

Cabletalk

Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

September 2018

Editor's notes

Chris Leggett

Continuing the fantastic achievements reported in the last issue of Cabletalk it seems that was only the beginning.

Mark Kidd followed his 300k around Gatwick only a few weeks later with a 500k at Aston Down, and Jonathan Hill got his first taste of competition flying. Mark's circumnavigation of Gatwick's airspace is in the October Issue of S&G.

Shayan Hassanbigi and David Hayes got their first solo flights before returning to full-time education.

Well, what a summer!

Steve Codd

Well what a summer, many first solos, epic cross country flights from 50km up to 500km. Fields have been visited on many occasions meaning that many more of you are venturing into the mysteries of the art of cross country. Members are also visiting different sites thus extending your gliding experience. I even managed, after 15 years of trying, a day win in a rated competition. But above all we have had yet another safe year where flying is concerned – no broken gliders and no one hurt. It is imperative that this record continues. I, and all the instructors, give guidance for free using our own experiences and in my case over 5,000 hours total flying. At the beginning of the year I ran two safety evenings mainly dealing with

the day-to-day operations of the ground side of running the airfield. For the most part things have run well and safely, but just recently one or two incidents suggest that we need to have another couple of evening sessions to refresh ourselves as to why we operate as we do. Watch your emails for upcoming dates and please attend if you can, especially if you missed the first meetings.

Autumn is fast approaching but the flying doesn't stop. Please endeavour to stay current and look to improving your skills. Maybe visit a ridge site, go to another site and fly in a type of glider you haven't flown before. It will soon be time to start preparing the fleet for annuals etc so why not get involved, you may learn why I always have to keep giving repeated guidance on ground handling. It's your fleet, your ground equipment and your clubhouse.

Finally, I'd like to thank those of you who have filled the spaces on the duty roster ably maintained by Chris. It makes the day to day running of the flying program much easier.

Fly safe, see you out there.

Competition Enterprise – Aston Down – July 2018

Jonathan Hill

Tom said, 'jump in the deep end, it's the only way to learn', how right he was! So having had a confidence boosting silver flight to Dover last April and some prolonged local

soaring from other clubs I entered my first competition (alright I know it's not a real Comp, but it was an experience!). In a nutshell, over a potential seven days flying you score 1pt/km + 10% if you land at Aston Down (AD); 10pt per each turn point (TP); 2pt for 100ft height gain above 5,000ft QFE; 50pt for overflying sea; 50pt overflying a new country, simples! Tasks included multiple TPs stretching north and south, visit as many as you like or scattered TPs north/south of a line drawn east/west through AD, visit as many as you like but alternating north south, enhancing your score by visiting Wales and Scotland and overflying the sea if you dare and going high. With his epic 300km under his belt Mark K joined me and what a stalwart Mark was, but I'll let him tell his story.

Day 1, brisk easterly & blue, briefed with TPs east & west, I'm going upwind! In the middle of 40 gliders, some £100+k hot ships, many less so and the mighty 1950s 2 seat Eagle was slightly daunting as the 7 tugs launched one a minute and then you're thermalling with 10 others with early launchers marking distant thermals. Aviate/lookout, navigate, communicate struck home! Struggling in broken thermals 3,000ft seemed to be tops around mid-day so I

pushed into wind, the hot guys were long gone. Blue soaring without gliders marking thermals, they'd long gone, no buzzards, thermal sources were villages and valleys, approach from directly down wind and you should make contact . . . sometimes! I really wanted to make the first turn point just 10k away and I really didn't want to land out. Staying up was a challenge let alone making progress into wind, thank goodness for a large quarry which took me from 1,800ft – 3,500ft but I was half way back to AD. For 2hrs 10mins I persisted but decided landing at AD with no points and my tail between my legs, but better than a pointless field.

Day 2, less breezy but blue again with a game of north south, first Nympsfield 10k, south 30k to Chippenham where I out climbed an Arcus to 5,000ft, next TP Gloucester some 50k north but the easterly was again taking some beating and I found myself fighting to stay out of Bristol's airspace. With the Severn Estuary glinting in the west I struggled north saving myself over another large quarry but struggling to push upwind and find good lift. I shan't forget Wootton-under-Edge in a hurry; down to 1,500ft with a smallish triangular cut hay baleless field with a gap between the trees on the approach and no powerlines



1950s Slingsby Eagle BBB won a day with a 130+ km flight to over fly the sea at Weymouth and part way home, dwarfing HKC behind. Photo: Jonathan Hill

in view . . . I spotted a modern large commercial building and car park amongst the rural scenery with my field not far off. Nearer, lower, wheel down, it's got to work it's so hot with nothing else around, lower nearer . . . firm lift, turn in out of lift, around again half in half out, every rotation where's that field, Ok move the circle, could I centre, field still there, maintaining height another adjustment watch the speed half in half out not happy so decision time, complete the circle, roll out straight onto the approach, line up on the gap, couldn't quite see the acorns passing over the threshold, watch the speed, touch down, squeeze the wheel brake, nothing . . . halted 80m short of the hedge. Once the grumpy farmer's daughter let me talk to her father, who wasn't at all bothered, heroes Mark K & Marc C and ex SHGC member Ben W recovered me to AD where the beer vouchers took a hammering!

