



HEREFORDSHIRE GLIDING CLUB

Shobdon Airfield, Herefordshire, HR6 9NR

Telephone 07585 702427

Website www.shobdongliding.co.uk

NEWSLETTER March 2012

Flying activities

2012 Flying Programme

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| Fri 6 – Fri 13 April | Easter Wave (and other soaring) Week; Kenley visit |
| Mon 7 – Fri 11 May | Pre-solo course and club flying |
| Mon 4 - Fri 8 June | Pre-solo course and club flying (including 2 bank holidays!) |
| Mon 2 – Fri 6 July | Provisional - Pre-solo course and club flying |
| Sat 4 – Sun 12 August | Task Week – soaring and cross-country flying |
| Sat 18 – Sun 19 August | King's Cup Air Race – no gliding at Shobdon, expedition possibly to Snitterfield (Stratford Club)! |
| Mon 27 – Fri 31 August | Provisional - Pre-solo course and club flying |
| Mon 22 – Fri 26 October | Wave week |

If you don't yet have your bronze, the Pre-solo courses are an excellent opportunity for you to get some flying while there is an instructor available to supervise. We need to arrange instructors and tug pilots for these dates – please help us to plan by letting me know if you plan to come on one of these weeks.

We will probably only run one of the provisional weeks, so if you have a preference, please let us know, as we will go on the basis of the most popular. (At the moment the weight of opinion seems to favour the August date, so if you fancy the July one, please say so quickly!)

Membership subscriptions

It's the time of year when we need to ask you to pay your annual subscriptions!

The Committee reviewed the prices at the February meeting and has made minimal increases, just enough to cover inflation. All the details are in the attached charges sheet. We have kept the innovations introduced last year of the 'training circuit' and also the differential aerotow prices for above and below 2000 ft.

Membership fees were due on 1st March. Please help us to keep track of who has paid, by completing the attached slip when you pay your membership and put it in my tray in the clubhouse, so that I can keep the records up to date and also pass on essential details to the CFI and membership secretary. If you would like the club to hold emergency information in case you are taken ill or injured while at the airfield, please also complete the optional form and return that as well.

Trial Lessons

Yes, of course, none of us likes having large numbers of trial lessons students taking over the two-seater when we want to do our own flying, but we have to face the facts that, first, the income they produce is very important to our finances and helps to keep us going and, second, if we can encourage the right sort of people to have a trial flight, they might just join the club and help to keep us going through more activity as well as paying their share of the costs. After all, we all started with a first flight. So – if you have friends or work colleagues that you think might be interested in having a go, please do encourage them to come along and give us a try. Don't forget the friends and family rate, which allows friends and family of members to have up to 3 trial lessons in any year, paying day membership on each occasion plus club rates flying fees. And have a look at the website to see our spring trial lesson discounts!

Other Activities

Airfield Open Weekend (23/24 June) – Nigel masterminds our share in this. Please be willing to help with the event, which provides an opportunity for us to sell our club. In addition to our own activities, there will be a chance to use the BGA simulator and to see a Battle of Britain Spitfire fly past, as well as plenty of other interesting aircraft. We have reminded the Aero Club organisers that our own members will also want to be able to fly themselves, as well as HGC having the opportunity to do some trial lessons for people that turn up on the day.

Youth visit (late May/early June - exact dates to be confirmed) - We have agreed to host a visit from some young people from Presteigne Youth Centre. A small group visited the airfield some months ago and had such a good time with us at the launch point (much more interesting than everything else on the airfield!) that they want to come back. They will be accompanied by Ken Rodmell, whom some of you will know as a former flying instructor, and other youth workers from the Centre. The plan is for them to spend the day at the airfield and take part in the gliding activities, including each having a trial lesson. The visit will take place during half term and we have agreed that we will aim to decide which day at fairly short notice, so as to give it the best chance of reasonable weather. A few people to help host the visit will of course be appreciated and we will keep you informed nearer the time.

Although these young people will mostly be too young to take up gliding in the immediate future, we are hopeful that the publicity within the town and also in the local press will give us the prospect of attracting interest from other people.

