

# Cabletalk

## Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

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### September 2017

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#### Editor's notes

The weather has not been the best over the last couple of months but there have been some trips away and some notable achievements.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in articles and pictures for this issue – it is much appreciated and members enjoy reading the stories of your gliding experiences and seeing the pictures. Please think about writing a story for the next issue which will be the Christmas edition.



*God-daughter Beth and Steve ready for departure.*  
Photo: Caroline Leggett

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### Steve reaches 17,000 glider flights!

*Chris Leggett*

I had asked Steve in advance if he would be kind enough, if there was time, to fly my god-daughter and our granddaughter on a day when I was at the airfield, which he agreed to do.

So on a lovely sunny Friday afternoon at the end of the school holidays I arranged for Caroline to collect them and bring them to the airfield at lunchtime.

Rob Cray was flying Air Experience and training flights and Steve got KFG out of the hanger and then disappeared on his own for a flight – not something he does every day but it turned out to be significant on that particular day.

Caroline arrived with my god-daughter Beth, and our granddaughter Kiera just as Steve had landed so it was a fairly quick turnaround – they got a joint briefing and then Steve took off with a somewhat nervous 15-year-old Beth. Amongst other places, they went to Oxted and Beth would

have able to see her house (she lives on a farm) if she had worked out where to look! After 30 minutes they arrived back – that was flight 16,999 for Steve.

For those that have met Kiera before they will know that she is one of the smallest ones in her class at school. So once back at the launch point we put a very large parachute on a very small girl, we had already put the weights in the aircraft. Kiera, although younger, seemed less nervous than Beth and so they prepared to launch on Steve's 17,000th glider flight. He did comment before we closed the canopy that it looked very strange as Kiera's head was lower than the head rest – so it looked as if he was flying from the back with no-one in the front – at least he could not accuse her of not leaning with the aircraft in a thermal as he could not see her head!

During the flight Steve gave Kiera the controls and she flew the aircraft – this allowed him to get his camera out and take a few different pictures – a memento of flight number 17,000. During the



*Is there anybody there?* Photos: Steve Codd

40 minute flight they went to Crystal Palace, which was probably lost on Kiera as she is not the Eagles fan her grandad is!

After she landed and they had left for home, Steve told me that they had both taken the controls and done really well. On the following Sunday, Kiera and I were talking about the flight and I told her what Steve said. I then suggested that I was surprised Steve had not said that she was better than her grandad – to which she replied “He did!” I shall be having words with him!

On a more serious note – congratulations Steve on a momentous achievement that most people will only be able to dream about. 17,000 take-offs, 17,000 landings and not one parachute used!

## SHGC '1'– Rozzers 'nil' . . . & FHO down . . .

*Jonathan Hill*

One July Monday the two trailer convoy raced north, I gave it the beans to keep up with the BRG Jag as it used *all* the available tarmac up the Great North Road towards Yorkshire GC at Sutton Bank. Greeted by familiar local faces, our Club Manager, Chairman and his first lady, Mark K and I rigged the LS4 in 20 minutes and Pirat DBV in an hour, phew time for a pint!

After my partial silver success in April I'd come to YGC specifically to complete the job, the bum numbing 5 hour flight. Though I'd solo aero towed at Shennington in May local instructors combined a couple of refreshers in a K21 behind a Super Cub with site familiarisation on Tuesday.

Steve, crewed by Chris and Caroline, was competing in the Northerns in FHO and had finished 12th on Monday having crossed the Humber four times. Blustery weather and challenging soaring was to make the rest of the week interesting. Wednesday saw the comp gliders away around lunch time, I did an aerotow off the back of the grid only to make a hash of soaring, landing back 35 minutes later. An expensive short flight but it was my first single seat aerotow. Time for tea and buns while Mark disappeared for a couple of hours . . . the call came in, FHO was in a field, Steve and Caroline were waiting in The Fox Inn pub on the other side of York (a bit odd I thought for a couple of 't' total gliderers). Chris towed the big trailer obediently following the sat nav's every command through the centre of ancient York, not a railing was scraped or a cyclist knocked for six! Collecting FHO's crew from the pub a narrow track took us to FHO in a harvested rape seed field.

