

HALESLAND HERALD

Mendip Gliding Club



Chairman's Chunterings

Very many thanks to our editor and publisher Peter Moorehead for his enthusiasm in resurrecting Halesland Herald after a gap of some 18 months. The lack of issues over this period was due to our lack of support and not lack of effort on Peter's part.

In memory of our late friend Tom Fisher your committee has commissioned an oil painting of Tom to be hung in the clubhouse. It is nearing completion and we hope to invite Mair Fisher to attend an unveiling at a date to be decided. As in the case of Brian Headon's memorial, if any member wishes to contribute towards this memorial to Tom, please see Laurie Penrose.

We have made an application to be considered for Sports Club of The Year 2009. The application was very well prepared by Simon Withey and endorsed by the BGA. The first prize is an award of £6,000, which will be a big boost to our efforts to acquire a third two seater. Many thanks to Simon for all his hard work.

Congratulations to Jack Tonkin, Ed Tonkin and Thomas Hogarth on their successful applications for a BGA/Royal Aeronautical Society Scholarship. There are only 20 scholarships awarded countrywide and for our juniors to get three of them is very good indeed. The RAeS grant each recipient £300 to be spent on flying at a gliding club of their choice; obviously MGC in this case.

We applied to NATS, with the help of Peter Turner, to obtain further concessions to the airspace restrictions along the ridge towards Weston super Mare, but unfortunately they were not able/willing to accede to our request at this time. We will continue in our efforts to improve our ridge soaring capabilities.

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We are actively looking for grant funding in order to purchase a Skylaunch winch. Those of us who experienced a launch on the demo day organised by Terry will know what a superb piece of kit it is. Terry and Tony Smith are leading the search into funding possibilities.

Two very wet years have resulted in unforeseen deterioration of some sections of the airfield tracks. In order to have the ground fit for operations repairs have been completed. Please use the vehicles sensibly and avoid driving on saturated ground, especially around the launch points.

One last moan before closing, please try and be tidier in the clubhouse. Don't trail mud from the airfield onto the carpeted areas, and if you find a bin that is full, don't try to see if you can squeeze one more thing into it - EMPTY it into the skip. Dirty dishes will not wash themselves, especially if they are left on the tables.

Mick Longhurst and his team have done a superb job modifying the white bus into a mobile canteen; it has proved to be a haven from the bitterly cold winter days and is a definite safety asset.

Happy landings

Barry

INTER-CLUB LEAGUE

This is for those of you who haven't yet come across this little jewel of gliding, or are aware of it but for some reason haven't taken any part yet.

So first of all, Inter Club League, or ICL, what is it?

Basically it's a cross country competition run on a regional basis, ours being the South West region which has 5 competing clubs within it: North Hill, The Park, Upavon (Army), Rivar Hill and ourselves. The aim is to encourage competitive cross country flying in a less formal atmosphere then can be found at the large 'regional' competitions.

We hold 4 competition weekends per year, with a spare weekend in case of bad weather. On each day of the weekend the idea is that three tasks are set for Novice, Intermediate and Pundit classes. Emphasis is placed on novices and setting realistic tasks for them, with it being quite common for novice pilots to be looking to gain their 50km silver badge 'leg' as part of the flight.

So that's the formal part, so why should you be involved? Surely this competition malarkey is only for the terminally brave or stupid and drivers of shiny plastic? Not so and there is something for everyone:

Got a cross country endorsement?

Well, you got the badge, now lets do something with it! As noted above, this is an ideal opportunity to try for a silver leg or three:

- Do your 50km on one of the tasks
- Good inland soaring conditions offering the chance of silver duration - Andy Whiteman did his at Upavon during an ICL meet
- Those higher inland cloud bases often support gains of silver height

Not got your own glider? Well look to take the club Astir or Skylark4 along - it's been done before and works even better if two of you share an aircraft.

Working towards Bronze?