Day 3, blue light easterly, the UK is quartered North South East West centred on AD, all you have to do is visit any BGA TP over 10k away per sector but you can't return to the previous sector, a bit of a navigation challenge this one but does keep you fairly local to AD. I went Mambury, Dursley, Nymphsfield, Blake Hill Farm . . . then the sky died as a weak front passed through but there was lift over a dual carriageway roundabout on the edge of South Cerney's ATZ, 20 minutes I circled at 1,500ft whilst the sky got greyer and AD was a long way off. Having been into a small field already I fancied a large one this time. Blake Hill Farm was the largest WW2 airfield built for tugging Horsa gliders full of troops with various multi-engined types, the longest runway is 1.5 miles but the tarmac has been replaced by grass which differs in colour, that's my field! Taking my eye off the ball a little I flew a big text book circuit and started my approach down the long long long runway, when I realised just how long the grass was. Oh no not another ground loop, those wings were sooo level when the

grass started pinging underneath and I sank gently onto the ground with an explosion of grass seed into the cockpit as I bounced along the not so smooth reclaimed pasture halting about 2/3rds down the runway. I love farmers, using bailer twine Mr Sweet towed HKC to the edge with his Land Rover from where Mark K and the lovely Sue recovered me back to AD where the vouchers took another hammering!

Day 4, Very breezy, big boys turboed it to Wales for ridge soaring and I adjusted my wheel brake!

Day 5, HOT and blue, light northerly with developing Cu later – declared St Neots/Pershore/AD as a 309km gold distance and put myself on the back of the grid to take the pressure off, big mistake! Launching almost last I struggled to get away spending 40 minutes at 1,000ft scratching over a hamlet to stay in the sky and when I finally gained height the sky was void of gliders marking thermals. Remember, it's all in the mind . . . first NE around Little Rissington's prohibited airspace to avoid the 'meat bombs' (parachutists from 10,000ft) then ENE initially into unfamiliar territory and then 5,000ft over Shenington. Approaching Milton Keynes a good climb, but then an airspace warning or was it a breach, was I under Daventry's FL65 or just over the LTMA's 5,500ft just to the south . . . Onward to skirt north of a very neat looking Cranfield with Graffam Water away to the north. Locating blue thermals at height having identified their probable sources far below took some practise and wasted much time but St Neots wasn't far off, 140km covered. Then, what a small world, Mark K joined me in a thermal, we chatted, it was getting on in the day and though the Cu clouds were good, I wasn't convinced the day would last and I really didn't want to call on Mark again to retrieve me from another field late in the evening and then there was that possible airspace breach, so I decided to turn at St Neots and run for home (Oh for



A different way to watch the racing at Silverstone – taken while at Competition Enterprise. Photo: Marc Corrance

hind sight). Back westwards over a pre Grand Prix Silverstone where over Enstone I took a sustained 6–8 up climb to cloud base at an indicated 7,800ft AMSL what a view, but inexperience and failing to properly use the technology on the moving map meant I failed to appreciate just how far you can glide. So rather than properly assessing the sky and adjusting my course for Pershore, elated that I'd make it back I enjoyed the ride arriving at AD at 3,000ft in a sky still working at 7pm! After 6hr 40mins I stepped out of HKC happy not to be in a field, but Enterprise is about stretching yourself and I'd aborted an almost dead cert gold distance. 280km flown, the trace showed no airspace breaches!

Day 6, HOT blue Cu later moderate N going W, Met briefing suggested the south coast

convergence would not advance north much during the day, rather than Denbigh N Wales I declared an out and return 318km to Truliegh north of Brighton, get down to Petersfield, push on to Cocking, surf the sea breeze front to Brighton then run for home... East of Petersfield just under the 4,500ft LTMA I was looking up at a paraglider high above me ascending the sea breeze convergence, but the further east I went the more north the front moved so when north of Parham I had my back against the LTMA 2,500ft with the front well to the north. I scratched for 15 mins but the stable sea air won and I landed after 144km at Parham around 4pm. It would have been a very long retrieve costing a few bob in derv, so I went for a re-light and most efficiently Parham's Pawnee towed me

