

# Cabletalk

## Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

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December 2019

### Editor's notes

I have to start this issue with a massive apology. The last issue of Cabletalk was back in May and this issue is way overdue. It has been a very busy time at the club as members will have noticed and I have had a very busy time with work leaving very little spare time, and even less for gliding.

### Farewell Steve

*Adrian Hewlett*

A long, long time ago (or so it seems to the elderly members) a young(ish) man came to SHGC in response to an advert for a club manager and staff instructor. He presented an impressive CV which covered all the holes the club needed to fill – maintenance of club gliders, winches, ground equipment and club-house buildings.

However, the restrictions at Kenley meant that we could not benefit from his experience as a tuggie and motor glider instructor. As a Full Cat instructor, with over 10,000 launches at the time, and an instructing record dating back to 1980 (age 17!) he was streets ahead of the other applicants. His name was Steven Codd (always with a 'v' please). So he was employed on a 3 month probationary contract and quickly started to use some of his experience in running the club. His probationary period passed with flying colours, things started to happen.



*Steve Codd leaves SHGC after 13 years as Manager. Good luck for the future Steve.*

My chronology may be faulty but very soon on a blessedly fine, calm day, the leaky hangar covering was renewed, decrepit wooden structures (AKA workshops etc) were replaced by shipping containers and the twin cabin clubhouse was given a makeover by enthusiastic use of anglegrinders to remove the dividing wall – the leaky joint between the cabins took longer to resolve – but that's another story!

Steve often used his enterprising powers of persuasion – a recent example was

persuading contractors charged with removing items no longer required by 615VGC on their rebuild to relocate a 60ft cabin to our compound instead of removing it to some remote disposal site. A more fraught exploit was persuading OC 615 that he had no use for the metal fencing which was sourced by MoD before planning permission was granted – which it wasn't – and the club could help itself to as much of the redundant material that we could use. Sometime later, an MoD jobsworth spotted the fencing which by then we had erected and enquired as to its source. Steve's only slip up was to fail to get said OC to sign a piece of paper saying 'Help yourselves, we can't use it'.

His experience and skills have kept club and private gliders serviceable and his expertise has proved invaluable. But perhaps Steve will be best remembered for his flying and instructing. Many members will have memories of flights with Steve where he went above and beyond to help them with their flying. His greatest was with a keen youngster who would often turn up after school hoping to fly. This young man acknowledges that Steve taught him almost all he knows – and the teaching was surely instrumental in Tom winning the Junior Worlds in Australia during the winter of 2015/2016 and Gold in the Europeans this year; and he acknowledges that he is 'certain that without Steve at Kenley, I probably wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now'. Indeed, other club members experienced for the first time flying cross-country and in Comps with Steve in one of our Grobs and some have progressed to instructor level. There must be many stories that members can tell about Steve but they must be saved for another time.

What his CV did not mention was his love of animal life. Until the fence was completed this year, he would often greet dogs which came into the clubhouse with

the toe of his boot which would then call on his skill in dealing with the general public! But he had a soft spot shown by his protection of the nesting swallows in the roof of the wooden bothy in front of the clubhouse door (see also his swallow photo in a recent issue of S&G).

But when all is said and done, Steve is a Marmite character. Love him or hate him, everything he decides to do is predicated on his passion for safety. He has never had to report an accident in gliding operations in his long career as an instructor/manager and he wants to finish his gliding life the same way. Yes, if he were to make up his mind that he wanted something done in a certain way, there was little that could be done to change it. But I cannot recall when he made a decision which had negative operational repercussions.

Whichever way you feel about Steve, he will surely be missed by the club. May his future be as safe and successful as his past.

## **Michael 'Mike' Pointon – 8/05/54 – 17/06/19**

*Marc Corrance*

Mike was a keen and active member of Surrey Hills GC for nearly 20 years and was well liked by all who knew him. He may have seemed at times a quiet person but beneath that exterior lay a dry and mischievous sense of humour.

Living locally to the airfield, Mike managed to squeeze as much flying in as possible around his work as a chartered surveyor, for which he ran his own successful business with his wife Dorcas.