Then it's time to check out your circuit flying ability away from the known landmarks of Halesland. The clubs visited operate as normal before and after the competition grid is launched and therefore you can take a site check and practice your circuit, see how you perform in terms of safe and accurate flying whilst focusing on a different landing area. Add in a new type of two seater and see how that goes! Practice at other sites is invaluable.

Of course there is also the chance to see field landings - or at least the retrieve! Joking apart, it's a chance to find out what has to be done to retrieve a glider - joys of trailer towing, working with the landowner, finding the damn thing which can be remarkably challenging! It's also a chance to talk to the pilot about the choices made in selecting that field and how it went - understand what the thinking was.

Ab Initio?

Again, normal club flying occurs either side of the competition launch. So go and experience different two seaters and different terrain (no ridge so you had better thermal!) - it's all valuable experience that will help make you a more rounded pilot.

Club Members!

There is a real social side to ICL meets, with BBQs often available on Sat night and a chance to meet members from other clubs. To many of us the social side is as important as the flying so come along and join in.

This years meets are: 9/10th May - The Park
30/31st May - North Hill
27/28th June - Upavon
18/19th July - Mendip

Reserve - 15/16th Aug - Rivar Hill

So stick your name on the forms in the back room as pilots and/or crew: and see you there

Letters to the Editor

IF IT AIN'T BROKE DON'T FIX IT

Unfortunately, however, occasionally things do get broken. The weighted seat back was just about to be put into a K13 on Thursday, when it fell apart, almost dropping the weights on someone's toe or possibly through the bottom of the cockpit. On inspection, it was obvious that it had been dropped, or knocked onto the floor, probably from the bench in the Launch Control bus, landing on the locating spike smashing the back and cracking all the supporting structures. Luckily, it was so severe that the wood parted in someone's hands outside the aircraft, making it obvious that it was unserviceable. If this hadn't happened, it might have fallen apart in the event of a sudden deceleration during a heavy landing, with obvious drastic results.

What should have happened, was that whoever dropped it or found it, assuming it had fallen down without assistance, should have informed someone, e.g. DI or myself, that there had been some damage. It could have been taken out of service to repair, thereby possible preventing a greater accident from occurring.

Last week, after flying, the tail-wheel of Victor Charlie, was found to be locked solid by mud, at the end of flying. The aircraft was declared U/S and I was informed by email that evening that this had happened. It was then able to be put back in service on the following flying day, after the wheel had been removed and the wheel arch cleaned.

These two examples illustrate the importance of notification of possible problems. No blame will be put on anyone notifying a possible defect/problem, Prevention being better than Cure. Think of the possible consequences of allowing a defect to go un-rectified, should an accident occur as a result.

While illustrating the principle with aircraft defects, the same principles apply to all aspects of the operation at the airfield, be it MT, winch, buildings etc.

Over the next few weeks it is hoped that we can develop a suitable notification procedure, whereby each area of responsibility is assigned to a designated person, making reporting easier, but for now, if you discover a problem, **INFORM SOMEONE ABOUT IT.**

Lez Saker

BATTERIES

I was dismayed to find EPP with the audio vario still on!! this is not the first time. I have gone to some length to replace all the glider batteries recently with higher capacity versions. They can cope with a bit of neglect, but left on for a week for instance will wreck them. If you cannot be bothered to take them out of the gliders then at least do me a favour and disconnect them at the plug.

Dave B

PARACHUTES

I was appalled (although by now not surprised) to find one club parachute left in the red and white bus and one in a retrieve vehicle one morning; they had obviously been there since the previous Sunday. I gather that there was no appointed Duty Pilot present on that Sunday afternoon so it is difficult to know where to apportion blame, but it is still inexcusable. The sad thing is that this is not an isolated incident. I have now lost count of the number of times that they have been left in gliders or vehicles.

Parachutes are potential life savers which thankfully seldom have to be used. But surely they should be maintained properly so that, if the occasion ever does arise, they have every chance of working reliably. Leaving them in vehicles or gliders in damp conditions could not only affect their safe operation but is perhaps also an indication of how seriously some club members regard their care.

