

Cabletalk

Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

April 2018

Editor's notes

Firstly let me apologise for the delay in getting this next issue of Cabletalk to you. Several reasons – it has been a very busy winter and I was lacking material.

However the weather at last seems to be more in our favour and after a very wet and windy few months we hope to resume normal flying – also I have used up my last stock article!

AGM

As most of you know the AGM is scheduled for 18th May at 19:30 in the clubhouse. The committee would encourage Members to attend the AGM. It would be helpful if any member wishing to raise other formal business advises the Secretary, Marc Corrance, on 01883 330726 or 07815 068116 by Friday 11th May. We hope there will be time for a drink in the Wattenden Arms after the AGM.

SHGC Annual Dinner

Caroline Leggett

This was my third annual dinner since Chris joined the club and I have to say it's nice each year to know more people. It was fairly well attended with enough people to occupy six tables. We had round tables this year which made conversation with each other much easier as we weren't just restricted to chatting to the people next to us.



Jon gets "two" awards. Photo: Caroline Leggett

The waiting staff were very efficient and polite and the food was delicious. I particularly enjoyed my choice of pudding which was the chocolate mousse. It was extremely rich and was served up in an enormous glass. I gave up chocolate for Lent so this was very timely and it gave me a wonderful chocolate hit before my 40 days of abstinence!

After the meal Chris, as Chairman, gave his speech which went down very well. He awarded the Chairman's Shield for contribution to the club posthumously to Stan

Rudcenko. Steve then said a few words followed by the customary awards. Jonathon Hill has had a very eventful year and won 2 awards. The first was for completing over 5 hours in the air at Sutton Bank towards his silver badge. The second was the CFI's shield for his achievements throughout the year, and training to become an instructor.



Mark gets the wooden spoon for second year running! Photo: Caroline Leggett

Mark Kidd won the giant wooden spoon award for managing to put Chris's car in the biggest and deepest puddle on a retrieval mission up at Sutton Bank.

The Alex Wright Trophy was jointly awarded to Michael Pointon and Patricia Chapman for putting up with their partners always being at the club!



Would he have driven his own Jag in there?
Photo: Caroline Leggett

After the awards we had the usual raffle. The whole evening was a great success and big thanks go to Marc Corrance for organising the event and to everyone who attended – we all had a wonderful evening.

Chairman's report

Chris Leggett

I would like to use this piece to thank all the people that have worked so hard to improve the appearance and structure of the clubhouse, the surrounding areas and the equipment. I am not going to name individuals as, if I do that, I will miss someone out. But you know what you did, so thanks for your help.



Think it might have been a tad too windy for the poor launch point! Photo: Steve Codd



Never happier! Photo: Chris Leggett

Again I will probably miss something but the main work has been to put a new roof on the clubhouse which means we have at last stopped the leaks where the containers join and have been able to repair and paint the inside – this looks so much better for our visitors as well as the members. The sheets we used for the roof have created a covered area at the back and the last bits have built an entrance to the workshop. Once this was done we realised we needed guttering – so now we have that as well. We have also built a porch at the front which is keeping the dogs out and is making the clubhouse more



New signs on the new dog-proof porch. Photo: Steve Codd

secure – it also has new signage which looks so much more professional.

As most of you know the launch point was blown over during the winter in the high winds and this resulted in broken windows and a cracked roof etc. The windows are now Perspex and not glass and the launch point is back and operational – it probably still needs some tender loving care but at least it is useable.



Phil making sure the water ran to the downpipes. Photo: Steve Codd

The main hanger and the outside of the clubhouse have all been cleaned with the pressure washer and look so much better – this needs doing every year! The area between the workshop and the hangar has been tidied up and now looks much neater. We have also built some additional trailer storage just to the side of the main hangar – the number of private gliders is increasing every year.

The buggies and the tow-out vehicle have been painted so now the buggies are all

different colours. The Discovery that pulls the launch point now has a solar panel so that the battery should remain charged. The trailer for the signage has been modified and painted and the workshop and hangar tidied up considerably so please help to keep everything clean and tidy.



The launch point has new windows again.
Photo: Steve Codd

Moving on to the gliders, both Grobs have had their ARC and Annuals done and the, new to us, K6 and Vega are also checked and ready for the rest of this year – the K8 will have to go offline in early May for its annual checks.

A number of private glider groups are planning trips away and I hope they get good weather to enjoy flying at their chosen sites. I hope everyone enjoys their flying in the summer months to come.

My Time in Flight – some memorable moments in moderate achievement

Paul Hayward

Unlike most glider pilots of my age I didn't begin in the air cadets.