Mike dedicated a lot of time to the club and being local meant he was often on hand to pop over and help whenever it was needed. He was also a member of the Committee as Safety Officer for a number of years and in

## Denbigh Gliding – G Dale Coaching – 31 August to 8 September

*Andrew Woolley*



*Michael receiving an award at the annual dinner recently.*

2008 he became a basic instructor. He enjoyed many club trips around the country and always made the most of flying the Discus, in which he had a part share, at places like Shobdon & Aston Down as well as Denbigh where he flew as recently as May this year. He was always great company and it will be strange going away without him in the future.

Outside gliding and work, Mike was a keen sailor and shared many sailing holidays with his wife and friends and he also loved his motors, being the proud owner of an Alpha Romeo Spider among other cars.

Mike was a true gentleman and he sadly passed away very suddenly this summer after a very short illness. He will be sorely missed by all that new him and especially by his loving wife Dorcas.

It was thanks to the late Michael Pointon that Jason Barton and I found ourselves trailing our gliders to Denbigh on Friday, 30 August to join a 9-day coaching course run by Chris Gill and G Dale at Lleweni Parc. In the Spring Michael had suggested to me that we should both join the course and take the Discus with us. Sadly, this was not to happen so Jason took up Michael's place, although, due to work commitments, he could only do the first 4 days.

On arrival at Lleweni Parc we watched the Eurofox tug land and it was being thrown all over the place in the high wind. We could have rigged and flown that afternoon but decided we didn't want to fly at a new site in these conditions. However, the wave was really strong and Chris Gill returned in his DG1001M, having reached 19,500ft. That turned out to be the best day for wave whilst we were there! There were 14 course participants, 10 of whom had bought their own gliders along. In addition to Chris Gill's DG1001M, G had his ASH25 two-seater, site owner Rod Witter had his Arcus 2 seater and Chris Fox had a Duo Discus Turbo, so there were plenty of opportunities for coaching in a two seater.

The pattern for each day was to have a 10am briefing (with bacon rolls!) from Chris, followed by a lecture from G Dale, the length of each lecture session being determined by the weather on the day. So on most days we enjoyed a lecture from G for 90 minutes or so before putting theory into practice in the air. G is a world class coach and his lectures are brilliant. He has a way of miming glider flight and cloud

formation that is very entertaining and he is also an expert at drawing on a white board. Probably the most memorable lecture was G reliving the experience of bailing out of his glider following a mid-air collision in a competition!

The Lleweni Parc airfield was established by Rod Witter in the early 90s following years of searching for an ideal site for getting into wave from Snowdonia. Apparently, in a strong westerly, it is possible to get straight into wave above the airfield from a winch launch. The downside to this is that there is often strong rotor turbulence on the approach and we were advised to make a very steep approach with a lot of airspeed (90 knots at times!) and to aim to touch down half way along the very narrow tarmac runway. The grass was out of bounds so we were expected to roll right to the end of the runway on landing and there was a £1 fine to be paid if your glider failed to get over an orange line painted across the end of the runway. I failed to do so on the first three attempts! I have to admit that the Discus proved very difficult to keep in a straight line at low speed thanks to it having a tail skid running on tarmac. Lleweni Parc is certainly a very challenging site to fly from, and for this reason pilots need to be at least Silver C to fly solo there.

On most days it was possible to soar the local ridge and, hopefully, get into a thermal and get away from the ridge. Tuesday, 3 September looked good for



*Andrew's view above the clouds.*

wave and, sure enough, the Eurofox towed me straight into wave above the airfield. Unfortunately, I soon dropped out of it but then got re-established in it and had the amazing experience of going up at 4 knots in totally smooth air. Soon I was above the clouds and as I was passing through 8,000ft I decided I had better get the oxygen on. Lack of preparation meant that the plastic pipes were tangled in one of the pockets, so I had to focus on untangling them before I could use it and in doing so I dropped out of the wave again. I soon got back into it and reached 9,566ft just as Chris Gill came on the radio to say we should all come back down as the hole in the cloud below us was starting to close up. So I put out the airbrakes and dived at 90 knots into the hole before landing back at base. So it was great to fly in wave for the first time but no Diamond height and not even Gold height!