After some jiggery pokery with the trailer hitch involving drills and big hammers we returned to YGC. I planned to use the Chairman's Jag for a getaway later . . .

Thursday, a brisk SWerly and low broken clouds, I areo towed ahead of Mark and scratched in broken lift determined not to embarrass myself again.



*This is what you need when you lose the trailer keys!* Photo: Caroline Leggett

1½ hrs later a solid climb to cloud base at 4,000ft had me move between two cumuli and the climb continued up between the clouds, at 5,000ft Mark joined me. Circling between solid looking clouds I chickened out at 5,300ft as I was some way down wind but knew YGC was on an approximate bearing of 240 and so pushed up wind back out over the Vale of York towards Thirsk. Looking at a large heavy shower cloud approaching eastwards, I chose to land after 2hrs 35mins whilst Mark circumnavigated the deluge. A magnificent flight just like some of the YouTube footage which inspired me back to gliding. Steve and Chris were in another field defeated by the push into wind, retrieved by Caroline and a friendly local. Rig FHO and retire to the Foresters for excellent sustenance with fiddles and accordion accompaniment.

Friday, a brisk WSWerly had the northerly sides of the bowls along the ridge working but first a very informative ridge check flight in a K21 as I'd not

ridge soared before, especially essential to correctly deal with the strong curl over encountered on finals at around 400ft, locally known as 'the hand that grabs' which necessitates a 70knt approach and very positive flying.

I loaded up DBV with a banana, dead fly biscuits, water and opted for a warm top and was then winched to 400ft over the south end of the ridge followed by a sharp right turn to start exploring where the ridge worked best. The ridge check flight had taught me to fly tight 'S' turns in areas of good lift taking me to 900ft QFE but when the wave interfered 350ft was the norm. The scene was set, from YGC in the south to Paradise Farm 3 miles north, I flew up and down dodging the heavy showers and when above 700ft a full thermaling turn was permissible which, if in lift, sometimes resulted in a climb above and behind the ridge to around 2,000ft before the wave broke it up and so back down to 400ft. After two hours 'numb bum' set in.



*Going to collect Caroline and Steve the armed officers got there first. Photo: Caroline Leggett*

The comp had been cancelled so many came to play on the ridge, an excellent lookout was essential and never more so when around 4hrs my mind was focused by 'that' bodily requirement but the thought of filling a sandwich bag containing a nappy (MK2 solution) wasn't an option just above the ridge with a dozen other gliders whizzing around, even peeling the banana was a challenge! Five hours, bottom, what bottom, but I was enjoying this and climbs were getting better, keep going, 6hrs, enough, really did need a comfort break despite not having drunk anything. Round the truncated circuit, 70knt approach but no 'clutching hand' and down, 6hrs 8mins and a prayer of relief aside DBV, phew, silver in the bag, now where's that Jag?

Right sir, let's have look at your dog licence . . .

Reports of an area search by the local Rozzers proved fruitless as I sped south, silver in the bag and DBV in tow, all in a glider worth a grand.

YGC is very different to Kenley, primarily being an aerotow site unless the wind is on the ridge. Crack the aerotow and the soaring is fantastic. Next time I want to summon the courage to jump to the forward ridge and hopefully experience wave soaring, it really is worth making the effort. Next goal . . . 100Km triangle . . . and a field landing!



*Keeping a close eye on what Mark Kidd was doing (taken from YGC's DG1000). Photo: Chris Leggett*

# Kenley Revival Sky Heroes

*Chris Leggett*

Sunday 10th September saw the Kenley Revival Sky Heroes day at the airfield. Amongst some of the attractions were replica WWII aircraft, WWII re-enactments, guided tours of the blast pens and a train to transport people around the airfield.



*Trumpton anyone?* Photo: Caroline Leggett

SHGC and the Air Cadets had been asked to have a presence and the Air Cadets unfortunately pulled out at the last minute. But thanks to a number of members and their families, SHGC had a very visible display and we were kept very busy.