Unless attitudes change or appropriate action is taken, I am not prepared to remain responsible for looking after and maintaining club parachutes.

Ed Gardener

Editors Note

The only time you might find that a parachute doesn't work is when you pull the handle. Treat them with respect, they are a life saver

A Winters Tale Talgarth in the Snow

Eds Tale

That morning we all woke up bright and early. Too early. Everyone had a full English breakfast and we all went up to the Black Mountains Gliding Club. My first thoughts when I saw the mountains were "WOW!" They looked amazing. Simon organised us all and we started rigging the K13 and the Astir. Terry and Bradley both arrived just as we were about to finish rigging the gliders. Typical! We all had a briefing with the local members and then Simon gave an extra briefing and took a tour of the airfield for those who hadn't been to the BMGC. After our briefing we started getting ready to fly. We started flying quite quickly. The first flights were quite good, although I can't say I saw much of the first flights as I had to do my homework. When I did get out after an hour of sitting inside the clubhouse it was my turn to have a flight. I did my ABCDE and then did my CBSIFTCB. Well, it seemed to all be good. I was flying with Simon. When we were just about to take off I was feeling pretty nervous. When I got up into the sky and saw the mountains up close, they were amazing. We released from the tug and Simon took us up onto the ridge. Once we got up there he handed me the controls and I started going up and down the ridge. It was quite hard looking out for all the gliders and checking whereabouts I was on the ridge. We tried to head over towards the lake but quickly started losing height. We went back to the ridge. Carried on flying up and down it for a while and then headed for home. We landed and I found out I had got a forty-one minute flight, which was good for my flight timings. That made a bigger hole in my grandad's flying account! As it was an aero towing club there weren't that many jobs to do. Although I was quite happy as I was taught how to retrieve with a quad bike so that made my day a bit more exciting. After my flight the gliding conditions went downhill a bit and the flight timings started getting shorter. Once we decided we would finish for the day we had fun trying to fit the Astir and the K13 into the BMGC's hangar. We finally managed to fit the MGC's and the BMGC's gliders into the hangar and we went back to the Castle. All of the smelly lot in the bunkhouse went for a shower. We all had tea and at about eight thirty Jeffery appeared smelling like perfume. Terry really took the mick out of him. At about ten all the people who couldn't keep up (Edward, Derek, Bob and a few others) went off to bed leaving the more immature lot to make the night a bit more raucous! Tony was having his own little moments in the corner making funny smells and smiling every time he did so. Well, the drink rounds kept on coming for a while and at about twelve ten, while I was in the pub listening to Terry's amusing stories, Grandpuff (big Ed) came into the pub. Walked up to the table looking like death and looking at me (not in a good way)! He sent me to bed and so that was the end of the night for me.

On Sunday morning to cut a long story short, I had a shower and flooded the bunkhouse. Again we all had an English breakfast and there was lots of banter about big Ed being a miserable old grump! We went up to the BMGC and took one look at the airfield and the weather forecast. It wasn't looking good. The airfield was a bog and the forecast wasn't in our favour. After a couple of hours of me dying to get back on the quad bike, and everyone sitting around feeling bored we decided to have a go at flying. It was all going well. The Pawnee started and pulled FVC. From where I was standing the last of the takeoff was hidden behind the hill on the airfield. The tug took off but released from Victor Charlie. When we got to FVC it had ploughed part of the airfield. Whoops! After this we gave up and packed up the gliders. We all said our goodbyes and went our separate ways after a slightly disappointing day.

Peter Tale Sunday 1st February 2009. My 62nd birthday.

What a way to spend a birthday! As the chauffeur to Talgarth, I endured the harassment of my young companions (son James, Beccs and Tony Smith) with the certainty that I would have my revenge.

We arrived early at Talgarth. Not early enough for me (one can only take so much verbal abuse). The conditions did not look good. A strong easterly wind with the rotor right over the site and lots of muttering from very experienced local pilots about the conditions.

Interesting briefing, leaving no doubt in my mind that I should be heading for the amber nectar. I know, most unusual for me but there again it was my birthday!