Thursday, 5 September wasn't a particularly good day as there was no thermic activity and no chance of wave. The ridges were working reasonably well and Chris Gill decided he would lead another motorised glider on a ridge run to Cader Idris, a 3,000ft mountain on the west coast of Wales. This adventure was for motorised gliders only as Chris had never been able to get to Cader Idris without using the engine on the DG. Rod Witter decided to go with him so there were two spare seats going. I was lucky enough to be chosen to fly with Chris, which was a great experience. We started well with Rod following us but, as expected, we both had to use our engines on a tricky ridge just before Bala. Finally, we made it to Cader Idris and climbed up its North face buzzing sheep and climbers on the way. With 3,000ft in hand we were able to get most of the way back before we were forced onto the ridge to get the rest of the way home.



*The beautiful North Wales mountains.*

The course effectively finished on Saturday, 7 September but those of us that decided to fly on the Sunday were set a cross-country task. In the briefing Chris said that top cover was expected to come over the Denbigh area in the afternoon so he set us on a modest 215km triangle to Bridgnorth, Mynd, Oswestry and then back to base. On launching, the local soaring conditions were not great with a cloudbase of only 2,500ft, which was only just above ridge height. However, I eventually managed to get into a weak thermal and got away from the ridge, crossing the start line over the airfield at 2,700ft. Conditions improved as I flew towards Shrewsbury with cloudbase going up to 4,000ft with strong thermals and completing the task was starting to look possible. I turned Bridgnorth and I could see the Mynd in front of me with good looking cumulus and lots of sunshine in between. I dropped to 2,000ft by the time I turned at the Mynd but picked up a stonking thermal over the airfield there. Oswestry was passed easily and, according to the

Oudie, I was soon on final glide. However, looking ahead, conditions seemed poor so I topped up at the next strong thermal. Approaching Denbigh I could see that I was generally in sinking air and making the airfield was starting to look marginal. I decided to deviate over to the ridge in the hope of encountering a bit of lift and this really helped. I was delighted to make it back to the airfield after almost exactly 3 hours on task. Chris Gill greeted me to say that, apart from him, I was the only glider to have completed the task. One had landed out 5 miles from the airfield on final glide whilst the others had abandoned the task and landed back at base.

I enjoyed the challenge of flying at Denbigh so much that, with the kind agreement of Marc and Richard, my syndicate partners, I decided to leave the Discus at Denbigh so that I can return this Autumn, when the wave conditions are likely to be more favourable, to have a go at getting either my Gold or Diamond height.

# Cows, Calves and Challock

*Jason Barton*

Saturday 18th May – I was driving along the M25 to Dartford noticing most of the fields adjacent to the motorway had cows and calves in the them. Reduced land out options if I was to try a 50k to Challock. I don't think that was imminent. But the following Tuesday lunchtime, I took off from Kenley heading to Challock.

It was a swift lead up to this flight, Steve mentioned in passing the previous evening that tomorrow would be a good soaring day.

I woke up early, assembled the essentials: map, hat, sunglasses, fruit jellies, radio and water bottle.

When I got to the airfield I told Steve and Richard that I wanted to try for Challock and both said I should go for it. By chance, the rest of the K6 syndicate arrived and we rigged 799.

Andrew Woolley had offered to retrieve me in case others were not available.

Once rigged, I decided not to leave immediately as not much cloud had formed and I wanted a bit more up there before settign off.

I had another look at RASP, weather and notams on the clubhouse computer. When some more clouds arrived I decided to put 799 on line.

I was launched into lift, then flew under nearby clouds that were all producing lift unlike last May, when I landed out by the Caterham bypass!

The wind was from the North West which pushed me towards the M25 quicker than I anticipated but the height was good. Plenty of cattle in the fields below!

