

Cabletalk

Surrey Hills Gliding Club Newsletter

November 2023

Editor's notes

Thanks to Gary our Safety Officer for a few words about safety on the airfield – this is so important. Please make sure you read and report anything – even if it is minor let someone know and then we can make sure it is examined and dealt with if required.

Thanks also to Roy for his two articles. The first about Roy and Phil's trip to Aston Down and the second a look at winter gliding!

Safety on the Airfield

Gary Campbell

Reporting incidents in gliding, whether they happen in the sky or down on the ground, is like wearing a superhero cape for the sport's safety. Gliding, that beautiful dance with nature, becomes even more enjoyable when we prioritise safety through open communication.

When we're soaring through the air, we sometimes encounter moments that, by sharing with fellow pilots, we create a collective knowledge bank to keep everyone safe. Think of it as your gliding family, sharing secrets on how to navigate and fly the skies safely.

And let's not forget about ground operations and safety there! Being present and switched on, listening and looking out for each other and yourself makes for a

smooth operation on the ground, from unpacking the hanger to the launch and retrieval. But sometimes, things don't go exactly as planned. Also, reporting incidents (sometimes via forms called "Notification of Unusual Event Reporting Forms" or NUERFs) help us fine-tune our ground game, making our ground operations (to visiting pilots and the public at least!) as smooth as being in wave (something I can't wait to experience!).

Incident reporting brings out the responsible side of gliding and by being open we not only demonstrate it's our priority, it makes gliding safer and even more inviting to newcomers.

You can report incidents to the DI, any Committee Member or the Safety Officer in person, or complete our very own NUERF "Reportit!" form located in the launch caravan.

Reporting incidents in gliding is like friends sharing stories sitting around a campfire, listening to the crackle of the fire and coyotes in the distance howling at the moon on a warm night. If that doesn't resonate with you then, sitting at a table in the Wattenden Arms with a warm beer. It helps us learn, grow, and keep the spirit of safe gliding alive, all while keeping our days at Kenley as fun and safe as possible. As the superhero Sky Sentinel© says, "Safety isn't a chore, it's a calling, a commitment to keeping gliding safe, one day at a time". So, get your superhero cape on and get reporting fellow pilots and make every day a safe day!

Aston Down expedition or a "Sporting trip"

Roy Musselwhite

Sunday 9 July

We arrived early afternoon and the sky was grey and overcast. We checked in with Susi in the clubhouse and then Phil, Bob and I deposited our belongings in the bunkrooms. Flying was taking place from the north end of the airfield off the main runway, but not very busy as the windsock was almost straight out from the mast. Decided not to rig but wait until Monday. Sam, the fulltime instructor, joined us and said he had done all his silver in a Junior. As it was late in the afternoon Phil made arrangements for our Sunday evening meal in the local pub.

Monday 10 July

We looked out of the bunkroom window and the windsock was gently moving with broken cloud and some blue sky so,

looking positive, after breakfast we started to rig the Junior and we noticed that the windsock was now about 45deg, but we carried on. After doing the Hokey Cokey with the wings ie wings in out, in out but no shaking them all about, we called over Sam to help, he helped and after a short while we had the wings on and were ready for flying. Sam then told us he had never rigged a Junior before! We took the Junior to the launch point, still at the north end of the main runway. Sam suggested it might be a bit "sporting" but said we could fly if we wanted to. We checked with the duty instructor, and he told us the same. The windsock was now almost 90deg to the mast. With discretion being the better part of valour, we took the Junior back to its overnight location and fixed it down for the night. We knew that an old Kenley instructor was at a club nearby, Nympsfield. Bob Sluman, who had come with us just for the trip, suggested we give him a visit as it was only about a 15min drive away. We found Larry alone in the clubhouse as he too had abandoned flying that day. We chatted about old times and people he knew



Now where does this go?



Which way up did Chris say this goes?

at Kenley, he then invited us to see their simulator. What a beauty, dual with all the bells and whistles. They used a virtual reality headset linked via a 72" TV screen – very impressive!

Tuesday 11 July

The windsock this morning was now only just about moving and a mist covered the airfield, but by time we had had breakfast

and got the Junior to the launch point (still at north end) it was up to about 60deg and moving higher but the mist had cleared to leave a cloudy and broken sky. Took the launch to just on 1600agl, which was like riding a bike over cobbles and laying off well to the west. This set the pattern for all the remaining launches that day and the rest of the week. Managed two more flights and limped up to 1900agl on one. Phil also managed



Look out!



*Into the wild **** yonder!*

three flights with the same rate of success, but as we had to dodge strong gusts and showers, we called it a day. Landing was also interesting as the local crows had taken to occupying large areas of grass generally near the round out reference point adjoining the main runway (due to the closeness of the wheat fields) however they did scatter very quickly as you approached and held off!

Wednesday 12 July

We were up bright and early as we were told today would be a “stonking day”, again the windsock was hanging almost limp with clear sky and marginally less cloud, but as the morning progressed it got more and more horizontal and the cloud built. We were taken aside by the duty instructor to be told there was an RIAT in force for today and the rest of the week! RIAT (Royal International Air Tattoo) at Fairford, so no going above 2953agl above the airfield, no further south than 0.75km and to the north, west

and east the same, leaving a narrow corridor to the north west if we wanted to get any higher or away. However, as with the previous days, overcast weather and strong winds reduced our heights managing only about 1700agl on my first launch which was almost into cloud. Phil and I then played a game of cat and mouse with the cloud to avoid entering it every time we launched, no where near getting to our restricted height. We put the Junior to bed in the early afternoon and called it a day.

