

CABLETALK

SURREY HILLS GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2016

Editor's notes

This last *Cabletalk* of 2016 seems to have coincided with lots of not very good flying weather but hopefully the New Year will see an improvement and we can all get back to regular flying and some longer flights.

This issue is a celebration of those people at the start of their gliding journey and to thank the tireless effort of the instructors at our club who make this possible. We have had a great end of year with firstly Shona Fenion, then Darton Bell and finally Serena Lambré all making their first solo flights. This was followed recently by Simon Cousins taking his first solo flight after his surgery earlier this year – congratulations to all of them.

Paul Hayward has now done his trip to the other side of the world to see family and so in January the monthly meetings will resume. Paul is also trying to help the 'early solo pilots' and those wanting to achieve their bronze by doing some more targeted instructional meetings on the first Monday of each month, starting on January 4th 2017. The more social evenings will still take place on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm in the clubhouse, seats are on a first come, first served basis. If anyone has specific topics they want to discuss or hear about then please let Paul know.

For those that don't already know congratulations, if that is the right phrase, also go to Steve Skinner who has become the CFI at Ringmer – good luck with your new responsibilities.

On a more concerning note, we had a break-in to the main hangar in November and there was damage to the canopy of both Grobs and the K8. Steve was able to successfully remove the super glue from each of the Grobs and apart from losing a couple of days flying, thankfully there was nothing more serious. The damage to the K8 canopy was much more serious and this had been damaged beyond repair – thankfully we had an old canopy in the hangar which Steve has spent a lot of time moulding to the right size and shape for JFT and hopefully the K8 will be flying again in the New Year. The original Pirat has also had lots of work done on it and is close to a reappearance into the fleet. On behalf of everyone at the club I would like to thank Steve for all his hard work with all these gliders – we take for granted that we can turn up and fly a club glider but there is an enormous amount of time an effort put into making sure this can happen.

This newsletter is for the members so please consider writing an article for the next edition – there are lots of stories that members recount verbally – just taking some time to write them down would be great. Thanks to those who have already supplied articles and photos. *I have now run out of any stock of articles and pictures I had so new articles for the next issue would be fantastic.*

Airfield safety

Adrian Hewlett and Chris Leggett attended a meeting recently with the City of London, the MOD and various other parties, all of whom have

an interest in the airfield and the surrounding land. The main concerns for all parties was Health and Safety and we all know that there have been plenty of incidents recently with people walking across the airfield. We do have to be very careful and in particular those in the launch caravan and the winch need to have a scan around the airfield before every launch to ensure that it's safe to launch.

There are some freestanding fences around the areas where the winch usually goes and these were designed to keep people away from those most dangerous areas but as we all know, as soon as we put them up members of the public deliberately knock them over again. The fence and the overall security is a serious concern to the City of London and it is the responsibility of the MOD to maintain the fences but we are the ones who will suffer if there is a serious issue. There has also been a child hurt falling on the overturned fences which has been reported to the MOD.

The main outcome of the meeting is that we all need to be more vigilant and make sure we report to the SHGC office any incidents on the airfield. In turn the club is now making a weekly report to the MOD so that hopefully, once a pattern is established, they will make some changes to help. The fences are their responsibility and we have to report every time they are knocked over so that their contractor can put them back up – last time they were knocked over within 24 hours of them being stood upright again.

Shona's first solo . . .

At 15:27 on Monday 24th October 2016 Shona took her first solo flight after Steve decided he had had enough of teaching her! Congratulations to her and she has now persuaded Steve to drive to Scotland to get her glider that has been in storage waiting for her to go solo.





Darton's first solo . . .

At 13:06, and just 3 days after Shona, on Thursday 27th October 2016, Darton then became the youngest ever solo pilot at Surrey Hills Gliding Club, going solo at 15 years of age.

Still being at school he was relieved that the weather during half term was good enough to get back up to speed after the summer holidays and then go solo. Darton was also the first to go solo in the newly refurbished FHO.



Steve briefs Darton before his first solo.



A very happy Darton after his flight.



Darton is congratulated by Steve – the youngest ever solo pilot at SHGC (so far!).

Serena makes it three

On a day that she will never forget, at 11:55 on the eleventh day of the eleventh month Serena

made it three in a month when she went solo in her beloved KFG. Three check flights in the morning followed by two solo flights completed a memorable month for everyone concerned.



Good lookout before launching!



Here we go – no stopping her now.



A very happy Serena.

Solo again . . . 45 years later

Chris Leggett

I wrote this article in late 2015 but others had supplied copy so I held on to this – now we have some space here is my story!

Like Jon Hill's story in a previous issue my story began with a school CCF trip to RAF 613 Squadron at Halton near Aylesbury, but I am older than he is! A group from our school joined forces with 16 year olds from other schools with the aim of trying to master powerless flight.