Having not flown at Talgarth for a while it was decided by the 'Gods of Gliding' (Mendips and Talgarth's CFIs) that, quite rightly, I needed an instructor check flight. So Gordon Dennis and I strapped in, looked at the sky, and got out. Something along the lines of 'sod that' comes to mind.

A while later having watched others do battle we strapped back in and gave it a go. I have to say that the tow was one of the most challenging I have ever experienced! I think both Gordon and I came out with 'F...ing hell' more times than we care to admit. Absolutely brilliant! A blast. We pulled off at about 2,500 feet, now in silk smooth air and climbed to 5,000 feet in no time at all. Then it was airbrakes out and plummet back to the site to give others a go.

With James strapped in the front I took another tow. Same incredibly rough tow and released at 2,000 feet. Handed over to James and with the vario pegged at 10 knots plus we were soon at 10,000 feet. Take-off to 10 grand? 10 minutes! Awesome. Unfortunately with time running out we couldn't spend too much time soaking it up, the tug was departing at 1500 to Shobdon for maintenance.

Next up was Beccs. Another rough tow and my hooting, hollering and cussing didn't go un-noticed. Oops, not in front of the ladies old boy! Like a total wazzock I pulled off at 1600 feet and spent the next several minutes trying to get into the wave. Having advised others not to release too early I was up for the prat of the day award. No hooting and hollering but apparently (and you'll have to take Beccs word for this) the cussing got worse. Obviously my standards are slipping. Anyway the situation was rectified, I handed over to Beccs and we climbed away spending the next hour soaring the wave. Absolute heaven. A totally new experience for Beccs and something I will never tire of. Her camera was very busy. We took it in turns to take pics and fly. All too soon it was back to Talgarth. Descending through the rotor Beccs put us down in a lady like fashion.

We de-rigged in a snow storm. Returned to Halesland, off-loaded 'VC' from its trailer into the hangar and with customary speed legged it to the 'Strawberry' to recount tales of derring-do and celebrate my advancing years with drinks and a birthday cake generously supplied by Mick the landlord. What a great day!!

Other Mendip Men who flew on the day were Tony Webb - Astir, Jeff Green - K21 and Astir, Bob Merritt and Simon Withey - K13 and Andy Whiteman and Karrin Stanley who nearly landed out in the Blanik - surprise, surprise! Others who flew on the Saturday were Mick Longhurst and Derek Wixey K13.

Beccs Tale-My Diary of Talgarth:

0730 - Departed Filton in the Turner conveyance.

0830 - Tour of Talgarth airfield with SW. SW points out a direction where it would be most hazardous to have a rope break, where later, he and BM will experience a rope break. Was reminded how gorgeous Talgarth as an airfield is.

0930 - DI of FVC. Notice that the BMGC gliders have on the side 'Caution: May Contain Nuts.' Apt.

1000 - Briefing. Began to potentially worry about rotor.

1030 (or so) - Jeff Green takes a check ride in the K21. After watching the landing, all pilots retire inside to find the tug pilot a sedative and drink tea.

1100 - Self attempts to wake up by copious quaffing of Coca Cola, while watching amusing videos on SW's laptop and listening somewhat worryingly about the tale of the CFI in the shower with a sheep...

1145 - The sun comes out. Gliding operations commence. Tony Smith has a whale of a time on the quad bike.

1230 (or so) - Watch with mild concern as Bob and Simon have a somewhat alarming launch failure, dumping the tow rope on some poor unsuspecting farm animal of the Black Mountains. They get back, doing a v impressive crosswind landing.

1300 - Self is informed by Tony Webb that Sqn Ldr Woolcock has called him to say that I have had no sleep. I deny this. Tony replies, 'Never mind, you're big enough and ugly enough to make your own decisions.' Self reflects that the CFI is actually quite philosophical.

