob, an altogether different machine from that T21 of 1959 not least because of the help I needed to get into it! But what friendly and willing help it was.

That first winch launch took my breath away! No sedate ride to 800 ft. but an express lift to 1100 ft. and I have been hooked again. I shall take advantage of my temporary membership to make sure that I really can do it again and then a flying membership beckons. Who knows, I might even solo again in another three years!!!

Contact Details

Club Chairman	Adrian Hewlett
Secretary	Marc Corrance
Treasurer	Mark Kidd
Membership	Russell King
Safety Officer	Paul Hayward
Club Instructor	Steve Codd
CFI	Richard Fitch
Equipment	Steve Skinner
Cabletalk Editor	Chris Leggett

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

The Surrey Hills Gliding Club
 Kenley Aerodrome, Victor Beamish Avenue
 Caterham
 Surrey CR3 5FX
 Tel: 020 8763 0091
 Web: www.southlondongliding.co.uk
 Email: surreyhillsgc@gmail.com

Comments on this newsletter and any contributions or photographs are welcomed and should be sent to the "Cabletalk Editor" at the club.