I tried to fly down the right hand side of the M25 but discovered the better lift was between the left side and the hill running

alongside the motorway. I passed Skinner's farm and was just getting enough height to get from one cloud to the next until Sevenoaks, when I was at 800ft above the M25/M20 junction. I thought if I stayed here, the heat coming off this junction might be enough. I had selected the field complete with dog walker who was just vacating it.

There were other fields nearby but they had horses in them ruling them out.

I started to lose height and was about to start my circuit when the vario went from negative to positive. I dug the wing in and climbed out. There were occasions I had to fly with the air brakes deployed to keep within the height restriction.

I did more cloud hopping to Maidstone but lost height at the edge of town. There was a large cloud over it but I didn't want to get lower over a built up area so turned south east to try to catch the edge of the cloud. Now at 800ft, field selected, farmer with tractor and trailer had just left it, but the vario lifted once more.

I passed the southern edge of Maidstone now looking at the railway heading south below me, checked the map, the step up from 2,500ft to 3,500ft QNH was roughly following the track. I decided to wait until I was level with Leeds Castle which is 50k from Kenley before climbing.

Leeds castle spotted to the North and once adjacent with it, for the first time flying from Kenley, I could climb above 1,934ft QFE (only by another 1,000ft). Break out the fruit jellies.

I could see where Challock was in the distance but at this height it was too far for a straight glide. However, the clouds had started to develop and the lift improved.

By the time I got to Challock, some of the clouds had 6–8 knots lift underneath them.

The clouds started to look good to the south but not to the east. The sea breeze was pulling the edge of the cloud down at Dover making it look like a huge curtain – not going near there!

In the meantime, a chunky cloud was forming by Ashford so decided to go under and got to cloudbase quickly.

I spent the next hour soaring around Challock trying to work out their circuit as I could not get hold of them on the radio and they were landing on two grass strips which converged towards the North. I aborted my first attempt to land when about 7 gliders landed in succession! I wanted a quiet spell to join the circuit to land. Back to the cloud by Ashford. My second attempt was scuppered the same way.

Later on, gliders began to park up at the clubhouse and then the next wave of arrivals seem to be waiting to be retrieved, I headed to the field, joined the circuit and landed.

I was welcomed by the tug pilot who asked if I wanted an aerotow back to Kenley which I declined.

Then the CFI congratulated me and towed 799 to the clubhouse, showed me the tea and coffee facilities and the bar if I fancied something stronger. I stuck to tea as I had a 2½ hour rehearsal that evening.

I was joined at the picnic table outside the clubhouse by various members of Challock who congratulated me and were surprised I got through the height restriction to get there.

Two of their pilots had just flown a 300k out and back along the south coast.

Andrew Woolley arrived and we derigged 799 back into its trailer and headed back to Kenley. It was driving back I started to realise how far it was.

It didn't look that far from the air.

Thanks to everyone helping me that day. Silver C completed.

As a cautionary note, anyone thinking of flying to Challock, be aware that the vineyards are expanding south of the site – landing out will soon not be an option between the airfield and M20.

## **Beware big fields ...**

*Jonathan Hill*

Day 1, Competition Enterprise '19 from Sutton Bank had 30 odd competitors flying alternately North/South across an East/West line through SUT to BGA turn points of your choosing scoring points for each new turn point. A light NWerly provided reasonable soaring conditions and cloud base around 3,000ft.

With two TPs in the bag I flew south from Helmsley towards Sutton on the Forest to gain some distance points. Trying to fly



*Jon trapped in the cockpit. Thankfully not badly injured.*

faster than I usually do in my Cirrus, routing between promising looking clouds intending to operate between 2 & 3,000ft I made reasonable progress, but I couldn't see behind me. A large blue hole had opened up just south of SUT and arriving near Sutton on the Forest around 2,000ft the sky above stopped working and became flat and grey and looking around into the distance didn't fill me with hope.