I first flew in a glider in the Autumn of 1994, a late summer afternoon on a visit to Kenley airfield prompted by an advert in the Yellow Pages. I watched the activities for a while

then, impressed, I paid cash for a single flight and waited in anticipation. The day deteriorated, the wind blew stronger and I was then the last flight of the day. A winch launch in a Ka7 with Tim Brewer (some of you will remember Tim), a dark, wild and exciting ride with no chance for a go on the controls, but I was hooked!

My childhood in Lincolnshire with a dad who had been an RAF pilot at the end of the war frequently took me to watch the take-off of the Vulcans at Scampton and the Lancaster that stood at the gate. With my Dad I'd often see live bombing and firing by the RAF over the east coast sand dunes of Mablethorpe and go to most of the air shows in several counties throughout my adolescence. But it never occurred to me that I could actually learn to fly myself. I remember my



first ever flight was in a Auster that was running pleasure trips from the beach at Cleethorpes – I recall nothing about it other than that it was exciting, better than a donkey ride.

So having tried a glider flight at Kenley and been told that I could learn to fly, I signed up as a full club member and took a one week holiday to get some training. Having always burnt in the sun I had never been a great 'outdoors' type, but ignoring advice I spent Day one at the club enjoying the sunshine (remember those days?). Day two I was lobster red and suffering, covered head to toe with factor fifty sun cream, a hat and long-sleeves; I made it to the end of the week with some progress in my flying training but sore as hell, and then went on holiday with the family for two weeks in Tenerife! Not an auspicious start.

I remember early training flights in snatches, a success here, a few whoopsies there, a lot of waiting around for flights – some things don't change but some things stick in the memory – the first time to another club, a day-visit to Parham with a K7, flying in

weak lift along the ridge and retrieving a Parham K13 which had outlanded over the back of Storrington – all in one day, brilliant.

I recall the day I went solo after months at Kenley. My tortured instructor gave up after ten flights in succession and sent me solo in desperation, not entirely sure that I would survive, but survive I did, and I slowly progressed. My first logbook lists plenty of cable breaks due to over rotation (tut, tut!) and worn steel cable; my average flight time off the winch stayed at less than ten minutes until finally at around flight one hundred I managed to break the half-hour barrier, success! This was mostly due to the arrival of soarable weather but some small measure being down to me.

My first flying holiday was a Kenley club outing for a week to Husbands Bosworth, I remember flying as P2 over the local prison in our club Bocian – a vast distance by my standards at the time – I managed my first solo aerotow in a K8, and recall great company with silly games in the bar; a great time was had by all – ah! Happy days.



Kenley from the air. Photo: Paul Hayward

My first overseas club outing was to Le Blanc (near Poitiers) in France, 'Spreckley's Flying Circus' was based there that year. This was a step up in flying, we took two club aircraft with us (K8 & Sf27) but on-site all the aircraft were modern GRP when all I had flown was wood. I had my check flight in a K21 – wow! I was then given a Jeans Astir to attempt my 50k. I flew plenty of lead-and-follow exercises but never did get to try for my cross country, maybe just as well since a land-out would have been interesting with my rudimentary French and no mobile phones (1996). The social side of away trips is always entertaining, to this day Paul Souter always refers to me as 'that man I slept with!' after he and I shared a cottage in France with Tim and Brenda Brewer. On that trip they discovered 'local booze' and every night was Scrabble-and-Pernod until we couldn't spell anymore.

I gave up flying once in frustration at lack of opportunity to get my silver. I had worked out the percentages (not a good strategy). If I could only fly once a week and was limited to club gliders and the statistical good

weather... If I went on club outings the chances were better but still not looking good given the record of flyable days. So I talked myself out of flying and quit and became (even more) grumpy. After a year I was told by my wife to start flying again as I was 'impossible to live with' (I can't really comment) but that has resulted in my wife's continued support for my flying – she's glad to be rid of me. And that got me into caravanning.

My parents had been great enthusiasts – so I was dead against caravans. I relented when I wanted flying accommodation. I saw a 'For Sale' advert (at a gliding club) and bought a small caravan for £200. It was a great success if a little cramped and for a year we had fun learning how to and how not to do it. My wife loves to paint, which is easier if you have your own space, so she would set up as 'artist in residence' in the caravan at a club whilst I went flying. We upgraded to bigger and better caravans and spent many a good week and weekends at various gliding sites. Caravanning stories are another subject, including jack-knifing the caravan when



Air and space museum – see next page for official caption. Photo: Tim Horbury

stuck trying to get up The Mynd, maybe that's for another time.

