

# Cabletalk

## Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

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November 2018

### Editor's notes

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*Chris Leggett*

Continuing the fantastic achievements reported in the last issue of Cabletalk it seems that was only the beginning – this must have been one of the best seasons of flying at SHGC for many years with 5 solos, Silver, Gold plus Diamond, and many cross country flights including the inevitable land-outs.

When Steve first came to SHGC as Club Manager he said 'Why isn't there a fence around the airfield? We need one.' Well now, some 12 years later, his wish is coming to fruition. Once we have this we can move the winch to places that will mean less cross-wind and therefore improved launches.

### Thank you

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*From a very satisfied customer*

*[Editor] We received this lovely letter from Alexa 'very satisfied customer' and I thought SHGC members would like to hear this. What we do does make a difference:*

"I just wanted to say a massive thank you to the team. I was booked in for 4 gliding sessions (my first ever experience) hoping to give me positive associations with flying to get me over my debilitating fear of commercial flying.

I already had a flight to Ibiza booked and you guys really kindly worked things round



*One of Alexa's views during her four flights.*

to make sure I could do the gliding before my trip even though you had a really full diary.

Then not only did you fit me in so accommodatingly, but Steve who took me up and talked through everything and gave me the MOST incredible experience. It was magical. And it felt so natural to be in the air. So beautiful. So much excitement and adrenaline. He made me feel so comfortable and prepared. I think it's the most magical thing I've done in my life.

But more than that, because of finally feeling happy and natural being in the air, I got on my flight to Ibiza yesterday and finally didn't experience the fear and committed to staying on the plane! I could never have got on that plane if I didn't do the gliding.

Because of gliding I feel I can fly anywhere now and enjoy it, and it's opened up so many new possibilities to go to places I never had the confidence to fly to before. It has honestly changed my life and I can't thank you all enough."

# Great Achievements

## Chris Leggett

Well what a year it has been – I thought after the last issue we were going to wind down for the winter but no, the achievements just kept on coming.

We had two more first solo pilots in Don Porter who was sent solo by Stephen Swan and Ben Gibbs who was sent solo by Richard Fitch. That makes a total of five new solo pilots this year – competition for the single seaters will increase next year.



*Don was sent solo by Stephen Swan.*



*Ben was sent solo on a Thursday before moving to Germany at the weekend – just made it!*

Then Chris (oh, that's me!) sat the Bronze exam one wet Friday and then had the flying test the next Friday.



*Steve signs off Chris's Bronze.*

Steve then went to Sutton Bank for a week and although no specific targets were achieved he has to get a mention for some of the best pictures of the year.



*Steve's glorious pictures over the Yorkshire clouds*

Tim Horbury then went on a trip to Aboyne with a group from Lasham and achieved his gold height – the last part of his gold sucessfully completed.



*Above: Tim's view while getting his Gold height.*



*Mark's epic flight including showing off his altimeter reading!*

Mark Kidd was not to be outdone by Tim. Whilst Tim was at Aboyne, Mark and two

others were at Denbigh (see article by Michael Pointon). The week was not as good as they expected but Mark was determined to get a good flight and stayed on for an extra few days. He was rewarded by an epic flight and he finished the season getting his gold height + diamond – so he started the season not having done a 300k and finished with Gold and three diamonds – a monumental achievement.

Lastly, but only chronologically, Jonathan Hill went to Bicester to do his BI flying test, which of course he passed and then had an acceptance flight with Steve and is now a SHGC Basic Instructor.



*Steve completes his acceptance test and Jonathan becomes the latest instructor at Kenley.*

## Safety First

### Terry Hagerty

As a fairly regular Duty Pilot on flying days, I'd like to point out a few issues that I have noticed over the past few months in the spirit of greater safety and smooth running of flying days.

**RADIO** – there are fairly regular occurrences of folk using the wrong technique when using the radio for launching. If you refer again to Steve Codd's Safety Briefing paper, you will note the correct procedures. Order of words and tone of voice is very important.

Significantly, it is imperative that wherever possible, radio communication is done from upstairs in the Launch Point caravan. This is to ensure that the radio operator has the best possible view of most of the airfield just prior and during the initial stage of launching. Remember that the pilot cannot see much from his low aspect seating position and the wingman, who can see more, still does not have a commanding view of most of the airfield like the radio operator has. There are occasions when radio comms have to take place from ground level, eg when we are short-handed and the wingman has to operate the radio as well as launch the glider. This is a compromise situation which is not ideal but in the interests of keeping things going, we will reluctantly adopt. Note, it is not acceptable to pass radio messages to the Winch Point from a sitting position as this will inevitably compromise the view available to the radio operator, particularly if there are parked cars in the way of his view.