The TP is a disused airfield with the runways removed and pig and poultry farms occupying the space but with a very large flat green field west of one of the old runways. Close by is the village of the same name above which I scratched for some time, ½ up . . . ½ down . . . ½ down and so it went on with no improvement in the sky. The village didn't work so I tried above the pig farm sheds, more down than up again, but I had my field, size – big; slope – none; surface – flat and no variation in grass or crop colour; stock – none; obstructions – none . . . visible from above and yippy, an open gate on the eastern boundary. Scratching above my field I had plenty of time to survey it thoroughly so at 800ft, accepting the inevitable, I commenced a conventional circuit.



*An expensive landing but could have been so much worse.*

Finals over the boundary were deliberately higher than normal owing to the exceptional size of the field ahead and as I intended to finish near to the open gate, I squeezed the airbrakes closed for a while to stretch the glide then opened them again executing a fully held off landing, when I saw the fence.

I remember my fingers moving towards the brake lever, saying, 'Oh no', hitting the fence at speed, the canopy exploding around me, rapid deceleration, then silence.

I sat awhile, pinned firmly by strands of wire in the cockpit unable to open the canopy, or what was left of it. Thankfully I could access my phone; amazingly there was a signal, I sent a WhatsApp message to my crew with the picture on page 7 and the caption: 'got any wire cutters?' xSustaining minor cuts and bruises it didn't warrant three nines so I ate my banana and pondered my situation.

Satisfied I'd followed procedure, what could I have done differently . . . as subsequently advised by some of gliding's great and good; land in the first available part of the field to minimise collisions with unseen obstructions and apply the wheel brake immediately to stop ASAP.

Thanks must go to Mark & Paul for cutting me out and retrieving my glider to Sutton Bank where many hours were spent completing accident forms, speaking with the AAIB, police and Insurers. YGC staff were brilliant providing all those forms! . . . with plenty of sympathy to ease the pain. My bruises faded and the Cirrus went away for a new lid and some sticking and gluing, the moral of the story, farmers don't subdivide small fields.





*Difficult to see the fence from the air.*

## Gliding scholarship at RNAS Culdrose

*Shayan Hassanbigi*

Sam and I quite recently secured the same gliding scholarship at RNAS Culdrose which was kindly awarded by the Fleet Air Arm Officers Association. I guess you can all imagine the mayhem if we both had the same course dates and were together, all jokes aside, it was quite upsetting however at least we represented SHGC on two courses.

**Day One:** On our first flying day we were all taken to the hangar, which was at Predannack instead of Culdrose, where we were introduced to the gliding club's fleet



*Shayan ready for the off.*

of two Puchacz gliders and a SZD-51 Junior. The solo pilots (me and another glider pilot on the course) learned how to DI the aircraft under the watchful eye of an instructor and checked if we would fit into the Junior, where they would aim to promptly transfer us from the Puchacz during the week. Thankfully I fitted snugly, however, every Cornish Pasty that I had throughout the week made it more snug by the day!

Every time we did a DI on an aircraft we had different instructors shadowing us and they all had slight variations in the way they did it which ultimately meant, that no matter what you did, you were wrong . . .

9AM, time to setup the airfield so we unpacked the hangar bringing out the gliders as well as the Super Dimona which was the club's tug. I was lucky enough to receive a nice taxi ride in it to the runway where it wouldn't show up again until the end of the week.

On my first aerotow I did some spinning practice in the Puchacz after coming off the tug at 3,000ft, it was nice to revisit spinning, mostly because it is so exhilarating . . . maybe not so much low down on a ridge though.

On my second aerotow my instructor remained completely silent, even while I

was making small talk... well trying to... he pulled the release on me mid aerotow where I went into circuit to land. Needless to say the instructor was pleased and I was shortly sent solo in the Puchacz with an aerotow to 2,000ft.

Flying over the coast was brilliant and with a forming cumulus cloud upwind at 1,500ft I slowly made my way towards it, flying out to sea and admiring the beautiful view, but I think the highlight of the day was that I did a circuit! A circuit! Can you believe that? I still can't...

**Day Two:** Time to convert to Autotow! A launch method that only this club is actively operating in the UK!

They use a V8 Dodge to drive down the length of the runway to winch us, effectively the ground roll is like that of

an aerotow with the remainder being like your standard winch launch.