Other events – plans are being made for some new events at the airfield during this year, but we have been told that they will not have an impact on our flying. They are designed to use the space that we don't need for our activities (such as the public car park), and to bring in much needed income to help keep the airfield going.

Please don't upset our tug pilots! Phil King, Club Safety Officer

As a member of the BGA safety committee I see a lot of accident and incident reports. Thankfully there were no fatal glider accidents last year; however there was a worrying number of very near misses. One that happened just this month was summarised in one sentence: "Pilot attempting to switch on vario lost sight of tug causing upset incident".

Over 20 years ago the BGA ran a successful safety campaign in an attempt to eliminate this type of accident. This followed several fatal accidents where a tug upset at low height had resulted in the tug diving into the ground. It's clearly time to remind experienced pilots and tell new pilots who might not know about tug upsets.

The tug pilot reported: "The tow was proceeding normally in smooth conditions until about 6-700' AGL at which point the tug's tail was pulled swiftly upwards to a nose down position of 30° - 40°. Full back stick was required and the situation improved temporarily. It then repeated and I was about to release the tow rope when the weak link parted. The recovery was at around 400' AGL."

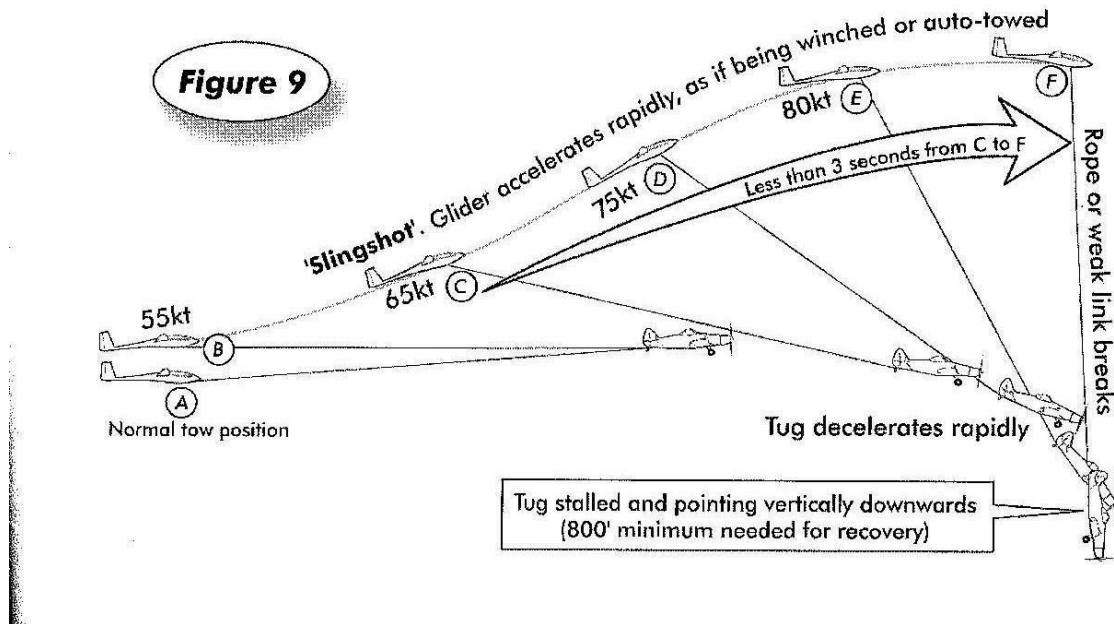
And this is the glider pilot's statement: "Whilst passing about 500' in the climb I was aware that the battery master switch may have been off due to lack of noise from the vario. I looked in to reselect the battery master on/off and on looking out lost sight of the tug. I pulled the release and thought that the tow cable had been released. I climbed a further 100' or so and turned back to the airfield. After an uneventful landing I discovered that the tow rope had not released but had broken at the weak link at the tug end."

The BGA Instructors Manual says: "If the glider is allowed to climb rapidly behind the tug, it can very quickly become impossible to prevent it accelerating upwards in a slingshot action (rather like a winch launch), and tipping the tug over into a vertical dive (see figure).