Thursday 13 July

Today was predicted to be the best flying day of the week again, and it started like all the others with the windsock hardly moving first thing but with clearer sky and less cloud, then steadily climbing as the morning wore on. The sky became overcast with the windsock straight out and again going up the winch was like riding a bike over cobblestones. Once more only short and sporting flights.



You think I am going to hold on to that!

Neither of us gaining much height, although Phil managed better times than me. Friday was forecast to be strong winds and squalls so we derigged, had the Junior back in its trailer and ready to go in about 45mins, not bad considering how long it took us to rig it on Monday!

This may sound like all doom and gloom, but seeing snatches of the scenery, valleys and rolling countryside made a change even though being buffeted around and concentrating on keeping the glider stable made a pleasant change from the usual vista of London, Croydon and high rise buildings. Although the flights were short it did make the trip worthwhile, plus of course the unique pies at the different pubs we visited in the evenings.

Oh – The Joys of Winter Gliding!

Roy Musselwhite

Wake up in the morning pull back the curtains, and there is the sun trying to peak through broken cloud being blown along on a gentle breeze. Hurrah looks like flying will be possible. Downstairs for breakfast and then back up again for morning ablutions, now what to wear: long trousers, warm vest, club polo shirt, and perhaps another top, waterproof footwear, normal coat and perhaps a windproof outer top.

Next, sandwiches to make or perhaps the goodly wife has made them for you, warm drink and ready for the off.

Sky has improved and looks like it may be ok, halfway to the club the sky looks as if it might just about be flyable. At the club, cloud very low, sky darker, things looking not very positive, but faint heart never won fair maiden so fingers crossed. Other club members milling about, kit not out yet as duty instructor weighing up the possibility of flying or not.

Retire to clubhouse for old war stories, tea and any other subject which comes up for discussion. More tea then the call "its brightening", troop outside with more discussions on wind direction, cloud movement and height, back into the club house, cloud too low and visibility not good. More tea! Finally, after about another hour or so flying scrubbed! Finish lunchtime sandwiches and drink.

Head home only to find sun out and very little cloud at home and then WhatsApp message with picture of blue sky and very little cloud at the club – Grrrrrrrrrrrr.



What do you mean I can't fly!

Looking back on 2023 and forward to 2024

Chris Leggett

As 2023 draws to a close and, as I write this we have lost seven out of the last 10 day's of flying due to the weather, perhaps its time to reflect on this year and look forward to next year.

Surrey Hills members achievements this year include, solo flights for Michael Bolland, Paul Armstrong and Advait Sharma – congratulations to you all. Other achievements include members progressing to flying single seaters and converting to new types. Sam Matthey (ex member!) passed his Bronze flying test and a number of our members completing their Bronze written tests in anticipation of completing the flying test soon.

In terms of instructors, we are extremely grateful to all the regular instructors who have helped out this year, the time and knowledge you all give to the club is massively appreciated (even if sometimes it does not seem like it!). We have also been very lucky to have had the occasional services of a number of visiting instructors and again thank you (and you are more than welcome at any time!).

As well as the instructors we could not operate without the help of the winch driver – this year we have welcomed Paul to the team and, thanks to Phil taking time to train him, he has become a real asset to the club and he ensures we get good launches day in and day out.

Then there are the non-flying jobs and the amazing amount of work that Dorcas does behind the scenes to ensure the club operations run smoothly cannot be underestimated. Marc, as technical officer, in conjunction with inspectors Ian and Stephen, keep the gliders flyable and then, last but not least, Phil does so much again

behind the scenes, to keep the buggies running and other jobs and maintenance and help around the club.

We have also added the K13 to the fleet this year, purchased last year but only flyable this year. This purchase from Waldershare has proved a very good buy with many benefits. This allows us to fly three two-seaters when we have enough instructors which means more training for pre-solo members and also allows pilots to fly wooden gliders before flying the K8. A rare picture of the whole SHGC fleet is below.

The club was closed for a week in May, as it will be next year, so the 615 Cadets can fly. Geoff kindly led a fantastic week to The Mynd in Shropshire, and although the conditions were not the best in terms of wind direction, ten of us had a fantastic

week with very testing flying and an airfield like most of us had never encountered before.

Looking forward to 2024 when we will try to arrange a dinner and awards evening so we can thank our partners for their forbearance while we go flying.

As you will have seen we will also try to arrange a flying week for members which will be the last week of May, when the cadets have reserved the week.

Hopefully this year will see more members progress their flying and that includes going solo, obtaining their Bronze and the Bronze Cross Country qualifications. We also look forward to welcoming new members and new instructors during 2024.



The 2023 SHGC fleet.



After flying at The Mynd.

Contact Details

The Directors of the Club are:

Jason Barton
Terry Hagerty

The Club Committee is made up of:

Chris Leggett (Chairman/Treasurer)
Marc Corrance (Secretary/Technical Officer)
Richard Fitch (CFI)
Gary Campbell (Safety Officer)
Stephen Skinner
Sam Coole
Phillip Skinner

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.