

Cabletalk

Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

December 2017

Editor's notes

There is only one place to start this Newsletter and that is with the very sad news of Stan's sudden and premature death – he will be so missed around the club. That comes after Roger Warren's death in the Autumn. Not a good end to the year!

Stanislav (Stan) Rudcenko (1945-2017)

Terry Hagerty

Hannah Rudcenko called me late on Wednesday, November 21st, to tell me that Stan had died of a

heart attack that same day. I was stunned. Stan was one of my few new friends and you don't expect new friends to die, only old ones.

Prior to retirement, Stan was a high profile economist, well known and respected across many European countries and beyond. He contributed to several treaties on the economic state of various countries and survived two political revolutions.

Stan loved flying, both gliding and power, and was always either at Surrey Hills or at Damyns Hall, flying with Deepac Mahajan. He achieved a long held ambition to fly from the UK to Czech Republic and managed to land Deepac's microlight aeroplane in a field there, nearby the village where he was brought up and went to school. A reception of locals was waiting for him as he landed.



Club members meeting at The Wattenden Arms to remember Stan.

Aside of flying, Stan loved his short wave radio hobby and was always an early riser in order to communicate across the world at the most favourable time of the day. I frequently received his emails timed before dawn.

Stan was financially generous to Surrey Hills Gliding Club and was always trying to find ways of injecting more money into the Club but would never want his name to be publicly attached to his gifts.

I understand that he was quite close to achieving solo status on gliders, but, with his customary sense of humour, he was always pointing out to me that we had both reached the fabled three score years and ten, and that's why we couldn't fly properly!

John Gillespie Magee put it well:

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the
tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of –
Wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence ...*

Stan has “slipped the surly bonds of earth,” far too soon, and is survived by his wife, Hannah, and two daughters.

SHGC Annual Dinner & Prize Giving

Here is some advanced notice so that you can put this date in your diary. The Surrey Hills Gliding Club Annual Dinner & Prize Giving will be held on Saturday 10th February at the Woodcote Park Golf Club, Meadow Hill, Bridle Way, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2QQ.

Further details regarding menu choices and ticket prices will be available nearer the time.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Steve's notes

Steve Codd

Chris normally has to chase me for an article, but after the sad news that we are all reeling from at the loss of Stan, I thought I must say something. There are articles in this Cabletalk from others but Stan to me was an ever present friend, a fixture at the club always willing to chip in and help. Many a flying day has been saved by his selfless attendance working tirelessly to keep things running, many times not flying himself – he always put others before himself. I flew with him on many occasions and it was always great fun if not totally infuriating for him and me. We all know Stan wanted to go solo but teaching him could be likened to joining the dots with the numbers missing, he had all the dots and knew what the picture was but the order was not always correct. The last Monday he was at the club he was very upbeat about the fact that he would be able to get some consolidated training in on Fridays over the winter. Sadly he has gained a set of wings but not the ones he should have got. If he's flying through some gates at the moment it will be with cross controls, but smiling.

On another note, I would like to thank you all for the support I've received over the past month, and your continuing support. We are entering the winter season with its many factors that affect our flying so I ask you all to be ever vigilant and watch out for each other's safety and well being whilst we are out on the airfield.

I'm hoping that through January we can get together and do many jobs around the club, smartening the place up and improving the club's facilities and fleet. KFG will need to be taken off line for his annual inspection and ARC so if you are interested in learning the tasks involved in maintaining our gliders speak to me in the New Year.

That's all for now fly safe and above all enjoy what we do when we can!

Thank you all, Steve.

Gold height attempt

Tim Horbury

You've got your Silver badge; what's next? Gold, of course! The 300km Gold distance can be done in the South-East, but the 3,000m height gain requires travel. As some of you know, I'm also a member of The Club That Shall Not Be Named and when an email went around about an expedition to Aboyne, which has excellent wave flying, I got approval from my wife and signed up.

There were four members and two instructors and through the wonder of Lasham organisation four club gliders arrived at the airfield: A Duo Discus, K21, Discus and baby Grob. The Club had rented houses and I was with two other members in a lovely house in Ballater, ten minutes West of the airfield.

