

On Circuit!

The Newsletter of Essex & Suffolk Gliding Club

No.3 January 2012

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Successful Aerotowing at Wormingford – October 2011

Over the weekend of 22/23 October Wormingford Airfield enjoyed the extra interest of a chance to practice aerotowing skills. Dennis Heslop brought his 150hp Piper Cub to Wormingford and managed to successfully tow out at one time or another both of the club 2 seat fibreglass aircraft and also the venerable K13 DVB.

It was tricky conditions in a strong, gusty almost 90° wind from the south with a hint of east in it. Launching from the Western end of the airfield Dennis explained that during take off it required him to keep the

in-to-wind wheel planted on the grass to avoid the tug/glider combination drifting off of the runway line before enough height for comfort could be achieved.

Dennis with the Piper Cub about to tow out the K21

The additional factor which most of us had to contend with was also the patch of concrete on the runway which was nicely shaped like a ski ramp just before either the Cub or the glider had quite achieved full flying speed with the consequence that one was uncertainly airborne a few feet off of the ground whilst the Cub continued scuttling across the ground in front leaning into wind on one wheel.

Dennis about to tow out Graham Drinkell in his Pilatus B4 whilst Dave Betts assists.

Chris Price steadies the wing of the K21 (pilot unknown) whilst Dennis manoeuvres the Cub into place for the tow

Richard Kimberley also dropped in to visit in his luscious Luscombe. Whilst chatting he explained the patience he had needed to rebuild it from a jumbled collection of components and had had to fabricate the undercarriage, doors, instrument panel and rebuild the leading edges of the wings himself at the cost of many hours of work. I'm sure you'll agree with "On Circuit" that he's made a great job.

Richard commented that it is a very frugal aircraft to fly with a 65hp Continental original equipment engine.

Richard's fabulous looking Luscombe

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Another two Aerotow days also took place between Christmas and New Year 2011.

◆ ◆ ◆ Club Member Interview

In this column "On Circuit" interviews a club member to talk about their gliding experiences. For this edition On Circuit has been speaking to John Gilbert.

*John Gilbert (listening for Rottweilers?
See below...)*

OC How did you get into gliding?

JG My Dad was a member and was flying when I was small. I first flew in 1979 when I was 5 years old. I flew with Colin Smith. It'll be 32 years in December [2011] that I've been flying.

OC Did you like flying straight away?

JG I enjoyed it from the word go. I flew regularly until I was 16 and soloed on my 16th birthday

OC Where else have you flown?

JG Quite a few. At least 25 around the UK including competitions.

OC What about abroad?

JG I've flown in Germany and in Holland. In Germany it was the international vintage gliding rally.

OC Are the clubs there different to the UK?

JG Not really, the clubs are not so different to here but the weather is better. An average day there is a good day here.

OC What have been some of the high

points for you?

JG Flying across the channel in my Skylark was definitely a high point. I'm quite proud of that and also winning Regionals a couple of times.

OC What tips would you give to early cross-country pilots?

JG Don't be afraid of failing. Don't be put off by the idea of landing out - if you're not landing out sometimes then you're not really trying. When I was trying and learning I used to land out up to a dozen times a year. A lot of it is practice and turning up even though the weather forecast is not perfect. There's no substitute for practice and a lot of days can be iffy but you can still practice soaring locally.

OC What have been the low points?

JG I'm not sure I've had low points. But, I haven't flown competitions for the last few years. The problem sometimes on a competition is that you have a lot of time there if the weather isn't great. The last competition I took part in three years ago we only flew 2 days out of 9 due to poor weather conditions. I will go back to them though, in the future.

OC What are the challenges you'd like to take up in the future?

JG I like racing my LS3. I would like to complete a 750km from Wormingford. I enjoy flying the Skylark and I'd like to fly a 500km in that.

OC Wasn't it 500km when you flew over the Channel?

JG No, its not even 200km I don't think.

OC What was the reaction when you

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landed there?

JG The second time they were non-plussed really.

OC What about the first time.

JG The first time I flew over I landed at Abbeville. They were good and fed me and gave me wine and beer.

Abbeville Airfield from, er, the air

OC Wasn't it stressful flying over the Channel?