My first flight was on 29th August 1970, like Jon in a Slingsby T21 Sedbergh, registration XN150. After 4 flights I progressed, if that is the right word, to one of the two Mk III Cadets (WT908 and WT913) and spent the rest of the week trying to master how to do a basic circuit with limited experience of cable failures, spinning, stalling and anything else they could cram into a limited time. 4 different instructors had the task of deciding which of us 'kids' could be trusted to do a solo circuit – not all were allowed to – but a group of us were selected as being 'capable'.

The first one to go solo took off on the launch in one of the two gliders (WT908) and, from memory did a reasonable circuit – however when coming in to land, instead of landing on the wheels he banked the aircraft and landed it on the left wing! That glider was immediately out of action and we only had one left – we were all read the riot act and told that if we did not think we were capable we should not attempt to go solo! However at 16 you think you can do anything, so undeterred, I got ready in the one remaining glider (WT913) – at this stage I had 24 flights under my belt and my total flying time was an impressive 1 hour 12 minutes.

Suffice it to say I then did three solo flights without incident and increased my flying time by 3 minutes with each flight – I can still remember the exhilaration of being in the air with no instructor, no radio, and just a creaking glider, the elements and my limited skills to get me back.

After that I was bought a couple of flights in my late teens from Lasham where for the first time I got to do some thermalling and got high enough to be able to see the Isle of Wight.

Again, like a lot of others, socialising, running a car, general lack of money, getting married, having children and building a business, all meant that, although gliding was a fantastic memory, I did not dream I would ever get back to flying.

Our business was started in 1991 and we had offices in Reigate for the next 22 years as we built the business up. Eventually, with the rents in central Reigate rising, we decided to look for alternative offices and after viewing a number of offices in a number of locations stumbled on an office building for sale on the old Caterham barracks site behind Tesco's and we became one of Mark Kidd's neighbours.

We moved in during May 2013 and suddenly realised that there were these majestic gliders flying over the whole area on good weather days. Even then, apart from watching them with envy from my office desk, I did nothing about it.



This is actually the glider I went solo in – its now in a museum in Doncaster!

The next January, just before my 60th birthday, I was in America on business when I got an email from Caroline asking how much I weighed and what height I was but not to ask why she wanted to know! Unbeknown to me the girls and their partners had bought me 8 flights for my 60th birthday. So once the weather improved I booked a day at Kenley and I was one of Mark Kidd's first ever punters – although obviously he did not admit to that at the time! So the 29th April 2014 was my first flight for well over 40 years – it only took 3 flights until I was totally hooked! The last of my eight flights, after 7 with Mark, was with Steve Codd – you can guess what he did as we dived at speed towards the ground and buzzed the airfield – that was it – I was going to pursue this no matter how long it took an old man to relearn the skills that seemed to be so easy when I was 16. So then the 'trying to teach an old dog new tricks' began and thanks to Steve Codd, Richard Fitch, Paul Hayward, Marc Corrance, Mark Kidd, Steve Swan, Larry Laws and Roger Warren I got to the stage of being nearly ready – just spinning and spiral dives to go! So a trip to Ringmer was required and a flight with John Weddell. I arrived, with Caroline in tow to watch, and Steve Codd told John what he wanted me to do – John then

went to his rucksack and took a painkiller (I did not know at that time he had just had a new hip) – then he looked at his notes to remind himself of what to do! However, with everyone on the airfield knowing what the flight was about, and therefore watching with interest, we took off and after John had demonstrated, I got to do the required exercises – fantastic experience. Caroline was relieved to see me back on the ground and after a trip to the Osteopath to put my spine back to where it should be I was ready – just waiting for the nod from an instructor to go solo.

On a relatively quiet day (not just because Steve was away at a competition) I had a couple of flights with Richard – he then said 'I think you are getting the hang on this – would you like another flight'. 'Yes that would be great' – Richard releasing the cable during the launch, was, I suppose, inevitable! Then he asked if I would like to do that again – stupidly I said 'yes' and he said 'OK but I am not coming with you!' Solo on 6th August 2015 on flight 132 lasting all of 6 minutes – I don't think I stopped smiling for well over a week!

Thanks to all the instructors and club members who gave, and continue to give, constant encouragement, help and advice. I have met some very

talented people and some great characters (some are even talented "and" great people!) and I am so glad that the children bought me a day at Kenley. Without that I would probably not have done anything other than look at you guys flying around with envy, but I would have saved a lot of money – the most expensive birthday present anyone has ever bought me!

Annual dinner

The Annual Dinner and awards ceremony will be held at the Woodcote Park Golf Club again on the 18th February 2017. More details will follow (prices and menus etc.) in the New Year.

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
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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 above email address.



We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to a great year of flying in 2017.