



Newsletter – July 2011

Kaye Alston, John Bugbee, and Peter Huggins DFC

I must begin on a very sad note. I am sure that everyone will be well aware of the sudden sad deaths in separate incidents of Kaye Alston and John Bugbee. The club was well represented at both funerals in reflection of the warmth and respect they held at DSGC. Our thoughts and deepest sympathy are with their families, who we hope will take some comfort from that, and reflect upon the happy and fulfilling times that they both enjoyed at North Hill.

I have also been advised of the passing of long time member Peter Huggins DFC. We must always remember that without the founding members and their inspired thoughts and commitment to the sport that we would not be able to enjoy the wonderful facility that we have at North Hill.

Open weekend

The Open Weekend ran smoothly and was well attended, with flights starting early in the day and running through to the early evening. Financially it was a great success, and enabled the club to donate £250 to Air Ambulance funds. As a direct result from the weekend we have also attracted several new members. It was a real team effort and all ran smoothly under the direction of Cheryl who put an enormous amount of work into it, for which we are extremely grateful.

Olympic airspace

Wide ranging restrictions on aviation have been announced for the whole period of the London Olympics (from 13th July to 12th September). In addition to the London based airspace restrictions there will be further airspace restrictions for the offsite venues like Weymouth during periods of competition.

We are fortunate that none of this directly affects DSGC, unlike many clubs further to the east and in the south east midlands who will effectively be shut down for a large part of the soaring season. I see this as an opportunity for DSGC and Mike Sloggett has taken the lead in looking at ways in which we can promote North Hill as an alternative venue for those glider pilots displaced by the restrictions. Ideally we wish to provide flying facilities to them whilst enhancing the opportunities for club flying during the summer period, to the advantage of club members, our finances and profile. It is early days on this yet but I will keep you advised.

Finances

I am pleased to relay advice from the treasurer that the club's financial position is close to our projections and that funds are now beginning to accumulate in the reserves to restore the solid financial base which we need, given the potential for wide fluctuation in financial demands. I will not include information on balances given that this document will be widely available and that the figures can be easily misconstrued as our cash flow and demands are erratic, and balances include members flying deposits and the Ian Beckett Fund. Suffice to say that all is currently going close to plan. We have also benefitted from our recent lack of claims when renewing insurances, which are a major part of our costs.

Membership

Good news here as well, we have attracted a number of new members including some very active ones, and we extend a warm welcome to all of them. There are currently around 125 active flying members and a number of pending full and Junior members as well as a goodly number of quarterly members, who we hope may move to full membership. Roly continues to do a sterling job on this front.

Flying activity

Club flying has managed to sustain at a level consistent with previous years, but private glider use is much reduced, I can only assume because of the paucity of good soaring days. Fortunately the latter does not impact significantly on the club's income, so financially the club has not suffered as a result (maybe there is a hidden message there?).

Cross Country week

Ron John's cross country week suffered from unsettled weather, but advantage was taken of what opportunities there were, with pilots achieving silver for duration and distance. Nevertheless a good and worthwhile week and thanks to Ron and helpers for arranging this.

Part M audit - BGA inspection

Much to the apprehension in the maintenance crew we were audited by the BGA inspector for Part M maintenance compliance in June. Thanks though to their conscientious and diligent labours all went well and no major practical issues were found. We have to deal with some administrative and documentary matters and these are in hand. A big thank you to Andrew Logan, Carl Tharme, Ian Mitchell and Pete Startup.

Mode S

This is rearing its head again, the gist of which is that the present position is that south of 55°N, (in other words the southern 2/3rds of the UK) Transponders will be required at or above FL100. In practise therefore little effect on us, although the situation is ongoing and developing.

Camping & caravanning at North Hill

The committee were prompted to consider this recently, and have decreed that:

“Anyone camping or caravanning on site must be there on gliding business. One member of the party must be a member of DSGC in some capacity. The club reserves the right to make a charge.”

Junior members operating club vehicles and equipment

The committee have decided to amend club rules and operating procedures to allow this. To date it has been a great success and we have benefitted greatly from the extra hands on these tasks when numbers on the field have been low.

Bequest to DSGC

Ron Dyer was a member of the club many years ago, probably one of the founding members, and we were recently contacted by his brother to advise that he passed away recently and his will contained a bequest to DSGC of £2,000. I have replied to Ron's brother thanking him for forwarding the cheque in accordance with the will and that the money will be held and accounted for separately from general club funds and be used for a specific project or purpose that can be defined and identified in the future.

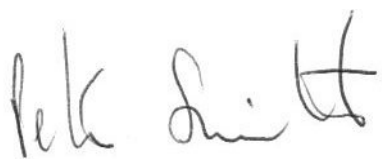
YouTube and Facebook

Matt has created some fantastic videos which are a delight to see and enjoy, and which attract a huge number of viewings. YouTube and Facebook are a wonderful facility with the ability to reach a worldwide audience instantly which can be immensely successful in raising awareness of gliding and be inspirational for pilots.

It is neither possible nor desirable for DSGC to attempt to monitor that. The committee have been made aware of other comments and video posted on some sites which have not always reflected well upon the club or some of its members. If you wish to post anything on these or other sites which contains reference to, or is traceable back to DSGC, do please first consider what you are posting and how that might be construed by the authorities to whom we have to answer, or if it could lead to an event which has the potential for repercussions on the club or sport. Also, photography in single seaters, unless automated, must inevitably be at the expense of awareness and look-out which is a major concern for the CFI and all other pilots so I must take this opportunity to reinforce his cautionary advice on this.

Skylaunch winch

You will, I am sure, be aware of two recent final drive failures of the final drive gear. Skylaunch repaired the first within 2 days at no cost to the club and as I write we expect them tomorrow to attend to the second. I am in dialogue with Skylaunch on this, as it is clearly not an acceptable situation for the future, but it would be premature to say that we have a defined plan or solution at present so I can only promise to keep you posted on progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Smith'.

11th July 2011