

# CABLETALK

## SURREY HILLS GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016

### Editor's notes

*Chris Leggett*

Richard Fitch has been producing Cabletalk for a number of years – I was not rude enough to ask him how many – but while I was doing a DI on the K8 recently, he asked me if, with my publishing background, I would take over the editing and production of Cabletalk. Like an idiot of course I said yes. So this is my first attempt at an issue of Cabletalk – hopefully we can do 3 or 4 issues a year. Thanks to Richard for doing this over the last few years.

Richard did relent and do one more 'celebratory' issue when Tom Arscott won the World Junior Club Class Championship in Australia this winter and the whole club is very proud of that achievement and our congratulations go to Tom.

This is, however, your newsletter and I can only do this if people are prepared to submit articles, photographs and suggestions. Richard handed over the articles from Simon, Jon (which is so long only Part 1 in included here) and Terry so now we need copy for the summer issue. Perhaps the story of 'buying a glider' can be written by several teams of people?



This issue is very much text based but if anyone has any pictures we can include that would also be great. All other polite suggestions would be most welcome.

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## From the Chairman

*Adrian Hewlett*

It must be some time since I last attempted to write something both interesting and relevant! The problem is that every time I start, I hear (an earworm?) a voice saying '500 words'!

So I shall start on a thank you – or two. Firstly to Richard Fitch who has ably carried the Editor's keyboard for the last 7 or 8 years, and welcome and thanks too, to Chris Leggett who has volunteered – or maybe been volunteered – to take on the job.

Where to start? How about Tom Arscott? Richard's Cabletalk Special covered his success down under, and we also managed to get some excellent publicity in the Croydon Advertiser and the Surrey Mirror. It was also very pleasing to read in Tom's 'The long road to Silver' in the April 2012 Cabletalk, his comment that although now flying at Lasham with Imperial College University GC, . . .

'I think I will always be a Kenley pilot'. Tom, we're proud to have you as one of our own, and to bask in your reflected glory. Well done, Champ.

So what of 2015? Weather-wise, in each of the 2 months at each end of the year, we averaged only 7 flying days, and there were a couple of days in high summer with 30 degree temps when the heat inside the cockpits made it unsafe to fly! The other feature of the year was uncertainty. Our relations with those in power – the Air Cadet movement – now residing under the control of No 2 Flying Training School – other branches of the RAF and Defence Estates have deteriorated and communications with them are virtually non-existent. We can only hope the funding secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund by the Kenley Airfield Friends Group to restore, conserve and preserve the historic RAF Kenley from which we are privileged (at a price) to fly, will persuade the powers-that-be that flying is also part of the heritage.

As to equipment, one of our hardworking Grobs will shortly go to Poland for a complete refit and finish, and the other when condition and funds dictate. Another single-seater, the Pirat, has arrived and we've said goodbye to K8 Charlie Zulu.



This piece would not be complete without a big vote of thanks to the staff and instructors and to the members without whom we could not operate. We do have concerns about the BGA's approach to instructor training which means that only the most dedicated can afford the time and expense to follow the European impost. Perhaps if the UK votes to leave the EU, we can go back to the old CAA/BGA system of instructor licensing! The only real fly in the gliding ointment that we can ourselves remedy, is the issue of Fridays. Can any of you commit to Fridays? We have already trained Dorcas in the launch point procedures – but we need her in the office to sell vouchers and book flights!

My 500 words is almost up – it only leaves me to say: 'Have fun – stay safe'.

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## Steve's notes

*Steve Codd*

I'm sitting here watching the rain go by the window horizontally, yet last Wednesday (20th January) I was climbing at a steady 2–3 knots up to 1,900ft in the first thermals of the year along with the K8 flown by Mark Kidd. It may have seemed like the weather is against us all the time, but actually we flew over 3,000 launches last year which matches what we have done over the last few years.