**LAUNCHING** – some “wingmen” are holding on to the leading edge of the wing while launching flights. This is dangerous and could harm you or the pilots or the glider. The recommended way is to hold the trailing wing edge thus facilitating an easy release, and, importantly, getting you out of the way naturally, in the unfortunate event of a wing drop, ground loop etc.

**BUGGIES** – it’s best and far safer if, after towing back gliders to the launch point, and unhitching them at a safe distance away from parked gliders and people, that buggies are returned to a safe area, some distance from all activities, preferably close to the Launch Point caravan.

**PEOPLE AND CROWD CONTROL** – we should all have an eye on the visiting public and stop them wandering towards the launching area unaccompanied. Recently a visitor arrived by car with family entourage, got out and strode across to the launch area

saying “is this my glider?” About as daft as saying “is this my funeral?” Fortunately he was stopped.

**COCKPIT COVERS** – these are expensive and must be kept clean. Please remove them carefully from gliders and fold and bag them without letting them drag on the ground and do not place them on the ground to fold them (tarmac or grass).

**VOUCHERS & PAY ON THE DAY TRANSACTIONS** – keeping track of this is primarily the Duty Pilot’s job or whoever is delegated in his/her place. Cash payers are always a potential risk especially when “on spec” people turn up and ask to fly. They should be asked to pay before flying or chased down immediately afterwards. This is very important if they are the last to fly when all hands are busy hauling gliders, locking up etc., and sometimes few members are around at the Launch Point.

Just in case you might think that I have taken over as Safety Officer or Club Manager, I haven’t. The above has been approved by them and I’m merely trying to share some of the tasks that they perform for the good health of the Club.

## Flying at Denbigh

*Michael Pointon*

Three of us, Mark Kidd, Jonathan Hill and I visited Denbigh during the first week in October 2018.

On the first day’s flying (before Jonathan arrived . . .) I landed out within a mile of the airfield, having been caught out by a heavy shower which I mistakenly thought I could avoid. Chris Gill, the manager, was very helpful in helping with the retrieve, and in my opinion runs the operation at Denbigh in a welcoming, informative and yet firm manner. He has also posted some very good You Tube clips of flying at Denbigh.



*View looking towards the Clwydian Hills*

I had two days of very entertaining ridge flying, another one on the Wednesday with potential wave (with which I did not connect) and one day when the wave was good, though the orientation of the bars varied at different heights by almost 90

degrees, which was quite confusing to read. I only made it to 5,900ft qfe but Mark got up to 7,200ft and one of the pilots from Parham achieved 14,432ft. The following day (Friday 5 October) wasn't worth rigging and we gathered in the clubhouse and compared all of our traces on a See You maggot race, which we found very informative in assessing where and how we could have done better.

When the right conditions apply, the wave seems to set up very close to the airfield at Denbigh and a short aerotow or, on occasion, a winch launch is all that is required to connect. However, the wave rotor also sets up over the site and the surrounding area which makes for somewhat "sporting" approaches (putting it mildly). The site can be rather daunting as it is prone to rough conditions and there is an expectation of



*Differing orientation of the wave bars*



*Too close under a wave bar*

spot landings to keep the hard surfaced runway clear; said runway is about 6 metres wide though the surrounding field is let to a farmer for growing grass. Some of the pilots from Parham who were there

during the same week said they found Denbigh to be more challenging than Talgarth, for example.

All in all I found that the week was a fantastic and fun learning experience, having been exposed to conditions that were well outside any parameters that would normally apply at a flatland site. I have every intention of returning there next year, though I am a little biased because visiting Denbigh also gives me the opportunity to see a very old friend who lives locally!

Congratulations to Mark, who had an excellent flight on Monday 8 October (after I had returned home) and also to Steve who got to 9,272 feet from Sutton Bank on 3 October.