1430 - Climb into front cockpit of FVC with PT. Most exhilarating tow of my short gliding career to date. Begin to regret bringing camera and not voice recorder - Pete's voracious language from the back seat would have made for very entertaining reading as he fought the controls to stay broadly behind the tug. Pete pulls off early; realise we have not found wave. More unrepeatable language ensues.

PT's not called 'God' for nothing however, and soon made a deal with him upstairs/used his immense talent and experience to find the wave and we go up to five thousand feet and spend a happy hour cloud/gliders dodging. Hands down, most awesome thing I have ever done - with reliable lift, the sense of freedom and sheer *space* was incredible. I loved looking at all the other gliders - my mates but rendered anonymous - being dwarfed by the huge scary clouds. The strong wave lift was a revelation too - still going up with full airbrakes?! Mental. But awesome. Is reminded that nature is actually quite powerful and should be respected. Utterly beautiful too - best moment was seeing our own reflection in a rainbow on a cloud! Only downside - was below freezing up there! Fully expected frobite in the outer extremities.

Pete was then daft enough to let me fly the approach and landing. Was...entertaining. And educational.

1600 (or thereabouts) - De-rigged stuff in the steadily increasing snow. Departed Talgarth, slept in car. Woke up unsure if I was in Wales or England, or even the United Kingdom.

1930 - Arrived Strawberry Special. Ate rather epic fruitcake to celebrate PT's birthday.

2009 Training Weeks

I hope that by now you are all aware of our plans for summer training weeks. For those who may have missed out on earlier publicity material, we will be running two Holiday Course & Ab Initio weeks and two Mini Course & Trial Lesson weeks. The dates are:

Wk1	June 22 nd - 26 th	Holiday Courses & Club Ab Initios
Wk2	July 27 th - 31 st	Mini Courses & Trial Lessons
Wk3	Aug 10 th - 14 th	Holiday Courses & Club Ab Initios
Wk4	Aug 31 st - Sep 4 th	Mini Courses & Trial Lessons

To all you Ab Initios out there, this is an excellent opportunity for you to accelerate your training by taking advantage of a structured five-day course of ground-school and flying instruction. Get your name on the booking form (pinned to the clubhouse wall) as soon as possible, so that we can gauge the demand, and set about raising commitment from instructors and ground crew.

A particular plea to all instructors, tug pilots and winch drivers - please check you diaries and declare your availability for any (or all!) of the scheduled weeks. Even if you can only support a few days here and there, all offers will be gratefully received. We are about to advertise our courses to the general public through the website, so we need your offers of support to make this happen.

This is a vitally important undertaking for the club as a whole, being an opportunity to significantly improve the club's finances, both through selling courses to the general public and by significantly increasing the volume of club member flights throughout the summer weeks. It also serves as a 'shop window' for prospective new members - so a well-attended slick and smooth-running club will be in everyone's interest.

Kerry Dyer
07976 123433

BGA LAWS AND RULES

A new (16th) edition of Laws and Rules for Glider Pilots was published last year. It contains many new or revised items. All glider pilots should be aware of them and refer to them periodically. While the publication is on the BGA website, the CFI would like all active (i.e. flying) members to have a personal hard copy for ease of reference.

The club has purchased sufficient copies, which have been available in the main clubhouse room for the past 3 months. The cost is £2.50, which can either be paid by cash/cheque or deducted from flying accounts. Most members have already collected their copies but about 20 have not yet done so. Those concerned please rectify as soon as possible, indicating on the accompanying list that you have done so.

Random Musings of your Treasurer

As I write this we approach the financial year end for the club and I think it appropriate that I discuss the state of the club finances.

I do not intend to anticipate my annual report to the membership at the Annual General Meeting in May but given the disappointing year on the income side I believe there are some things which can be usefully commented upon.

We are in a time of recession/credit crunch/bank bailout and low confidence across all financial aspects of our lives. This has undoubtedly impacted on club members and we see a reluctance to fly as much as we could. There is little we can do to offset that.

Club income has been severely affected and it is likely to be some £6000 down on the modest estimates as planned at the beginning of the year across the budget.