When I last wrote something for Cabletalk we were all worried about EASA and how it was going to affect our sport and I hinted that EASA wouldn't work in the format that Europe wanted. Low and behold EASA licensing regulations are now on indefinite hold.

Unfortunately it has caused a big hole in the training of new instructors so please look after the ones that we have, don't wear them out, if they want to go off and fly solo for a break then let them. We have been packing and unpacking the hanger the same way for the last eight years, do you really need an instructor to be present at all times?

Last year I took KFG away to Bicester to fly in the Club Class Nationals, flying the club members in this prestige competition, hopefully those who flew with me, flying further, faster and higher than what they had done before, enjoyed themselves and learned something to inspire them onto greater things. I will be taking T40 away later this year to fly in the Northerns at Sutton Bank, talk to me if you are interested.

Talking of greater things what about Tom, World Junior Champion, just because we are a small club confined in our operation by airspace doesn't mean we can't set our sights higher.

February and March are going to be difficult months with T40 off to Poland for a much needed refurbishment and KFG will be out of action for two weeks whilst its CofA is done and having



some gel coat tidying up done. Fortunately Ringmer's K13 is staying with us until April 5th. The single seat fleet has been increased with the addition of the Pirat, please look after all the aircraft and ground equipment as though it was your own, because it is yours.

I will finish by wishing you all a safe and fun flying year to come and don't forget that whoever you are or how ever much flying you have done, occasionally flying dual with an instructor is not a punishment but an opportunity. I'll be hoping to fly with our own World Junior Champion Tom.

Stay safe.

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## Doing the Palais Glide

*Terry Hagerty*

This all started when I was about 11 years old. My brother instilled into me a love of aircraft both old and modern and, apart from a few gaps, I went to Biggin Hill Air Display regularly until they stopped it all.

Some 10 years ago or more, I visited Kenley and had an air experience flight with Roger Warren and there it ended . . . or so I thought.

Following my illness my daughter pushed me back into gliding by buying a voucher which I used at Challock, flying with my old work colleague, Colin Fretwell. It all went rather well until I took control. The bacon sandwiches, however, were good.

In November 2013 I met Steve Codd tinkering with his red van outside the Kenley hangar and he told me he had something to do with gliding . . . It's how he tells 'em.

Since then I've never looked back – one can't! Gliding has been, and still is, the most challenging thing I have ever undertaken bar attempting to drink as much as I used to, when I was 25 years old. I originally had no idea that one had to fly a circuit before landing, or that airspeed was so important, and I am still learning the complexities of both those skills amongst many others. I really very much appreciate the time and effort that my instructors spend on me (Paul Hayward in particular), the understanding advanced to me by Phil, the winch driver, as I ask him to take up slack on the Hangar Lane cable, and the patience of several others in answering all my daft questions about ground handling, launching and safety.



As one member mentioned to me recently, when flying the Grob its comforting to have your mother-in-law behind, to nag you when things go slightly wrong.

It will be a long time before I am ready to take the 'eyes-in-the-back-of-the-head' exam that Steve Codd excelled in some years ago, but now that I have got at least one foot in gliding (and on the buggy) I am looking forward to going solo in 2018!

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## 34 years before going solo!

*Simon Cousins*

About 34 years ago I decided that I would like to learn to fly gliders. I made some enquires and decided I would go on a two week residential holiday at a gliding club where I could learn to glide – I then met a lady who is still my wife and the holiday was put on hold.

Move forward 30-plus years of marriage, two children and a career and I am now retired. So I decided to try again. I booked some trial flights at Kenley and Paul Hayward took me up for my first flight. We did not get very far – we had a low cable break and ended up near to the fence. Undaunted I got back in and had a very enjoyable day.

I joined the club and started to have lessons. I have discovered I am not as quick or as coordinated in 2014 as I was in 1983!! Paul and Richard have had to work very hard to get me up to standard and have been very patient with me. However in April the day came when Richard sent me up on my own. The feeling of elation and achievement was fantastic and I am sure you all felt the same.

