



**DEVON & SOMERSET GLIDING CLUB**

**ADVICE AND GUIDANCE TO  
VISITING PILOTS**

**June 2023**

## Contents

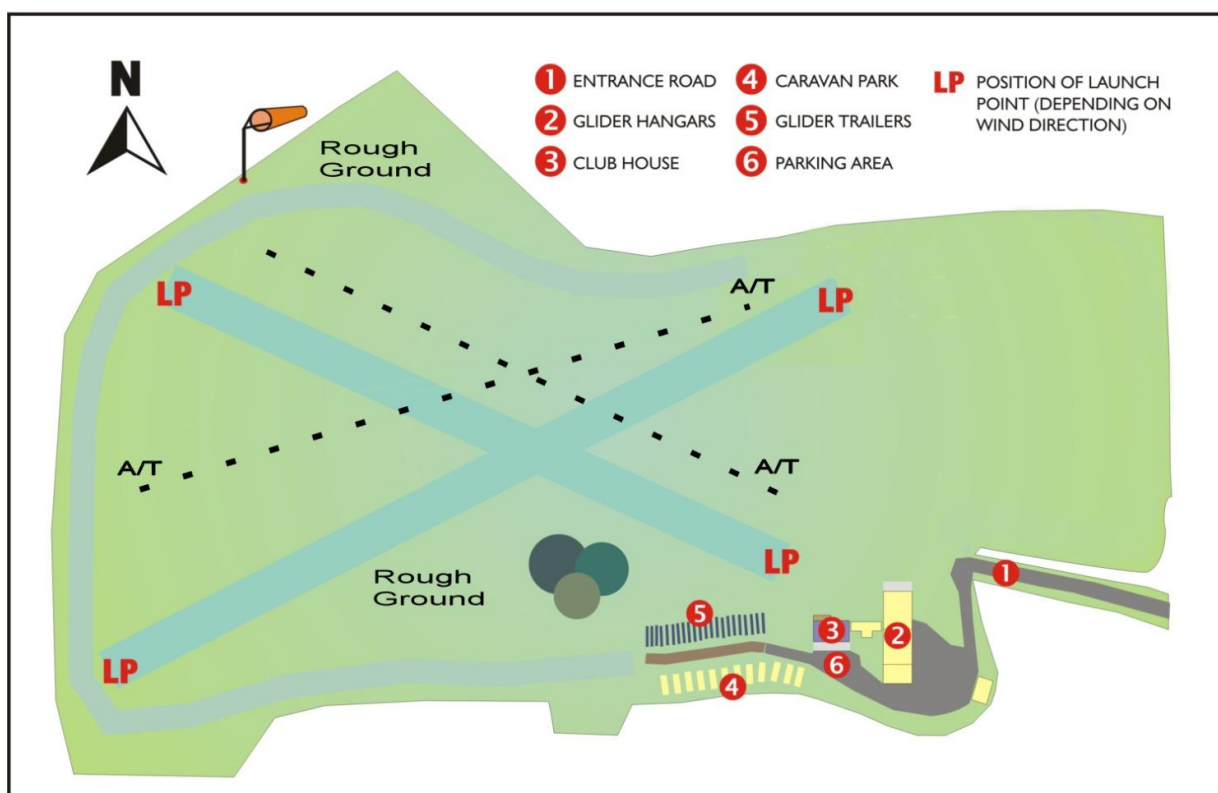
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Devon & Somerset Gliding Club is based at North Hill Airfield, lying just to the west of Dunkeswell Airfield, in the Blackdown Hills, classified as an "Area of Natural Beauty" and is affiliated to the British Gliding Association. The Club generally operates at the weekends and on Wednesdays and Thursdays. During the summer season, there is a series of course weeks, during which the Club operates all week.
- 1.2. DSGC welcomes visitors from other gliding clubs, with or without gliders, motor gliders and self-launching gliders. North Hill Airfield is not generally available to powered aircraft and in any event only on condition of prior permission obtained from the Club's CFI or his representative.
- 1.3. These notes provide basic guidance to visitors and are to be read in conjunction with DSGC's "[Operations Manual](#)" and its "[Ground Operations Manual](#)", available on the Club's website.
- 1.4. All visitors, flying from North Hill Airfield in either their own or the Club's aircraft, are required:
  - to complete an application form for Temporary membership of DSGC
  - if intending to fly as P1 in any aircraft, to bring and show to the Duty Instructor their current medical certificate (depositing a copy for retention by the Club)
  - personal pilot's logbook
  - if intending to fly their own aircraft, bring the aircraft's documentation as may be required to provide evidence of the currency of its ARC and annual inspection
  - to pay a temporary membership daily fee, for days on which visitors fly either as P1 or P2. (Some BGA clubs do have a reciprocal membership with DSGC)
- 1.5. Visitors may be required to take a familiarisation flight with an instructor before flying P1, especially if they have not flown recently at North Hill. There are two reasons in particular for this:
  - North Hill Airfield is a hill site with particular characteristics; and
  - the site is very close to Dunkeswell Airfield from which general aviation and parachute jumping activities take place.
- 1.6. Internet facilities are available in the Clubroom for visitors and members to fully brief themselves as to NOTAMS and MET. A duty instructor is responsible for flying activities at North Hill, whenever operational. Different weather conditions impact variously on general flying activities at North Hill: visitors are advised always to obtain a personal briefing from the Duty Instructor on any given day.
- 1.7. DSGC operates a colour card rating system for solo pilots. The Duty Instructor is responsible for monitoring weather conditions during operations and for deciding the colour appropriate to the prevailing conditions. The right is reserved not to permit visitors to fly, taking into account their flying experience and the current and predicted weather conditions.

