

On Circuit!

The Newsletter of Essex & Suffolk Gliding Club

No.1 July 2011

Welcome to the first edition

Welcome to the first edition of On Circuit, the newsletter for the Essex & Suffolk Gliding Club. On Circuit is intended to provide a medium for communication between club members and also between club members and the club committee. On Circuit is meant to be interactive too, so please pass any feedback, stories or notices which you would like published in On Circuit to Adrian Tills at adrian.tills@googlemail.com.

Committee Meeting 11 May

The Club Committee met on the evening of 11 May and a number of issues were discussed and which are summarised here.

Bronze talks

Popular demand has led to requests for some Bronze Talks to be organised. Andy Winton, Peter Hibbard and George Green will be arranging and delivering these talks. Dates are yet to be confirmed. For more details please contact Andy Winton.

Safety on the Airfield

As ever safety on the airfield is a perennial concern. There are reports of an incident when a member's car had driven past the winch towards the western end of the airfield without checking with the Winch Driver first. This had caused a launch in progression to be stopped, with the cable marking the wing mirror of the member's car. Can all members make a note that it is important for safety reasons to check with the Winch Driver before driving down the track to the Western End of the airfield.

The committee have decided that an A Frame notice board appropriately worded

is to be placed on the track for drivers to see and thereby take steps to check with the winch driver that it is safe to proceed to the Western End of the airfield as this is often a problem with visitors to the airfield and not just an issue with members. Equally, members with guests should ensure that the visitors are suitably briefed on safe movement around the airfield.

Winch Driver Volunteers

We have a diminishing number of Winch Drivers and obviously no winch drivers = no flying. The club needs to recruit and train new drivers and it is fairer for the existing cadre of winch drivers if there are more on the rota so that each driver has less shifts to do over the year. If you are not currently a winch driver it would be appreciated by both pilots and existing winch drivers alike if you would consider volunteering to be trained.

Shower Block

Jerry Newbery and Eddy Leach have done sterling work to get the shower block completed and should be applauded for their efforts. There were other notable contributions too from a variety of club members and so well done all to for getting this operational.

Parking of Cars and Trailers

Cars and trailers parked alongside the hangar have been causing problems. The main problem is that it narrows the gap for members towing gliders through to the Trailer Park and has on occasions led to damage. We are lucky to have plenty of space so there should be no need to park in this vicinity.

Making the most of the Motorglider – A club member relates their experience

As a beginner at cross-country flying (I achieved my Bronze and Cross-Country endorsement in 2010) I felt I needed to

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prepare myself for the 2011 cross country season so I took the opportunity of an hour in the motorglider with Richard Kimberley. This had the advantage of giving me the “stick time” which I hadn’t been able to have during the winter and also allowed me a safe chance to practice some field selection and circuit planning.

A reasonable looking field viewed from directly above at 2,000’ turned out to be less than ideal with large undulations once seen from a committed circuit height. The motorglider affords the luxury of opening the throttle and climbing away from these sorts of fields with the learning experience intact as well as giving invaluable practice at circuit planning and execution in a location with no familiar landmarks or landing reference points.

To get the same air time in non-thermic conditions would have required around 8 – 10 winch launches with all of the costs associated with that and without the chance to practice in an unfamiliar setting. I firmly believe that the motorglider makes good financial sense for pilots during the winter as well as helping to keep pilots current on the essential skills needed for safe cross country gliding. (AT)

A Message from the CFI

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Below are a couple of topical issues that I believe need disseminating amongst club members.

Ground Handling

We continue to see a steady flow of ground incidents at the club that I’m sure could be prevented if members became just a little more mindful. The aim here quite obviously is to minimise incidents and prevent them from becoming accidents. The club has a very good Ground Operations Manual, copies of which can be found around the club or available on the website for download. Please revisit this from time-to-time in order to refresh your knowledge. Also be aware that a Ground Handling Progress Card will need to be completed before you achieve Bronze Badge status.

Radios

Please remember that circuit radio calls are mandatory at ESGC. We are working towards ensuring all club gliders have serviceable radios, but remember this ruling applies to private gliders also. The single call is blind (no return), should be brief and begin with the station you are calling, for example: “Wormingford radio, G-BLAA, downwind, 27 left”.

We experienced two glider-to-glider near misses within the circuit last season, and I continue to be convinced that accidents of this nature can be avoided by using a combination of Lookout, Radio and Flarm. Safe flying everybody. (DH)