Silver distance and five hours was eventually achieved during a club outing to Husbands Bosworth, flown in a K8 with a hard wood platform for a seat and only a thin pad covering. After the first two hours my bum was hurting, for the next hour I alternated left cheek then right, for the fourth hour I almost lost the will but then I was damned if it was all for nothing so fortunately I went numb. Have you ever tried standing up in a K8? With your legs crossed? I have. On landing I was relieved in more ways than one. Late in the day meant an exciting aerotow retrieve of 40km, at VNE with the control stick on the front stop.

The things we do for fun! But the stories we can (or can't) tell!

Bonfire Night, Kenley airfield, 5 November 1999 with a burger in hand and smoke in my face I remember asking about Basic Instructor training and was jumped upon with enthusiasm. Trying to learn and remember 'The Patter' improved my flying, and I learnt to think, fly and talk all at the same time. My BI training seemed scarce and

patchy at the time, followed by a flight test at Parham in a Slingsby Eagle, a huge old beast but all that was available on the day due to overstretched resources. Trying to run an 'Air Experience' flight with the late Stuart Ross as the 'passenger' would test a saint; Roger Coote as the other examiner was only marginally better behaved, but I was judged fit to perform and became an Instructor. My acceptance flight with Roger Coote at my home club Kenley, was on a foul day of drizzle, the final flight being against my judgement in the rain, and I handed control to Roger for landing when I couldn't see where I was going. My final assessment cautioned that my 'confidence exceeded my ability' but certainly not on that day.

And the rest is history (trite but true). I have had countless flights as an instructor and will not dwell on the highs and (literally) the lows, visitors and students, but I have enjoyed the experiences and I think I may continue.

I once booked a day flying at Fayence in the Alps Maritime, South of France, north of St Tropez as I was staying with friends in the area. I had booked with the office and was

Grob 102 Standard Astir III

120
CPL/OT
CPL/AT/PLP

Shortly before 1 p.m. on February 17, 1986, a tow plane hauled Robert Harris and this Grob 102 sailplane aloft over central California. He unhooked the towline and soon found weak lift that he worked to an altitude of 10,640 meters (35,000 feet). Strong lift then pushed the glider up at a rate of 182–243 meters (600–800 feet) per minute.

At 12,768 meters (42,000 feet), Harris's eyes began to water, and his teardrops froze and formed ice cobwebs. Even five layers of clothing could not insulate him from temperatures that dropped to -50 °C (-58 °F) inside the cockpit. Harris was forced to stop climbing at 14,899 meters (49,009 feet) when excessive pressure from an oxygen regulator broke the airtight seal around his face mask. He returned triumphant, having exceeded by more than 821 meters (2,700 feet) the world sailplane altitude record set by Paul Bikle in 1961.

Gift of Robert R. Harris and Susan M. Rothermund

Wingspan:	15 m (49 ft 2 in)
Length:	6.7 m (22 ft)
Height:	1.3 m (4 ft 1 in)
Weight, empty:	255 kg (562 lb)
Weight, gross:	450 kg (992 lb)
Top glide speed:	92 km/h (57 mph)
Manufacturer:	Burkhart Grob Flugzeug GmbH & Co. KG, Mindelheim-Mattsies Airfield, Germany, 1981
A19970455000	



This caption goes with Photo on page 6. Photo: Tim Horbury

promised an English speaking instructor but the usual cock-up prevailed and I had a gruff Corsican whose only instruction seemed to be 'par la' and 'comme sa'. An aerotow to 3000ft in the mountains, during which my man kept grabbing the stick and repeating 'comme sa!' – not enlightening! We spent two hours of strained rock-polishing in a K13 using only 'par la' and 'comme sa'. Interesting. Stunning scenery, lots of jagged bare rock and variable lift, I suspect a lot of frustration at my attempts from the man in the back, but I enjoyed the flight and learnt some new techniques.

It's a small world. On a trip to see my daughter in New Zealand, I booked a couple of days away from the family to fly at Omarama. The first person I met when I walked in was my Parham syndicate partner David Rhys-Jones, and the site instructor was Bo Neilsen whom I'd flown with at Talgarth. My first trip on oxygen, McKensie Basin and the 'Magic Mountains' with 9000ft

as a starting point, to 15,400ft in wave. Looping a Duo Discus in tandem with Gavin Wills in a second Duo over Mount Cook was spectacular. Seeing glaciers running down the mountain valleys and icebergs floating in the bright turquoise mountain lakes – it all added to a once in a lifetime experience.

Ever tried to fly a five minute holding pattern waiting for a turboprop to land? A five mile final glide from ridge flying the local mountains brings you to Paraparamu Gliding Club which shares its approach with the local commercial airport – a different but equally interesting New Zealand experience.

Other pilots have far greater achievements than mine and stories of their own, but I am happy that my flying has entertained me for a good many years, with ups and downs, a great variety of interesting people and a great store of memories. I can only hope to add more to all of that in the remaining years of flying.

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.