35km just north of Petersfield beyond the front where, with the intention of reducing the retrieve distance, I climbed away passing Lasham at 5,300ft looking up at one of their K13s high above . . . Looking NW there were few big conurbations and time was ticking, weak climbs kept me going till, 80km later with a low sun and very hazy viz I made Swindon above which was a high sprawling not great looking cloud. 1 up, go with it, search under the cloud, damn lost what I had, found it again stick with it, painfully slowly I crept up to 4,500ft, the sky towards AD 30km away was cloudless and very murky. At 50knts I gently hissed NW the sun low directly ahead its glare preventing me reading instruments and the horizon just a smudge, could I make AD . . . Approaching Cotswold Airport at Kemble I was down to 2,200ft, I could see nothing ahead, not great for a field landing if I didn't make AD. I called up Kemble Tower . . . hissss . . . Decision made, Kemble traffic glider . . . HKC downwind to land runway 27 grass. I stepped out, looked around, there was no one there, it was 19:20hrs! On reflection I probably could have made AD but gliding into poor viz

over unfamiliar territory I felt discretion the better part of valour and played safe. HKC over nighted at Kemble whilst golden angel of gliding and mum of current BGA development, Anne Randle collected me and told me tails of her adventures and mishaps in her Oly 2b in the '60s during the return drive. Better still, Anne didn't drink so the beer vouchers were safe! Glided for 253km, towed for 35km.

Day 6, Saturday dawned, I was cream crackered so called it a day and with Mark K, who has his own tales to tell, we made for Kenley.

From the first grid with 40 gliders; taking on blue cross country flying; two field landings; visiting one new gliding club; landing at my first airport; covering not far off 1,000km during the week; attaining a best height; all with likeminded people who were great company. I know it's not a proper competition but it was very 'enterprising' for me and next time I'll be wiser. Sutton Bank next year . . . ?



Shayan Hassanbigi sitting there patiently ready for his first solo launch – wonder what he was really thinking! Photo: Steve Codd

Shayan flies solo

Chris Leggett

Congratulations go to yet another 16 year old, Shayan Hassanbigi, who went solo in KFG on 21 August 2018. Having spent a lot of the summer doing circuits, spinning and cable breaks, Shayan was sent on his maiden solo flight by Stephen Skinner. He is already looking forward to half-term to continue his flying career.

Solo on 20th birthday

Chris Leggett

Congratulations also go to David Hayes who was sent solo by CFI Richard Fitch on 13

September 2018 – his 20th birthday. Progressing to other gliders may have to wait a while as he returned to University only a few days later.

From the chairman

Chris Leggett

Well it has been quite a summer, and I am delighted to see some club members have made the most of it. Badge flights for Andrew Woolley, Tim Horbury and Mark Kidd – all fantastic achievements. First solo flights for two 16 year olds, Sam Coole and Shayan Hassanbigi and then Sam managed over 10 hours solo before going back to school – a really good summer. This was



David looks very composed after his first solo flight – what a birthday present. Photo: Richard Fitch



Sunset over the airfield after flying an evening group. Photo: Chris Leggett

followed by David Hayes going solo just before returning to University.

We have had some other recent changes with Bryan Yates stepping down from doing the regular Monday winching slot (again!) and David Kirby-Smith (or perhaps his wife) deciding that he would only do two Fridays a month on the winch. Thank you both for your sterling service over the years. Jonathan Hill and Roy Musselwhite have picked up most of the vacant winch slots so far and I would like to thank them for that. However, looking forward, we need to train up a new batch of willing and competent winch drivers – so if you are a solo pilot and

fancy learning how to launch your colleagues skywards then talk to Phil Chapman who will be delighted to show you the ropes, and that includes how to splice them when they break!

On the Instructor front we have gains and a temporary loss – Stephen Swan, Paul Hayward and Richard Fitch are still doing their regular days most weeks and we really appreciate their continued help, support and willingness to pass on their knowledge to the next batch of pilots. We have also persuaded Adrian Lyth to help out on Fridays, certainly throughout the winter. We may also have persuaded Geoff Purcell to

help on some Wednesdays so that will mean Steve does not have to do everything! For those that don't know Adrian or Geoff, Adrian is a full-cat instructor and ex-CFI who is based at Parham and Geoff is an ass-cat and lives not too far from Kenley.

That has dealt with the gains but we will lose Mark Kidd for 3 months as he is sailing from the Canaries to the West Indies – Mark I think you are mad but I hope you enjoy your trip – he will be away from the beginning of November until February 2019.

We also have several people who are hopefully not too far off gaining their Basic Instructor rating and we hope to have at least one new BI before Mark departs.

As most of you know Steve is handing out miniature wooden spoons for people who do silly things (not safety related) around the airfield – so don't be surprised if you get something wrong and get an award for it – driving over the bollards, towing the cable

parachute out without the cable attached, and many other amusing incidents have already been justly rewarded.

As you probably all know the MOD have got planning permission for their new clubhouse and also for the perimeter fence. We have no definite start dates for these works but rumour has it that the fence will start soon – we may therefore experience some interruptions and inconvenience around the airfield and entrance but the end result will be better for everyone and the public should not cause as many safety issues as we currently experience.

Lastly, but most importantly, I would like to thank all the people who helped fly the groups this year – it is a very important source of income and we can't do it without the help of the instructors, winch operators and people who help on the ground. Thanks to the weather, we flew all the groups this year and we will hopefully see them return next year.

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),
Stephen Skinner,
Trevor Fielder,
Shona Fenion,
Terry Hagerty.

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.