After two flights in the Puchacz I received a simulated cable break at 300ft. As I lowered the nose I immediately saw the tow truck ahead of me and decided not to land ahead for some strange reason, I then committed to turning left in order to set myself up for a brief circuit to land onto the cross runway... I was in a Puchacz... at a low height and about to chuck the aircraft onto its side to make the runway... whoops, but I committed and positively flew a steep turn onto final with at least 65kts without fail. I will not lie... that was fun but it was the wrong decision and I needed a bit more practice before my instructor would be happy to send me solo, but I learned from it and recognised my error.



*Plenty of options for a field landing!*

Two bimbles and a successful launch failure recovery later I was sent solo on the autotow.

**Day Three:** I needed to build up a bit of experience in the Puchacz before flying the Junior. The days were not thermic and a small ridge only provided height of 600ft, however it was a pleasant day and it was lovely to relax and admire the view.

At the club they did not allow us to thermal downwind which always happened to be the place where the thermals were. I recall being in two up on my downwind leg and my heart wanted to bank into a 45 degree turn so hard and see what could be made of it . . . but I figured they may become a tad suspicious if I called downwind twice resulting in losing my solo privileges and waving goodbye to any flying in the Junior . . . the sky was as flat as anything during the week with the only hope of staying up being a small ridge that provided reduced sink, quite annoying when you desperately want to make use of the buckets of airspace available . . .

The club used a geared quadbike to retrieve gliders, I will let your imagination continue the rest of this story.

**Day Four:** Cornish weather cancels gliding for the day so we ended up being briefed on field landings and navigation



*The team.*

in a glider. We practiced plotting XC routes and were talked through what we would do before embarking on a XC as well as techniques that you could use whilst on them. The route I planned then would have been the one used on my XC Navigation if the weather was good enough . . . which unfortunately it wasn't.

Shortly after we visited a naval squadron where we had a tour of the Merlin and Calrose's Air Traffic Control to make the most of the miserable weather.

We returned to the clubhouse and learned how to use CRP-1 Flight computers to calculate ground speeds, headings and leg ETAs in preparation for our powered navigation flight of 80Nm completing airborne recce of areas of interest such as Porthtowan airfield and The Eden Project

During the navigation exercise I would be expected to act as the navigator primarily before handling the aircraft for the remaining half of the exercise, both flying and navigating the aircraft.

**Day Five:** I was put into a PA-28 because personal space is a thing and good luck trying to get me into a tiny Jabiru.

We strapped into the aircraft and I plugged in my David Clark headset, courtesy of my brother, as well as the other 130 items I stole off him for this course.

The weather was not ideal, however my pilot had an instrument rating so we took off expecting a cloudbase of 1,500ft which soon turned into a 1,300ft cloudbase with our highest obstacle being a mast at 1,400ft. We sighted the mast and I continued navigating until we lost sight of it which ultimately resulted in us returning to Culdrose as safety is understandably paramount.

Later on in the day I was briefed on the Junior and flew it for the first time.



*Congratulations.*

**Day Six:** The day was once again a no fly day which ended up with our group meeting two Fleet Air Arm observer instructors, where we learned more about their roles and visited the aircraft they trained on early in their career, a Beechcraft King Air. One of the purposes of this course is to introduce young people to flying who are interested in becoming a pilot or observer in the Fleet Air Arm or the other military services, it additionally exposes young people to what daily life is like for officers, and we were all expected to act as young officers.

We returned to the gliding club house where we watched a video regarding gliding in New Zealand (which now after that video is on my to-fly list!). We also

trained on their flight simulator practicing aerobatics, spins, and field landings.

**Day Seven:** The final day – I went with the club's CFI to do field selection and landings in the Super Dimona since the weather was not complying for a Cross Country Navigation exercise, long story short, I can land in a field . . . just don't know which one!

Later on in the day I embarked on my final Junior flight and received an aerotow to 2,000ft flying around with another glider on the ridge to bring an amazing week to an end.

Overall it was a very insightful experience in a new environment which taught me so much.