JG In the Skylark about a third of the way across I reached the point of no return. There was a south westerly wind and so if you turned round after that point you wouldn't push far enough into wind to make it back. I had concerns about my progress after that and was continually making calculations so that if I wasn't going to make it I could radio my position before hand.

OC Do you have any special memories or have you had any amusing experiences?

JG I remember I landed out near Gransden Lodge and when I went to the farmhouse I was chased by two Rottweilers. To escape I had to go in through the front door which was unlocked. Once I was safe I realised there was no-one in. In order to escape, the retrieve crew, (Richard Robinson and Eric Hibbard), drove around the other side of the barn to distract the dogs which gave me the chance to get away.

OC What about ridge flying - do you enjoy that?

JG If there's a good Northerly forecast I quite like to go to Parham and soar on the

South Downs.

OC Isn't that tricky?

JG There is some really challenging flying there as the hills are not that high. It's a long ridge but there are a few gaps - anyone with a bit of ridge experience and a good knowledge of their own glider would be OK with a local briefing. I've landed in fields there a few times - generally there's no problems finding fields if you need to land as the valley bottom is mostly flat. Crossing the gaps can be tricky.

OC John, many thanks for giving the Club Member interview for this edition of On Circuit.



CFI's Update

Preparation for flight

The BGA are having another safety "push" about preparation for flight, including: Rigging, DI and pre-flight checks.

I have pinned a notice to the board in the clubhouse lobby which contains the details, but really there should be nothing there that you do not know already. One point they make, which I have commented on to several people recently, is that if you have completed your pre-flight checks but then open the canopy (for whatever reason) you should repeat the C-B-E end of the checks again.

The canopy must be closed, locked (both sides) and resisting upward pressure. Personally, I am happy to accept an abbreviated form of the last two, because you have already checked the working of the brakes once, so "Brakes closed and locked" with an appropriate shove on the

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lever (some people prefer to unlock and re-lock). You will have already considered your “Eventualities” and so will know what you can and cannot do in various circumstances, but in the abbreviated check you should at least recall the recovery speed, and “... land ahead if possible otherwise turn right/left”. The reason for this is simply to have this information in the forefront of your mind when the cable break occurs.

Lasham Collision

I got Andy to add a Lasham accident report to the web site because I thought that the "issues for consideration" that it lists apply just as much to our flights from Wormingford. These two pages are well worth a read; and whilst doing so you might like to imagine (or draw out) the paths of the two gliders, and try to visualise the views from the cockpits of each one.

Superimpose the accident on our airfield and you will find that the collision occurs almost over the railway line. How often have you meandered around in that area whilst waiting to start a circuit? See Rob Lockett's article below for detailed advice.

“FLARM”...

The FLARM debate has been rekindled in this [Lasham Collision] thread in the “burble room” but, we will never know if it might have prevented the Lasham accident because it was not fitted to one of the gliders and it certainly cannot help in this circumstance. Like any other “new” gadget it takes a while to become familiar enough with the display to allow the pilot to assimilate the information it is providing with a glance and without consciously doing so, it then becomes less of a distraction and more of an assistant to lookout. Most of the time the display simply shows the nearest glider and can help to relocate it when you lose it

visually. If it starts beeping you have 18, 13 or 8 seconds until impact! The urgency is denoted by more frequent beeping. There are variants of FLARM displays, but those in club gliders are all the same. If you are unsure what it is telling you then read the manual or ask an instructor.

Bronze+ for DIs

I also have to point out that the law, as interpreted in the BGA Laws and Rules, requires pilots to hold a Bronze badge (or higher) in order to be eligible to check and sign for a glider daily inspection. I think this is a really stupid rule because flying proficiency and the ability to inspect a glider for mechanical defects are not correlated, but from now on we have to follow it. We will be granting “grandfather rights” to those people who already carry out the DI but do not yet hold a “bronze”.



Mid-Air Collision Avoidance

By Rob Lockett

The Committee discussed the important subject of mid-air collisions at January's meeting and I have agreed to present some simple and concise advice on the avoidance of collisions here in On Circuit.

Many gliding clubs have had fatal collisions. At Wormingford we have been very lucky so far, but we must not be complacent, we are no different.

There are fatal glider collisions almost every year in the UK. Statistically, about half of the pilots involved in collisions are killed.

