

In the Air Lasham

Fast Communication for Lasham Members

Landouts and private strips

Landouts are always a hassle. The use of mobile phones makes the process that much quicker, you can get the crew on the road straight away and that saves a lot of time. We don't have the indignation of grovelling to the land-owner for the use of the telephone and if your first approach is with a cheery disposition and a touch of the forelock, they are generally pleased to see you and jolly helpful.

The ability to aerotow retrieve is another massive advantage to cross-country flying. If you have chosen well and your field is suitable you can save hours of hanging around waiting for your trailer by whistling up the Pawnee for a quick re-light.

But, and there is always a but, the field has to be suitable. If you request a tug and the field is not acceptable to the tug pilot you will still have to pay for the flying time of the aircraft. So, what makes a suitable field? It has to be long enough, with a suitable climb-out and be either flat or sloping slightly down, into wind on the climb-out. There should be no obstructions that would impair the climb-out and the surface should be firm, short, smooth and dry. As a minimum you should have at least 800m of useful take-off run, less than this and things start to get critical, so pace it out and

have an approximate length available when you phone in. You must have received definite permission from the land-owner to conduct the retrieve. This means that you have ascertained who owns the field and have requested from him or his manager that they will allow a tug to land and retrieve you, and not from someone that thinks the owner won't mind. If you have asked for a retrieve and it transpires subsequently that you did not have permission, it does not matter how much you plead in the future you will not get a Lasham tug to pick you up.

If you have landed on a strip then please consider other users. Pull your glider off to one side and allow plenty of room for someone else to land. If the owner is flying and he comes back to find you plonked in the middle, he is hardly likely to be in a mood to allow you out. Put yourself in his position, if you wanted to land there but couldn't because some thoughtless prat had carelessly abandoned his aircraft, you'd have something to say about it.

Please don't spoil it for everyone else, the plethora of private strips are like manna from heaven to the glider pilot, but only if we remain welcome. We use them a lot and want to continue to be allowed to use them, for everyone's benefit.

South-Side Johnnies

We have established trailer parking on the south-side along the straight peritrack opposite the old DERA buildings. The ground is in good shape and hard standing is available for rigging with easy access and uncluttered parking. At the moment the only members to take advantage of all this space have been some new members (plus Tim Parker) we have acquired from Booker (their loss, our gain). They are enjoying the luxury of space and the freedom to rig unhindered and there is a lot more space for more. If you would like to move, have a word with Malcolm or myself and we will brief you on best practice etc.

Taxiing to clear the landing area

If you have ever done any flying at a continental club, you will have very quickly learnt that protocol and good practice require you to taxi clear of the landing area, thus leaving a clear path for the next landing glider. Common sense dictates that the taxiing glider rolls into a clear space, the pilot plans his approach to account for this and manages his energy to allow for it. The pilot on approach behind expects the glider ahead to roll clear to the left or right depending on the approach and the airfield layout, and takes this into account also.

For some reason this practise does not appear to have made it across La Mancha. The English pilot abroad will readily taxi off, leaving the landing area clear for his French/ Spanish or German fellows. When he comes back to the UK, all polite and common sense practise appears to fly out of his DV panel. He stops in the middle of the available grass, firmly and comprehensively rooted and taking up a vast amount of space. Those following on are forced around, over or short with all sorts of gyrations and contortions trying to miss the deposited plastic. I have never understood this. If we can do it on the continent, why can we not import that good practice to Lasham? We have large and available landing areas but everyone wants to land on the north side, understandably, that is where their trailers are.

It would of course be foolish to taxi across the path of an approaching aircraft, but it is not rocket science to plan to approach such that if you intend to turn off you approach to one side of the landing area, making it obvious to those behind what your intentions are. If you are the one following do not plan your approach so that you are passing between the glider ahead and the edge of the landing area, that way, when he turns he does not get in your way.

Until more private owners move to the south side we will have a congestion problem during mass landings on the north side. If we all use common sense and give consideration to everyone else trying to land, the airfield and its available landing areas get much bigger.