Some areas, such as Trial Lesson Voucher sales and Courses, have done well but figures representing our core business, winch launches, aerotows and chargeable soaring minutes are considerably down. The reasons are slightly more complex than blaming the recession or poor weather, although they have been significant factors.

It is premature for me to say that we will have to face major increases in prices for next year but there is no magical formula to balancing the books.

The destiny of the club is in our own hands. My message to you; attend regularly and fly more. If there is any issue that prevents this that can be addressed by the club then do let any instructor or committee member know.

Figures to date show expenditure and costs will total somewhere near budget but there has been some overspend against anticipated outgoings where there was no alternative. I'm thinking track repairs as an example. This will be ongoing and we should all do our best to make sure they are looked after to the best of our ability. Therefore, please observe the 15 mph speed limit across the entire airfield and refrain from driving or doing anything in such a way that the surface of the tracks is disturbed if it can be avoided.

Generally, please try to save money where you can. In particular, turn off the generator when it is not needed. Last year diesel cost us £2500. Also, if you can think of anything we can do to save money then your committee would like to know. For my part, I will firstly be looking at any savings that can be achieved on bank charges, rates and waste disposal.

I do not wish the above to appear too gloomy. The club is solvent and we have some modest reserves. The point I am trying to make is that we have to operate with a surplus if we want to have cash available to grow the club.

Laurie Penrose
Treasurer

" A GPS is a device which records the exact location of an accident which you might have avoided if you hadn't been looking at the GPS"

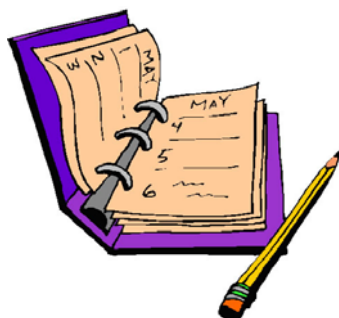
Dates for Your Diary

Fri 1st May 2009
Annual General Meeting at
8.00pm.
This is your opportunity to have
your say on the Club's future.
Please attend. Buffet supper will
be served

8-10th May 09
Inter Club League at
"The Park", Longbridge Deverill
Please speak to Simon Withey/
Terry Hatton for further details.

30-31 May 09
Inter Club League at North Hill.
Pilots and crew welcome.

6-13th June 09
Club Expedition:
Once a year we take the
gliders to another Club
location to experience
flying at a different site
T Hatton



June 22nd - 26th
Holiday Courses & Club Ab Initios
(see notice in Club House
- all welcome)

Sat 21st June
Dawn-to Dusk Flying Day

27-28th June 2009
Inter Club League at Upavon.
Pilots and crew welcome.

18-19th July 2009
Inter Club League at Halesland.
Pilots and crew welcome.

July 27th - 31st
Mini Courses & Trial Lessons
(see notice in Club
House- all welcome)

Aug 10th - 14th
Holiday Courses &
Club Ab Initios (see
notice in Club House-
all welcome)

Aug 31st - Sep 4th
Mini Courses & Trial Lessons
see notice in Club House- all
welcome)

Sat 7th Nov:

Bonfire night

Although it's tempting to think that emergencies
always happen to "other pilots,"
the truth is that none of us are immune

THINK THE SKY IS THE LIMIT ?

THINK AGAIN.



INTER CLUB

LEAGUE ^{2009.} dates

info

Wondering what's outside 'gliding range?':

- Meet and compete with local clubs
- tasks open to BRONZE X/C and above
- local flying at host clubs
- quality pub time/saturday night entertainment - and camping!
- crews welcomed
- learn more about cross country, be you a curious ab initio or seasoned soaring god, or somewhere in between.
- bloody good fun for all.

THE PARK	9/10 MAY
NORTH HILL	30/31 MAY
UPAVON	27/28 JUNE
HALESLAND	18/19 JULY

THE PARK VS. HALESLAND VS. UPAVON VS.
RIVAR HILL VS. NORTH HILL

FOR MORE INFORMATION, AND SIGN UP: See Simon Withey/Terry Hatton