## 2. Airfield and Radio use

- 2.1. Depending on weather conditions, the launch point may be in one of several positions, some are indicated on the airfield diagram below. Aerotowing usually takes place from one of several positions, again some are indicated on the diagram.
- 2.2. Most of the field is useable, with the particular exception of the two areas marked on the diagram as "Rough Ground".



- 2.3. Radio - in the local area the Club operates on 129.905, this is a shared frequency with Parachutists. The Club uses this so as to be on the same channel as the Dunkeswell parachuting organisation. When in the local area, a watch on this channel should be maintained for parachute jumping activities (10, 5, 2 minute calls). When such activities are in progress, all aircraft are to ensure that they are well clear of the jumping area. In strong winds the parachutists may be dropping upwind and outside the Drop Zone (DZ).
- 2.4. It is Club practice to call "North Hill Traffic, XXX, downwind, left (right) hand" from the high key point when on a landing circuit. Even so, it should not be assumed that a call has been heard and the usual high standard of look-out must always be employed: (radios may be temporarily inoperative.) It must also be remembered that, for example, the Club's Pawnee may be operating on tugging duties, and may be operating on opposing circuits.
- 2.5. Beyond the local area, 130.105 should be used.
- 2.6. Flarm - All gliders and aircraft flying from North Hill are required to have Flarm, we ask pilots to register with OGN and not to block their id.

### 3. Trailers & Rigging

- 3.1. Visitors' trailers may be parked in empty spaces to the west of those with electric hookup in the row of glider trailers (indicated "5" in the airfield diagram above). Vehicles may be parked either on the hard standing immediately to the south of the clubhouse or on the grass area between the western end of the clubhouse and the trailers. A public right of way runs from the entrance road and then along the southern boundary to a gateway in the south western corner of the field.
- 3.2. Gliders may be left rigged overnight in an agreed position.
- 3.3. When the eastern launch points are in operation, gliders may be rigged in the trailer parking area and towed out, taking due care and attention if it is necessary to cross the active runway area.
- 3.4. When the western launch points are in use, it is preferred that trailers are taken to an area adjacent to the relevant launch point and that gliders rigged there (the rigging area for the normal trailer park is within the possible winch cable drop zone in a strong northerly crosswind). However, gliders already rigged may be towed out if necessary:
  - when the north west launch point is in operation, following a route along the south of the field; or
  - when the south west launch point is in operation, following a route along the north of the field.

### 4. Launching & Landing

- 4.1. Winch launches at North Hill are usually undertaken with a Skylaunch winch. The Club also has a Piper Pawnee PA-25-260 for aerotowing.
- 4.2. Before any launch, visitors should report to "Control" in the launch point vehicle to ensure that:
  - the due formalities have been completed (ie temporary membership etc); and
  - names of those flying in visiting aircraft are known to the person currently responsible for flight logging.
- 4.3. The Duty Instructor will brief visitors on options on any given day in the event of a launch failure. In general terms, the layout and dimensions of the field are such that winch launch failures need present little difficulty. In the event of a launch failure when aerotowing in a westerly direction, a landing may be possible back on the field or a landing may be made in the valley to the west of the site, where there are many large fields from which to select. A launch failure when aerotowing in an easterly direction offers potentially fewer options, making a briefing by the Duty Instructor important before launch.
- 4.4. The preferred circuit direction at North Hill is always on the upwind side of the field.

- 4.5. With the predominant winds being westerly, most often the eastern launch points are used. The field is significantly narrower at its eastern end and particular caution needs to be exercised, especially when landing: a particularly good look-out in all possible circuit directions is essential. The launch points at the eastern end are displaced fairly well into the field due to trees on the approach.
- 4.6. With any landing at the eastern end of the field, it is important to be aware of powered operations at Dunkeswell. As mentioned below (see section 5. Airspace), whilst there is a letter of agreement between DSGC and Dunkeswell Airport, there can be errant aircraft. Equally, especially when on a southern circuit, it is important for North Hill Aircraft to keep a good look-out for aircraft that may be taking off or landing on Dunkeswell's 22/04 runway.
- 4.7. When the western launch points are in operation, there is plenty of space to allow landings to be made well away from the launching operation.
- 4.8. The duty instructor will advise on particular issues to which regard should be had on any given day. It must be remembered that North Hill is a hill site and due caution exercised at all times. Two specific issues though should be mentioned here:
  - the western end of the site sits at the top of an escarpment. Any wind with an easterly component can give rise to curl-over, which can range from mild to very severe. Visitors are advised to keep their base leg close to the field and landings should be made reasonably well into the field
  - a southerly wind (and not necessarily of great strength) can produce curl-over affecting especially landings at the eastern end of the field: on such occasions, a higher approach speed may be advised, or a landing made further into the field.