*Wave bars*

# The Snatch Launch

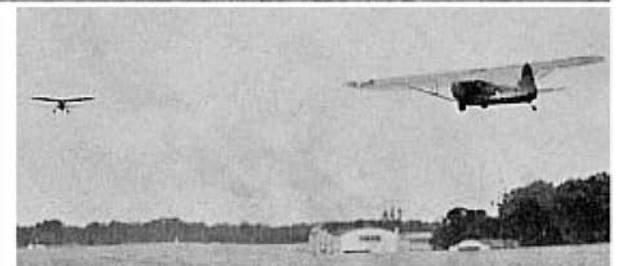
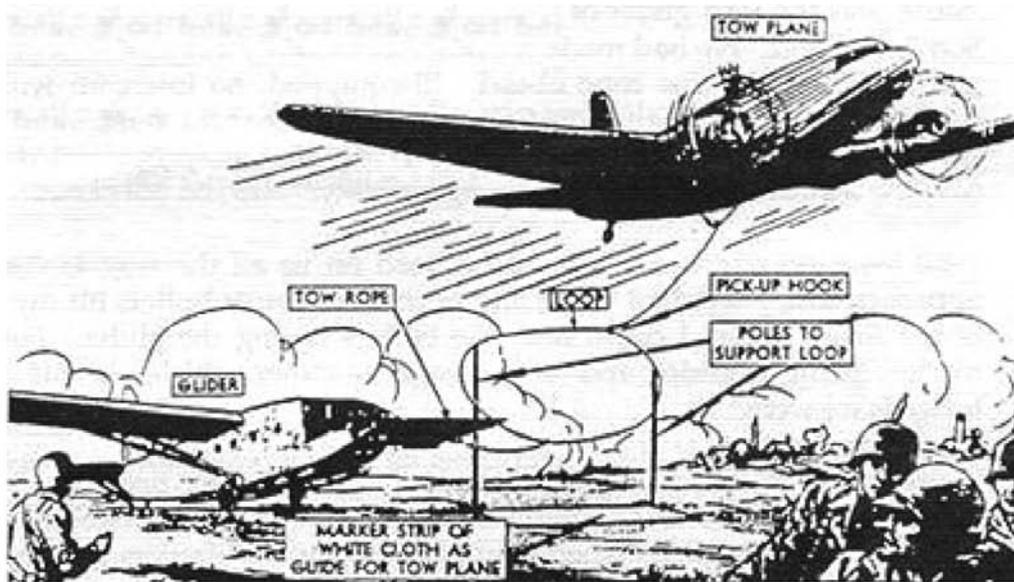
**Bob Sluman**

The glider snatch pick-up technique was used by the Allies in WW2. It allowed military gliders to be launched from a stationary position on the ground by a low-flying powered aeroplane (the tow or tug), flying low overhead but which did not have to land.

The snatching aircraft – typically a Dakota has a 20ft arm that is hanging down at 45 degrees from the plane, supporting a hook at

the tip. The hook is attached to a steel rope attached to an automatic winch containing 1000ft of steel cable aboard the tow plane. On flyover, the hook engages in a square shaped loop of nylon tow rope, supported on two poles about 20ft apart 10ft off the ground. This loop is attached to an 180ft nylon tow rope which is attached to the front of the glider.

The special design of the hook means it is less likely to snag the ground but will grab the loop. When the hook engages in the loop, initially the rope pays out from the



winch, and then gradually a brake is automatically applied until up to typically 800ft max of cable is paid out. This, and the stretch in the nylon rope, reduces shock loading to less than 1G and for a duration of around 3–6 seconds by which time the glider is airborne. The steel wire is then winched in. It was possible for one plane to pick up 2 gliders in this way – first one, and then another. Gliders were retrieved for re-use in this way after combat operations. Some casualties were evacuated from the D-Day landings back to UK using this technique. Several rescues of downed aircraft passengers were also performed by landing gliders to pick up survivors and then snatching them from remote locations.

There are YouTube clips of this type of launch at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dgu5yh0HkgY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dgu5yh0HkgY)

and

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=68O\\_ZHCOjwk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68O_ZHCOjwk).

## Annual Dinner and Prize Giving

Please put the 23 February in your diary for the Annual Dinner and Prize Giving. For those that have not been before or those who have not been for a while, this is an informal evening with a three course dinner (choice of 2 starters, 2 main courses and 2 sweets). Menu choices will follow soon.

There is also a very reasonably priced bar and plenty of opportunity to socialise. Attire is smart casual (it's certainly not a black tie do) and it is the evening when we recognise the help we get from our partners (who let us fly) and award cups and wooden spoons to those who have achieved things, good and bad, throughout the year and/or have helped the club.

## 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

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.*