Here is a simple quick resume of the common ways in which gliders crash into

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each other, based on my observations of real accidents:-

1. Pilots in both gliders have failed to see each other and collide completely unexpectedly – crunch!

Try hard to keep a good lookout.

2. The pilots of one or both gliders do not see the other glider until it is too late to take avoidance action – crunch!

It takes at least 4 seconds to roll from one direction of turn to the opposite direction – 4 seconds is a long time if trying to avoid a near collision.

Don't leave it too late to take avoidance action.

3. Glider A has seen Glider B approaching and incorrectly presumes that Glider B has seen him. There is a risk of collision, but Glider A chooses not to take avoidance action as he incorrectly presumes that Glider B has seen him and will give way – crunch!

A common example of this is when a thermalling glider sees another glider approaching to join the thermal. The thermalling glider technically has right-of-way, but if the joining glider has not seen the thermalling glider, or muffs his thermal entry, then dead people can result.

Even if you have right-of-way, be prepared to take avoidance action in good time.

The fact that you have seen the other glider and may technically have the right-of-way in some circumstances will be of no consequence if the other glider has not seen you and crashes into you.

Never presume that the other glider has

seen you.

4. Pilots of both gliders have seen each other, but do not maintain sufficient safe separation - crunch!

Very stupid, and often happens during over-competitive or bloody-minded thermalling. Exacerbated by an under-estimate of how long it takes to manoeuvre a glider.

Maintain good separation and don't be bloody minded or over-competitive.

It is extremely rare for the responsibility for a collision to be attributable 100% to one party. I would say that in percentage terms the apportionment of responsibility almost always lies between 50/50 and 75/25.

Next time another glider or aircraft nearly clobbers you, don't just automatically blame the other pilot – ask yourself honestly whether you could or should have seen him sooner and whether you could or should have taken avoidance action sooner, before separation became so small.

Right, that's enough for now!

I've got more to say on this subject and will try and deliver it in palatable portion sizes via the BurbleRoom and via "On Circuit".

In the meantime;

- **Try hard to keep a good lookout.**
- **Never presume that the other glider has seen you.**
- **Even if you have right-of-way, be prepared to take avoidance action in good time.**
- **Don't leave it too late to take**

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avoidance action.

- **Keep in mind the manoeuvrability limitations of gliders, in particular slow roll rate.**

Take care and have fun.

Rob Lockett



Glider winter storage – by John Gilbert

Over the last few years I have come across nearly as many gliders seriously damaged or beyond economical repair through storage problems as I have through accident damage. Below are some examples.

- **K6e wing spar web dissolved by mouse urine, wing scrapped.**
- **Skylark main spar edge chewed away by mice.**
- **K8 wing glue failure due to damp, glider scrapped.**
- **K13 wing glue failure due to damp, repaired at cost.**
- **Janus wing gel coat failure due to damp storage.**
- **Excessive mouse droppings on main spar of ASW15 requiring hole cut in wing to inspect.**
- **A number of cases of severe corrosion problems to metal fittings.**
- **Variometers and radios requiring expensive repairs.**

Mice

The main concern always used to be mice chewing things like seat cushions, now there seems to be more and more cases of serious damage being caused either through chewing or mouse droppings and urine. Generally the serious problems are when they have been in a wing for an extended time, they tend to nominate an area to use as a toilet which means a regular concentration of urine, this will damage wood and will find its way through the very light fibre glass layers on GRP gliders and damage foam or wood material in wing skins and main spars, moderate damage to a spar web on most older gliders will probably be un economical to repair and not likely to be covered by insurance!

The only way to protect against this source of damage is to keep mice out, with the glider out of the trailer spend some time inside with the door shut and look for any daylight, any gap bigger than about 10mm will make a good entrance for them! Cover the inside of vents with a fine mesh material.

You could also block off access to the wing internals, ideally with fine mesh to allow air circulation.

The other alternative is to put a good supply of food in someone else's trailer!

(Above, Rob Lockett's ASW 20 rebuilt after the mice got to it.)

Moisture

If your glider lives out in the trailer park all year then there is no full defence against moisture, you can only improve the situation and make sure the glider gets regular airings.