Aboyne is in the Dee valley, an hour West of Aberdeen – one of the local hazards is helicopters ferrying royals to and from Balmoral – and it's a wonderfully peaceful location. Late September weather in Scotland is obviously a bit variable and in the end we flew for three of the six days – but they were really memorable and the weather was

very mild. On Sunday there was good wave in a South-Easterly wind. We all had check flights in the K21, learning how to fly in the wave, use the oxygen system, what to do if you're stuck in cloud – but also understanding the area and the airfield, which is a real challenge. It's laid out like Heathrow, with two parallel East-West tarmac runways, but they are super narrow, which adds to the fun when there's a strong crosswind. Takeoffs are by aerotow on the North runway, landings on the South and because almost nothing else is landable on the airfield, you have to roll all the way to the end when you land to let someone else come in behind. Combined with huge sink from the nearby hills this made for fun approaches and it wasn't unusual to turn base at 1,000 feet, airbrakes open, 65 knots, to swoop down to the runway. The aerotows were also fairly bouncy and the tugs tended to fly straight out downwind over unlandable mountains, which concentrated the mind.

After being cleared to fly I took up the Discus, released at 2,600 feet, connected to the wave and flew up to 10,000 feet, sometimes at plus 8 on the vario – it was just so easy. The wave air is totally



Not the widest runway in the world. Photo: Tim Horbury.



What a sky. Photo: Tim Horbury.

smooth and you fly at min sink so it's quiet and calm and the views are spectacular. I couldn't get higher, but other people that day got well over 15,000 feet. To add to the fun, I couldn't get the gear locked down so I had a frantic few minutes in

the cockpit before I finally managed it. This is when the Lasham people started to realise how weak and feeble I am...

Three days of grotty weather then Thursday was sunny. I flew in the baby Grob but released too



Landing with the ASI reading zero and a wave bar ahead. Photo: Tim Horbury.

early, lost the wave and was at 1,500 feet over the airfield before I finally managed to get away and into the wave, but the wind was quite weak so it petered out at about 5,000 feet. I got respect for scratching low down in very broken lift – but that’s what we do at Kenley all the time! The day went thermic, which destroys the wave, and I had a nice second flight just seeing the mountains from the air. It’s a very pretty area.

Friday was the last day – and the last chance for Gold. A promising strong South-Westerly wind and when the rain cleared the others were really good at letting me go first in the Discus. A very bouncy aerotow, I released about 2,300 feet in lift, turned – and realised that my ASI was reading zero. Not a good moment. I pushed back to the airfield, which was just about reachable, and made a radio call to let people know; they told me later that the tension was clear in my voice, and apparently quite a few people came out to watch (the crash?). I kept the speed up, listening for the wind noise, and in the end the circuit was uneventful and I even managed to roll to the end of the runway. It turned out that the total energy tube had been plugged in the pitot hole during the

rig; and I’d DI’ed it, so no-one else to blame. I learned about DI’ing from that . . .

I went up again, released about 2,900 feet and battled my way into the wave. I needed about 13,000 feet for Gold. The wave bar was quite broken, but it kept working and I had a fairly quick climb to 10,000 feet. After that it got progressively harder and I finally reached 12,200 feet but again the lift ran out and I just couldn’t get any higher. I came down to let someone else have a go, but by then the thermals had kicked off and it all just died.

So: no Gold Height but a fascinating set of flights and I learned a lot. It was a good bunch of people on the trip and like Shenington earlier this year, it was a great way to get to know them better. If you get a chance to go wave flying, take it: it’s such a different experience. I’m going to remember drifting smoothly at 12,000 feet in the sunlight, with just the gentle beeps of the vario and the little clicks of the oxygen system for company, for a very long time.



Wave bar at 9,000 feet. Photo: Tim Horbury.

From the chairman

Chris Leggett

Apart from the sad losses we have recently experienced, life on the airfield continues. We have, as all of you know, had a difficult couple of months at the club and I would like to express my personal thanks for the support and help I have received – not least from the instructors, winch drivers, duty pilots, the committee, and lastly, but certainly not least, Dorcas and Linda. Without the instructors, many of whom have been visiting instructors we could not have flown as much as we have – to them we all owe a large vote of thanks. Then the Duty Pilots, who have been essential when we have had instructors who don't know the airfield as well as our regular instructors, have been brilliant at volunteering and helping. My phone has never rung and beeped so much – I hope Caroline knows it's all gliding related!