The Season is well underway

We have already had some very good days. For those of you have still to shrug off your winter plumage, we have already had two flights in excess of 750 kms. On the 16th April David Masson, flying his LS 6 and Bernie Morris in a Nimbus 3d, both spotted the potential of the day and completed similar tasks, David's speed was at a fraction over 100 kph. Several others had equally memorable flights that day, Chris Lovell, Paul Kite and Alan Purnell all did 500km in very good times while others enjoyed smaller but equally enjoyable flights. We had a very good day the day before but only Tim Parker saw that one coming, managing 500km on a day that probably had 750 potential as well.

It has been some years since we have had really good spring North Easterlies but it just goes to show, you need to be ready before April comes to take advantage of that can be stunning weather.

Since then we have had a number of lesser days but good none the less. Al Nunn and Chris Starkey completed 500km flights on 4th May and there have been a plethora of 300km flights. We have even had a couple of first 300km claims from Graham Prophet and Brian Harrison and Silver distance claims from Chris Mann and Jeremy Grindle.

Well done everyone, it promises to be a fantastic season and if it carries on the way we have started then I am sure records will tumble. Good

Meanwhile, somewhere in Spain..

...Jaca to be precise, several Lasham members were having a ball. During the four weeks Lasham had its Duo Discus based on site at this Pyrenean gliding paradise nearly 100 flying hours were completed in the one aircraft. Hugh Kindell had his Duo there as well and did sterling work on behalf of Lasham and lots of our members enjoyed Hugh's expertise in the area. I would like to say a very big thank you to Hugh and Andy Aveling, who instructed in the Lasham Duo for two weeks. Together they gave a lot of members their first taste of mountain flying and produced many happy, smiling faces.

Jaca is a special place, a wide open valley with good landing fields all around. Thermal and wave and spectacular scenery. Soaring with columns of vultures and Kites, friendly locals and good food. Easy access to major airports and cheap hire cars, good accommodation and first-class airfield facilities, who could ask for more? We will be going again next year and I would very much like to extend the scope of the expedition a little more to include single-seat and private gliders. I will be posting details in due course so watch this space and keep your diary free for March 2003.

You're not as sharp as you think you are

Experience brings with it many things; as the hours and the years increase, we become more able to withstand long periods of not flying without our overall handling ability reducing too much. It brings with it the ability to deal with taxing situations without compromising other aspects of our overall performance. We are able to spot a potential problem looming and deal with it early, thus preventing it from becoming a larger and more complicated issue. How does the saying go?

'He uses his superior skill to

avoid situations where he is obliged to exercise his superior ability.' Or something like that.

It is this prescience that develops over the years but it is also the first thing to deteriorate if not exercised often. So we loose the ability to recognise something going wrong, we loose the edge and then have to rely on our superior handling to retrieve the situation, or not. If that superior handling skill is not present.....we crash.

Problem is, we don't know how bad we have become until it is too late usually. Until you get your edge back through practise, let discretion be the better part of valour.

Aboyne 2002

We are returning to this Scottish wave mecca in October with the usual accommodation arrangements.

If we end up with more names than we have beds, providing the numbers stay constant we will book more accommodation, unfortunately not everyone will get to stay at Loch Daven.

Most other things will be the same as in previous years, the Grob and the newly finished K21 will be making the long haul north and at least one single-seat glider. The list will be posted on Saturday 1st June and I will require deposits very early, so please don't put your name on the list unless you are serious about going.

Instrument Appreciation

Plans are well underway for instrument training in the Faike. As soon as the instruments are fitted which should be any day now, we can begin instrument appreciation training. This will involve a number of flights and ground-school dealing with the flight instruments, their limitations and how we use them.

The intention is to produce a syllabus that will train to a standard to enable a controlled exit from unscheduled cloud penetration. We can then go on to extend the syllabus to include climbing through cloud on instruments.

The instrument appreciation flying syllabus will include:

Maintaining wings level & constant speed, turning onto specific heading and descent.

Flying to selected way-point using GPS, maintain position during let-down to specified height.

Recovery to wings level and constant speed from various unusual attitudes, full & partial panel.

Anyone interested should enquire at the office and they will include your name on the list of prospective candidates. The cost will be 92p/min which works out at £55.20 per hour. I would expect to be able to cover the syllabus in a total of about 2hrs flying time, although this will be split into several sessions. You can do as much of the syllabus as you wish.