I look forward to learning more and enjoying my gliding for a long time to come. I am grateful to all the instructors and club members who have made me so welcome and given constant encouragement.

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## Solo to solo, 1982–2015 (Part 1)

*Jon Hill*

Some might say I haven't progressed much and I'd agree but there's been a lot of water under the bridge during those 33 years. As with so many, it all began at the tender age of thirteen as a member of 450 ATC Squadron Kenley, so I haven't moved far either, with a couple of air experience flights in Tandem Tutors & Sedberghs and then life moved on ...



When she dumped me, rather than shed a tear I bought a fast car and went gliding! 1982 was when I turned up at Dunkerswell aerodrome in my black 1300 Mk1 Escort Sport, pitched my orange Vango tent next to the dilapidated control tower and went and stood next to a tin Slingsby T53 Phoenix attached by piano wire to a bonnetless Mk1 Jag with a concrete block in the boot. I'm not sure which was more fun, thrashing the Jag towing half a ton of glider trying to lift the boot over the bonnet or mastering the tricky art of powerless flight. I remember lots of cable breaks, the Jag veering left every time the brakes were applied and having, 'balloons on landing' written in my log book. I do recall a rather pretty K18 too, in my dreams! I can't have flown too badly because the instructor invited me to his own 'operation' later that summer with the temptation of soloing if I kept improving.



Later that year I met up with 'said' instructor at his 'operation' somewhere near Dartmoor. Situated on the crown of a hill the hedges had been removed between three fields. At one end sat a Bergfalke with its Messerschmitt like canopy together with a Swallow and at the other end a single drum balloon winch whose cable was retrieved by a Morris Minor, just. I do recall about three others on the course, I felt rather young! I wouldn't say the winch hurled us into the sky but we did all get lots of launches, circuits and landings though not much else. One flight must have been at least five minutes duration as I remember a Buccaneer flying under us at a rate of knots and we had time to utter a few expletives before getting back to the matter of returning the Bergfalke to the strip. Your reference point was always the area of grass approximately 200 yards prior to the crown of the hill between the perimeter hedges approximately 50 yards either side of the centre line, touch down much nearer to the 'crown' and it was downhill all the way to the winch! The trouble with Kenley is it is big enough such you can land over there or over here, the Bergfalke had to be on the centre line well before the crown otherwise the instructional input was . . . once down . . . stick hard forward to get the nose skid hard onto the turf or the crumple zone would be tested by the dry stone walls!

Thursday started late as the winch driver had to pop off to collect his social, but in the afternoon the Swallow was dragged out of the corner and I was duly plonked in it. I guess when you're a two ship operation you can't afford to lose your pride and joy. And so I was launched skyward in one of Slingsby's finest. At the top I remember thinking, it's awfully quiet up here . . . as the pre-stall buffet reminded me fast is good, slow = spin recovery, not ideal on your first solo. So, attitude corrected the Swallow proved twitchy by comparison and I should have known with 10 seconds solo experience under my belt! Three minutes later (no 45 degrees in those days!) I was lined up, 50 knots and out with the air brakes, I'm sure they were designed for a 747! Certainly made you come down before the crown. Then I did it again! I'm not sure if 'that' operation is still functioning, I suspect the BGA found out!

Hooked, I signed up with 'said' instructor the next year but at Eaglescott in Devon, another strip created by removing the hedges and filling the ditches, but actually quite a nice strip being longer, flatter and wider than the last one. Still the Bergfalke and Swallow but a Grob109 motor glider had also been acquired. Much as it goes against the purist in me I did several flights in the '109' to prove I could recall the vast experience I'd