A good quality rotating ventilator and vents at the opposite end of the trailer will offer

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some air circulation, not generally much help on the really cold foggy days when there is little wind!

Ensure there are no water leaks in the trailer, sounds obvious but plenty do have leaks that the owners know about and plan to fix at some point.....

If possible remove the instrument panel for the winter, or at least any instruments with LCD screens as these can get ruined in one damp winter. Radios are also very susceptible. Make sure the back of the trailer is not jammed into wet ground, a piece of wood under the rear end can stop damp coming up through the floor.

A good polish of gel coats will offer some protection and will probably stop mil dew forming in cracks.

Occasional turning of the main wheel while applying the wheel brake lightly can help save you from expensive brake repairs, rust forms on the brake drum, the brake shoes stick to the drum and the first time the glider is moved the brake lining can get ripped from the shoes.

Grease the wing spigots and pins, L'hotellier balls and any other metal contacting parts, most people rely on the grease put on at the previous annual which will no longer be there by the following winter. Corrosion will cause damage and lead to premature wear!

Some people find that fitting insulation boards to the roof of the trailer can reduce the condensation dripping problem.

Many people also put water trap/de-humidifiers in the cockpit, I am not sure

how effective these are, I do know that most people forget to take them out before the Annual and end up with soaked cockpits!

Finally the best thing I think you can do is open up the trailer to air whenever possible and ideally pull the glider out on dry calm days for a few hours.

The very best thing you can do is rig and fly the glider occasionally; the mice are certainly not keen on flying!



Surprise yourself! - Goals and Achievements for 2012

I'm sure you have come across research at one time or another that shows that setting goals, even just moderately stretching goals, can lead to a higher level of achievement and performance. It may be unrealistic to set yourself a goal or a challenge of becoming the next gliding World Champion but that doesn't mean we can't all achieve something personally significant in our flying.

The start of the New Year is a good time to reflect on what we'd like to do better and to set ourselves a target or goal that is both realistic but will be stretching towards achieving that improvement we want to see. The point is that any goal will be relevant to you and will need to take into account any limiting factors which are personal to you and which you may or may not be aware of such as: shortages of money; time; emotional support; flying experience; health; ability to ask for help; humility; determination; commitment and so on.

You may be afraid of seeming pretentious and a braggart but it's still probably a good idea to tell a few people about what you hope to achieve. It makes it more real and

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you can be surprised how much people admire the sense of wanting to achieve in others and will be prepared to advise, support and help you towards your goal.

What is important is not the grand scale of the achievement to which you aspire but the degree of challenge it poses to you. A modest goal that is achieved against some of the limiting factors mentioned above may be a more admirable achievement than the great achievements of others with more natural ability, more money, more time etc.

Your goal could be a modest one such as, "Achieve a flight of at least 2 hrs duration" or, "In the next year fly from at least two other airfields besides Wormingford." or, it might be a more stretching and demanding target with several components such as "complete all three elements of my Silver badge".

As the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, (6th Century BC) said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". So, if it looks really difficult, break your goal down into bite size chunks. Give yourself little mini goals which help build up your commitment and confidence and help you to overcome some of the limiting factors mentioned above.

Another key aspect of setting goals is to make them time bound. The natural rhythm of the seasons provides the neatest way for a glider pilot to make their goal time bound. So, why not set a moderately challenging goal for yourself for this coming 2012 soaring season?

You never know - you might surprise yourself and if you don't achieve it in 2012 there's always next season!

The dates for the 2012 Task Week have been set following a proposal to the Committee from Paul Robinson.

The Task week will run from 26 May 2012 to 01 June 2012. This runs up to the beginning of the Eastern Regional Competition and the two days of Bank Holiday on the 4th and 5th of June. Out of interest too, the 15m and Open Class Nationals start on the 2nd of June at Lasham.



Contributing articles, pictures and copy to On Circuit!

Contributions of articles, pictures and copy for publication are welcome and should be sent to Adrian Tills at:

adrian.tills@googlemail.com

A very big thank you to all of the contributors to this edition.

Publication deadlines for "On Circuit" for the rest of 2012 are:

- 24 March for Spring
- 19 June for Summer
- 18 September for Autumn
- 30 November for Winter

Safe flying everybody!



Task Week 2012