We seem to be returning to a more stable situation and long may that continue. I would like to continue the four-week rota as that gives everyone some advance information and it means that we always have at least a minimum team on the field. I would also like to continue with the Duty Pilot system that people seem to like and it seems to be working well. It gives the Duty Instructor some support and relieves them of some of the pressure – they should be flying and teaching – not worrying (as much) about what happens on the ground. As well as that we are all responsible for what happens on the airfield – if anyone sees something that needs sorting please say something or solve the issue yourself rather than keeping quiet and hoping someone else will sort things out. If anyone has any other suggestions or comments then please let me know.

Whilst all that has been going on there seems to be some movement with the 615 cadets hopefully returning to gliding soon, possibly by the summer of 2018. As most of you know there was a public meeting at which “the powers that be” put their proposals for their new headquarters and for a perimeter fence. There have been many comments on Facebook (RAF Kenley and Kenley Airfield

Friends Group) and, with a few notable exceptions, the general opinion seems to be in favour of what they are proposing.

There will be some advantages and some disadvantages but we will have to deal with whatever the outcome is and it has to be better than the current situation. The advantages are that there will be a fence, albeit not that high, which will go roughly where the yellow line is currently – allowing us vehicular tarmac access inside the fence while letting the public use the tarmac area outside the fence. The exception to that is that the yellow line will be diverted to go “behind” the SHGC hangars and clubhouse so our carpark should not be used as a doggy toilet as much and we will be like the cadets “inside” the yellow line.

One of the disadvantages will be that it takes us longer to get going in the morning and clear up after as we will probably have to lock a number of gates in the morning before starting and unlocking them when we pack up – there could be up to 20!

As Steve has mentioned in his piece the plan in January is to fly if the weather is good but only club flying, no air experience flights are being booked. However if the weather is “not worth getting the kit out for” then we plan to have a series of jobs that people can help with – both to the fleet (KFG ARC and Annual for instance) and to the clubhouse and launch point. I wonder when the launch point vehicle and winch vehicle were last cleaned and hoovered! We will certainly gain some brownie points with our landlords if we improve the exterior.

Thanks once again for all your support, and Merry Christmas to everyone.

Roger Warren
(1944–2017)

Mike Jeater
(East Sussex GC)

It is with great sadness, that we at East Sussex Gliding Club (Ringmer), report the passing of Roger Warren who was a senior instructor at our club.



Roger in his “banana”.

Those of us who flew with Roger, as our instructor, will never forget the experience, as his technique was to take you to the edge of your comfort zone and often beyond it. During the walk back to the launch point Roger would slowly, as was his style, but meticulously debrief you on all aspects of the flight. Within the debrief, more often than not, there was a small gem that you could take forward on your journey to becoming a pilot.

Roger's flying career began as a youth when he joined his school's CCF Air Squadron where he first got to fly a glider. On leaving school he started an apprenticeship with British Airways at Heathrow although at this time Roger had another passion and that was music, so he joined a band and sought fame and fortune along this route which was a more fruitful way of earning a living and this took him away from aviation for a while. Some years later Roger returned to flying and got himself a PPL and eventually a twin-engine rating. But gliding was still in his heart so on returning to the sport he trained as an instructor and climbed through the ranks. During this period Roger bought a Slingsby T61F Venture G-BUFR motor glider which he flew up until a couple of years ago. At one point Roger set up a small business, from a caravan in the carpark at Ringmer, to provide NPPL training for aspiring powered pilots in the Venture.

Over a 30 year plus time at East Sussex Roger held many posts and was our CFI for a number of years, more recently Roger became our Instructors' Instructor successfully pushing them forwards to better things. There was also a period when he was a full-time instructor at Surrey Hills Gliding Club at Kenley where many members there will have fond memories of him. When his instructing duties didn't get in the way Roger would often rig and fly a Schleicher Ka6CR affectionately known as the 'Banana', in which he had a share, and would go off and find lift that us mere mortals could not dream of finding. Not so long back a celebration was held at the club to mark Roger's 10,000th launch and in his true modesty he said to a small group of members with a cheeky smile on his face 'Well actually it's nearly 11,000 launches'. Of course, Roger was well known to the wider gliding community and his influence was felt across the whole South East of England.

Outside of flying, Roger had other passions, one of which was his boat which he cruised the river and canals of England on, and his extensive model railway that he shared lovingly with his grandson. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Judy and his wider family.



Stan, taken on his last ever flight, the Friday before his untimely death. Photo: Deepac Mahajan

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.