gained the previous year together with a couple of days in the trusty Bergfalke and then back in the Swallow. I have two distinct memories of the Wednesday and Thursday of that course. Trying to smash my record of six minutes in the Swallow I had just turned onto the downwind leg when I got a firm push in the seat, I put in a quick turn . . . away from the field . . . having not gained a foot I resumed my downwind leg to arrive at the start of the crosswind leg a tad low . . . so completed a 180 into wind and landed, I thought rather nicely, except I hadn't taken into account that the ditches hadn't been filled right to the edges of the strip . . . so just as I touched down seeing the ditch 'right there', managed to hop the Swallow to the other side, strangely not a word was said, but a lesson was learnt! Thursday was 'fly the school kids' day and the trusty Bergfalke was earning its keep whilst I grabbed launches in the Swallow. Sat in the cockpit, another course member holding the wing-tip his under arm swing signalling the inevitable. I did my usual look all around for my peripheral vision to notice a child standing just in front of my starboard tail plane, I pulled the plug. The 'said' instructor approached me shouting why was I taking up time as there were other children to be flown. Offering my explanation I was shouted down, there wasn't a Friday flying that holiday though a letter did shortly go off to the BGA, I always wondered what became of 'said' instructor!

Then I bought the fast car. I drove my Lotus Elan 2+2 130/5 JPS limited edition (sorry) to Challock in 1984 where I convinced the course instructor in a K13 I could still bring his aircraft back in one piece and where I flew my one and only aero tow to date, though he was less than impressed when I pushed the skid into the grass to reduce the walk back and he told me so despite me explaining 'said' instructor's practises! Never-the-less Challock let me loose in one of their K8s. In those days stubble in fields was burnt off and I remember it was very turbulent with bits of burning straw floating up past the window as I tried to keep circling . . . still trying! The '8' was great, as we

know they are. I distinctly remember the grass pinging on the fuselage just before touch down, most satisfying.



Then life got in the way! Career, well sort of, house buying, wedded bliss then kids! Sailing prevailed for the next thirty years but a house move had me sitting in the garden looking up at Kenley's gliders thinking, 'I should be doing that'. I injured my elbow sailing early in 2014 possibly meaning my competitive sailing was over. Not being a great spectator I had to find something new and so wondered up to SHGC one cold blustery December day to find several members and an instructor huddled together in a tin box of a club house cuddling cups of coffee discussing which end to fly from, dog poo corner was chosen! I joined as a temporary member which is an excellent way of trying out a sport and a club without breaking the bank. Most importantly I found SHGC a friendly club with some interesting cars outside but no Range Rovers or Bentleys to joust with!

*To be continued . . .*

# Dinner Dance

Don't forget to reserve your place for the Surrey Hills Gliding Club Annual Dinner – see below menu.

## THE SURREY HILLS GLIDING CLUB

ANNUAL DINNER & PRIZE GIVING

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

7pm (7.30pm sit-down) at Woodcote Park Golf Club,  
Meadow Hill, Bridle Way, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2QQ

Tickets available now for a wonderful  
three course meal for only £25 per person

### Menu

#### *Starter*

Vegetable Soup or  
Crab Cakes with sweet Thai Chilli Sauce

#### *Main*

Choice of Roast Beef or  
Mediterranean Chicken

#### *Dessert*

Sticky Toffee Pudding or Eton Mess  
or Fresh Fruit Salad  
followed by coffee and mints

Please book your tickets through the office  
or by email to [surreyhillsgc@gmail.com](mailto:surreyhillsgc@gmail.com)

Please advise of your choice for each course when booking  
or if you require a vegetarian option.

Payment by bank transfer preferred

(If you wish to charge your tickets to your flying account the tickets will be £27.50)

Smart casual dress code (no jeans or t-shirts)

## Contact Details

Club Chairman	Adrian Hewlett
Secretary	Marc Corrance
Treasurer	Mark Kidd
Membership	Russell King
Safety Officer	Paul Hayward
Club Instructor	Steve Codd
CFI	Richard Fitch
Equipment	Steve Skinner
Cabletalk Editor	Chris Leggett

You can contact any member of the team  
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Comments on this newsletter and any  
contributions or photographs are welcomed and  
should be sent to the "Cabletalk Editor" at the  
club.