Once this has happened, only height can save the tug pilot from disaster. Downward displacement of the glider to a position below the slipstream is quite acceptable, but upward displacements are much more critical.

"The glider pilot must release **immediately** if:

- the glider is going high and the tendency cannot be controlled, or
- the pilot loses sight of the tug.



“Factors which can combine to create a tug-upset accident are:

- a light pilot flying close to the minimum cockpit weight [or near aft CG limit for any reason]
- an inexperienced pilot – particularly winch launch pilots with little recent aerotow experience [e.g. visitors from a winch site such as the Long Mynd]
- glider being launched with a belly or CG hook [always use the aerotow hook if there is one. Be particularly careful with a glider without an aerotow hook, e.g. some Ka6s]
- an all-flying tailplane, or a glider with very light elevator forces [e.g. Ka6e]
- short rope
- turbulent conditions.”

If there are more than two factors from this list giving you any cause for doubt, then correct at least one of them before launching.

Before you read further please have a think about how you as tug or glider pilot could have acted differently to avoid this incident entirely, or to improve the chances of a safe outcome.

Here are some general suggestions of things to check before take off that are not particular to this incident – see if you can think of any that I have not mentioned!

As tug pilot it's your safety that may be at risk so:

1. Check the rope length before the launch starts, or at the latest in your mirror before you are committed to take off.
2. If you are unfamiliar with the pilot, check that they are familiar with the glider they are flying and current on aerotow. A pilot who has landed at Shobdon and asks you for an aerotow retrieve back to their home club may have launched by winch and may not be in practice with aerotowing.

As glider pilot:

1. Make sure that you are well above the placarded minimum cockpit load, especially when it is turbulent.
2. Always complete a thorough pre-flight check (CB-SIFT-CB-E) before accepting the aerotow rope. This should include setting the DV panel and ventilator appropriately – adjusting these while on aerotow could cause you to lose sight of the tug.

3. Make sure the rope is attached to the aerotow hook if you have one.

So what could you as tug or glider pilot have done differently to avoid this incident entirely, or to improve the chances of a safe outcome?

- As tug pilot you could have released the rope immediately when full back stick was required.
- As glider pilot you could have:
 1. Delayed looking for the master switch until at a safe height or preferably until after release from aerotow.
 2. Perhaps pulled the release sooner and pulled it twice.
 3. Checked that the rope had released instead of assuming it had released. It may take a much firmer pull than normal to release in this situation because of the excessive tension in the rope.

Safety on the airfield

The Aero Club safety committee has complimented our members on the use of high vis. clothing and improved use of radio. Please keep up the good work, as it is helping to build good relationships. The Aero Club is also trying to control the speed of cars on the peritrack, to make it safer for everyone. Please do comply with the speed limits as well as encouraging others to do so.

A big thank you to Ken Powell, who is partway through painting the buggy a bright orange, so that we will be visible to even the most short-sighted when we are driving around.

Club Phone number

In order to save costs, we have cancelled the club phone line (which was usually diverted through to Les Kaye's phone but seldom received anything other than cold sales calls). Instead we are publicising Les's mobile number – please note that this has changed and the new number is at the top of this Newsletter. Many thanks to Les for continuing to be the 'reception desk' for all our calls, a task which he has already done for a long time.

Facebook

Herefordshire Gliding Club is now on Facebook! Many thanks to Ian Roper who organised this. There is a link from our club website (www.shobdongliding.co.uk) – please go and have a look and help make this new publicity opportunity work for us.

Website

The website needs regular updating and refreshing if people are to be encouraged to keep coming back to see what we are up to. Les Kaye runs this for us and he would welcome new photographs, film and other material. Please send anything you can suggest to Les at les.kaye@couchmansfarm.plus.com or pass it to him when you see him.

And finally...

Spring is coming and the thermals are starting – how about making a resolution to do a bit more flying this year than you did last year? Getting plenty of flying keeps you safer, puts funds into the club's bank account and we'll all have more fun!

See you soon.