

In the Air

Fast Communication for Lasham Members

April 2000

The Safety Zone

No, not exactly the Twilight Zone, but a series of articles intended to hi-light safety matters associated with gliding. The intent is to be better informed and to promote further thought so that we may all be better equipped to face the dangers inherent in aviation.

Unreported Damage

Endemic in the general populous, this problem is frequently encountered in gliding operations. The usual scenario is a case of "hangar rash" and occasionally a more serious event such as an "unscheduled arrival". Fortunately the end result is generally some lost paint here and there, perhaps a small fabric tear and of course much embarrassment. This superficial damage may appear insignificant, especially to the casual observer, but what if there were more serious, perhaps well disguised, damage to the aircraft?

During the recent C of A inspection of a club glider, the airframe was found to be so badly damaged (bent tubes etc) that it was considered uneconomic to repair and was written off. The attending inspector was unable to determine whether this was the result of a single or a series of events, but the damage had been present for some time. It could have been caused by a heavy or sideways landing, poorly executed aerobatics, or perhaps something as simple as poor towing out technique, especially over rough ground or in a strong wind. Any or all of these items, and more besides, could have contributed to this situation. The important point is that no "events" were reported and indeed how was the damage missed during the DI?

The answer is not simple, but the prevention of a similar incident is. Any damage, no matter how insignificant it may appear, should be reported to the club. Lasham operates a no fault, no blame system, but the club needs to know so that authorised inspections can be arranged and damage repaired before it progresses further. If nothing else, this will enable the club to plan for the repair and subsequent use of the aircraft subject to operational requirements. Don't leave it to your colleagues or the Staff to discover a broken aircraft just when it may be required the most.

The other point to make is to be vigilant during the DI. If something looks suspicious, get a Staff member to look at it. Remember that you wouldn't rent a car without first checking for scratches and dents. Lastly, if you do have the misfortune to be involved in an incident, no matter how insignificant it may appear, tell the Staff. If you can't possibly handle the embarrassment, put a note under the Office door and "do a runner". Either way, the club needs to know.

Just in case the message has failed to get through, a recent CAA accident report highlighted this very point. A Robin DR-400 landed normally at a strip but during the last few yards of the rollout while travelling at taxi speed, it clipped a hay bale with the wing tip. The pilot inspected it, found no evidence of damage and departed some time later. The wing subsequently separated during the flight. Draw your own conclusion.

Winch Launch Events

Not a new discipline in the Olympics, but some of the aerobatics associated with this would score very highly for artistic content, not to mention adrenaline rush. We're talking from when the cable goes tight at the start of the take-off run through to the first 50 ft of the launch. This covers a time period of perhaps 5 seconds, depending on the day, but boy can the World change. Wing drops, ground loops, sudden yaw, cartwheels, power failure and of course the standard cable break.

The trouble is, no matter how well we are mentally prepared for these events, folks still get caught out. It is the speed of change that is the culprit..... ask the average drag car racer. How can we improve our reaction time? By placing a hand actually on the cable release for the start of the take-off. In this way we will minimise the time required to terminate the launch before a minor wing drop turns into a major ground loop or cartwheel. Don't rely on the power of the winch to "pull you through". Most of all, be keenly aware of the environment that you are about to launch in and really concentrate on keeping the wings level and the glider straight. Finally, take a last look at your wing tip holder prior to the cable going tight. If they are straining to keep the wing level then you've got too much control input. Oh, and if you inadvertently pull the release as a result of having your hand on it as the glider accelerates, you need to move the seat forward.

Andy Aveling (Safety Officer)

EASTER COMPETITION

Easter Bank Holiday weekend 21st - 24th April

Free entry on the day

Tasks for all experience levels

Fly any day or all

Sky Writing Challenge

Briefing 10am daily in the Bar.

more news...more news...more news...more news...

Weekend compass flying

The flying list for weekend instruction in the Duo Discus and Grob is nearly full now but there are just a few places left if you hurry. If you missed out on a weekend place don't despair, there will be plenty of opportunity for dual cross-country training during the week; just make sure you keep a day's leave free!

Seen at the launch point

The cable retrieve vehicle now has a different method of attaching the cables. The new system uses a glider winch release mechanism in such a way that it will release the cable at the same load as the old green weak link but can be reconnected in seconds as opposed to minutes. There is also a considerable cost saving. A pair of the old green links is approximately £6. One can imagine how many links are broken by a trainee retrieve driver.

A word of caution, as the cable can be reconnected very quickly to the retrieve vehicle, the driver must make absolutely sure it is safe to tow the cable. The winch driver may have his hands in the cable drum. Remember, the winch and the retrieve vehicle should use channel 3 (129.975) on their radios.

Lasham win BGA Trophies

The Annual BGA Dinner in late February saw the presentation of a whole range of trophies for outstanding gliding performances during 1999. Congratulations are in order to Lasham Pilots Roy Pentecost, who won the L. duGarde Peach Trophy for the Weekend Ladder, and to Peter Masson who carried off the Spitfire Trophy for the Junior Ladder.

Well done to both pilots for keeping Lasham amongst the winners.

Hopefully, their success will encourage more pilots to challenge for the 2000 awards

Help with the 2000 Lasham Comps needed

Help is needed to guarantee the success of the 15metre Nationals and the Lasham Regionals which will be run from the 19th to the 27th of August this year.

It's a great way to get involved in the competition environment, work hard and have a lot of fun. You don't need any previous experience, as the Comps Team will give you all the guidance that is needed. We just need your minds and bodies for a week!

If you are interested please contact Marion Masson who will be happy to give you more details.

Trailers in the T2

There are still a few trailers left in the T2 hanger after winter storage. Please can owners arrange to move them without delay as the space is urgently needed for gliders and tugs. Thanks in advance for your co-operation

Mapping the future

The new ICAO 1/2 million maps have arrived in the office and are available now. The new maps are significantly different in presentation to previous versions so make sure you get a copy early and familiarise yourself with not only the changes to Airspace (fortunately very few) but also the new format.

Thermalling gently towards controlled airspace is no time to try to work out what the new colours and symbols mean!

WE NEED YOUR CLOTHES!

We will be holding a sale of good quality second hand clothes and books during the Jubilee weekend to raise money for Lasham funds.

If you have any unwanted, good quality garments or books please hang on to them. As soon as a place for storage has been identified we will let you know and you can bring the items down to Lasham. Who knows, your fashion mistake might be someone else's dream garment!

And why not make some room by giving us your unwanted books. That way you can come and buy some more on the 25th of June, safe in the knowledge that you'll have a place to put them!!

For further details please contact Kathy Joint (clothes) on 01420 544397 or Nan Worrell (books) 01372 278807.