## **Chairman's notes**

*Chris Leggett*

Well where do I start? The last few months or so have seen many changes at SHGC. We have lost a dear friend, lost a manager, gained a workshop and made lots of other changes.

Sadly, as reported earlier in this issue, we lost a valued club member and friend in Michael Pointon earlier this year. I had the privilege of going on two separate trips to Shenington with Michael and he was great company and a true gentleman. He will be sadly missed by everyone but of course mostly by his wife, Dorcas.

Steve resigned as manager in the late summer and then worked his 12 weeks' notice. It was a very difficult time for Steve and the club but we have come out the other end. Steve had been manager for 13 years and although there have been issues we will miss him in ways that most of us will only realise in the coming months. Steve taught so many people to fly and his obsession with safety means



*Steve introducing another person to the delights of gliding.*

SHGC has one of the best safety (or perhaps better described as lack of accident) records in the country. When Steve left he was approaching 10,000 more flights than when he arrived at the club and most of those were training or air experience flights.

During Steve's notice period he worked hard to leave the paperwork and club in an organised state and for that we are all very grateful. As we go forward there are things we keep discovering and we will, I am sure, continue to discover that Steve just got on with what the members and the committee had no idea about.

As a result of Steve leaving we had to appoint a new Technical Officer and the committee is delighted to have been able to convince Jonathan Hill to take on that position. Jonathan has already made large strides in getting to grips with the job and is planning how to get the club aircraft through their ARC and Annual checks. The fact that Jonathan is Technical Officer does not mean he will be doing all the work – it means he will oversee the work and badger members to help. We all need to put in some time to help keep the club fleet up and running. Phil Chapman has also agreed to take responsibility for the ground equipment but again this does not

mean he will do all the work. We all need to contribute to the successful running of the club and that sometimes means getting our hands dirty.

As I mentioned earlier, there are many changes at the club. One of the other big changes is the introduction of a new computerised admin system called FreeFlight. We are dual running this at the moment until the end of the year and then, in line with our financial year, we will only use the FreeFlight system from January. A massive thank you has to go to Mark Kidd who has almost single handedly found out what we need to do to make this work for us. Dorcas has also been invaluable in helping Mark input the data into the system, i.e. the diary, members details, next of kin, medical records etc.

FreeFlight will replace the spreadsheets we currently use for the admin functions and will save a lot of dual entry that is currently done. The diary will be interactive and available at the launch point. Aircraft and individuals' flight logs and accounts will all be held in the software and available for instant review. Pink slips and taking photos or scribbling notes



*Steve, never happier than when able to fix things that benefitted the club.*

about your day's flights will be a thing of the past. Perhaps the biggest change for members is that the daily log keeping, currently done on paper, will be done on the club laptop. This software is being used by many other clubs in this country and abroad so it is tried and tested.

The Duty Instructor of the day (or office staff on their behalf) will post notes about whether we are flying or not, whether help is needed or not, etc – so checking your mobile will keep you informed.

Moving forward (from the New Year) the Duty Roster will also transition to FreeFlight so you will have the Roster at your fingertips and you can quickly grab the slot that you want to do. Some clubs insist on members doing a minimum of one duty per month – we prefer to do this in a voluntary way but we do need help!

Finally, I would like to wish all the readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Without Steve we need people to send in

pictures to keep the Facebook page current – please WhatsApp or email me.

## Annual Dinner and Prize Giving

Please put the 21st March 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 starters, main courses and 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.

## 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)  
Mark Kidd (Treasurer)  
Paul Hayward (Safety Officer)  
Jonathan Hill (Technical Officer)

*You can contact any member of the team through the club at:*

The Surrey Hills Gliding Club  
Kenley Aerodrome  
Victor Beamish Avenue  
Caterham  
Surrey CR3 5FX  
Tel: 020 8763 0091

Web: [www.surreyhillsgliding.co.uk](http://www.surreyhillsgliding.co.uk)  
Email: [surreyhillsgc@gmail.com](mailto:surreyhillsgc@gmail.com)

*Comments on this newsletter and any contributions or photographs are welcomed and should be sent to the 'Cabletalk Editor' at the above email address.*