On the patch of grass across from the workshops we had FHO with wing stands and the K8 again with a wing stand – the new and the very old. We took the canopy off the K8 so people could look



*Teddy flies the K8.* Photo: Caroline Leggett



*Everyone commented on the “new” FHO.* Photo: Caroline Leggett

inside and to make sure no-one asked to climb in we placed “teddy” in the cockpit with a parachute. From about 11:30 till 4:15 (when the rain started in earnest) we had a constant gathering of people around each aircraft. The members who were talking to the public around the gliders had an onerous task and never seemed to stop for breath. We sold a few vouchers and we were asked for (as opposed to just giving out) a lot of leaflets which kept Caroline and Dorcas, who were manning (or womanning!) the information desk, very busy throughout the day. I am hopeful that at least some of them will come back for flights, and we may have already got one evening group for next year! At 14:00 hours there was a fly-past from a Hurricane from Biggin Hill, the weather was not



*Just some of the many members that helped.* Photo: Caroline Leggett

brilliant but he did a number of circuits of the airfield at about 800 QFE before waggling his wings and going back to Biggin Hill. Everyone on their airfield stopped and was just looking skywards to see this historic aircraft over the equally historic RAF Kenley airfield that we, as a club, are lucky enough to call our home.

Thanks to everyone who helped during the day – some members were there to help get the kit out and in position, some were there to talk with the visitors and others helped put things away. Steve and Shona kept the BBQ going and made sure the helpers did not go hungry or thirsty. Some people were there all day and thank you to everyone who gave up some or all of their Sunday to help – we had just about the right number of people.

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## From the chairman

*Chris Leggett*

I would like to start this piece with some congratulations. The first is Dave Harrison and his partner Pamela Warren who announced the arrival of their baby daughter Ella who came into the world on 31st August. I hope the sleepless nights are not too bad and that Dave gets let off at some time soon to get some gliding done.

Secondly, I would like to congratulate Jonathan Hill on achieving his Silver badge – needing just the 5 hour flight to complete all the badge tasks, he excelled himself and did 6 hours 8 minutes just to be sure, I know that because I logged him down.

During his flight I had flown over him a number of times in YGC's DG1000 which was slightly quicker than the Pirat! If you are interested, ask to see Jonathan's flight trace, it resembles a large banana! He did not go far but that was not the object of the flight – six hours and never lost sight of the airfield – well done.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate Shona on becoming a winch operator. She has now done a number of days and half days and is slowly getting more experienced. You can call her the winch wench at your peril!

While talking about the winch operators, these are some of the unsung heroes of the club and without them none of us would be flying – please remember to acknowledge them after you have had a great time in the air thanks to their launches. Thanks also, at this time in particular, go to Bryan Yates who has decided to call a halt to his regular Monday winch launching duty. Thanks Bryan for the time you have devoted to winching and we hope you can now enjoy more flying than winching!

As I said in the last issue, we need to organise some work parties during the winter. To that end we are not taking any Air Experience bookings in January at the moment with a view to leaving this clear so we can get the work done and the club up to scratch before next year. For November and December we are not booking Air Experience flights on Mondays or Fridays so these days will be club flying days only.



*Surprised Jonathan could walk the glider back plus a record of the YGC daily log. Photos: Chris Leggett*

We are still waiting to hear about any progress with the fencing of the airfield – MOD surveyors have been round the airfield so hopefully things will start to move forward soon. In the meantime please be extra vigilant about members of the public encroaching on the airfield while we are

flying – even when you are just around the launch point please watch for incursions and deal with them rather than waiting for others to do it for you. Also remember to fill in the incursion reports in the launch point caravan – these will help us in the long run.

## Contact Details

*The Directors of the Club are:*

Jill Oake,  
Jason Barton.

*The Club Committee is made up of:*

Chris Leggett (Chairman),  
Marc Corrance (Secretary),  
Russell King (Membership),  
Martin Emery,  
Stephen Skinner,  
Trevor Fielder,  
Shona Fenion.

*Reporting to the Committee are:*

Richard Fitch (CFI),  
Steve Codd (Club Manager),  
Mark Kidd (Treasurer),  
Paul Hayward (Safety Officer).

*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 above email address.*



*FHO at the back of the grid during the Northerns. Photo: Chris Leggett*