## 5. Airspace

- 5.1. Gliding from North Hill is relatively free from airspace restrictions. There are however some very important issues in the local area, summarised below.

**All pilots flying at North Hill should be familiar with these arrangements.**

### Dunkeswell airspace

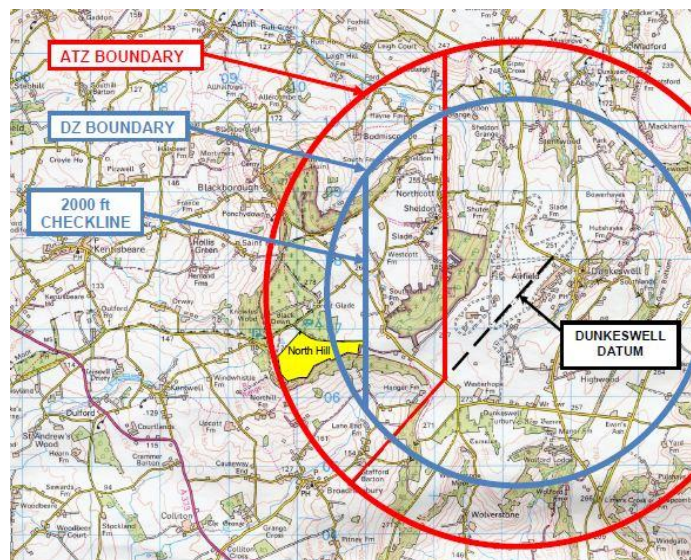
- 5.2. DSGC at North Hill operates within the ATZ of Dunkeswell airfield and partly within the drop zone of the parachuting organisation at Dunkeswell airfield. The photograph below, looking in a north easterly direction, shows the proximity of North Hill and Dunkeswell Airfield.
- 5.3. A letter of agreement has been drawn up between DSGC and Air Westward to delegate airspace and operating procedures to DSGC within Dunkeswell ATZ. This delegated airspace is shown by a red boundary on the local map below. The ATZ is 2nm radius and 2000' agl.
- 5.4. An annex to the agreement is a code of practice between DSGC and Skydive Buzz the parachuting organisation at Dunkeswell. This delegated airspace is shown by a blue boundary on

the local map, illustrated below. The parachute drop zone is 1.5nm radius and its upper limit is FL150, but in strong winds parachutists may drop from upwind beyond the drop zone.



5.5. The broad effect of this is that:

- North Hill aircraft are to remain west of the straight red lines on the map below;
- if North Hill aircraft wish to cross through the Dunkeswell ATZ, they are to call Dunkeswell Radio on 123.480;
- listen out on frequency 129.905 for 10, 5, 2 min calls and during parachuting operations and above 2000 ft agl, gliders should only go east of the straight blue line if contact has first been made by radio with Dunkeswell Radio or Dunkeswell Parachuting, on 129.905 to establish no conflict.



5.6. The [letter of agreement](#) (pdf) including code of practice are available on the Club's website. Dunkeswell airspace is available to download from ASSelect.

## Exeter ATZ and Extended Centre Line

- 5.7. Exeter airport is 9 nm (16 km), south-west of North Hill. It is marked as an aerodrome with 2.5nm radius ATZ and Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs) outside controlled airspace. The 'feathers' are aligned along the extended centreline of the Instrument runways, and are not representative of the coverage area of the IAP associated with that runway. Pilots intending to fly within 10 miles of any part of the 'IAP symbol' are strongly advised to contact Exeter Radar on 128.975MHz.
- 5.8. Under a [Letter of Agreement \(LOA\)](#) (pdf) with Exeter ATC, North Hill Duty Instructor telephones Exeter ATC at the beginning of every flying day and informs them of gliding operations so that radio contact does not have to be made every flight. Glider pilots should not cross the southern limiting line (A30 / railway line) without first calling Exeter Radar to advise of their location and intentions. Exeter Radar operates on 128.975MHz.

### Airways

- 5.9. Berry Head CTA (previously Airway N864) runs roughly north-south with its eastern boundary above the western end of North Hill airfield the base is FL65. Berry Head CTA (previously Airway N862 runs parallel and to the east of N864, the base is FL105. These airways are under the control of Cardiff Radar on 119.15MHz.

### Cardiff Airspace

- 5.10. There is a small area of Cardiff Control Terminal Area (CTA) below Airway N864, 5 nm from the north coast of Somerset, base 4500 ft, tops FL65. As it is Class D airspace, gliders may enter having contacted Cardiff Radar on 119.15MHz.

### Yeovilton

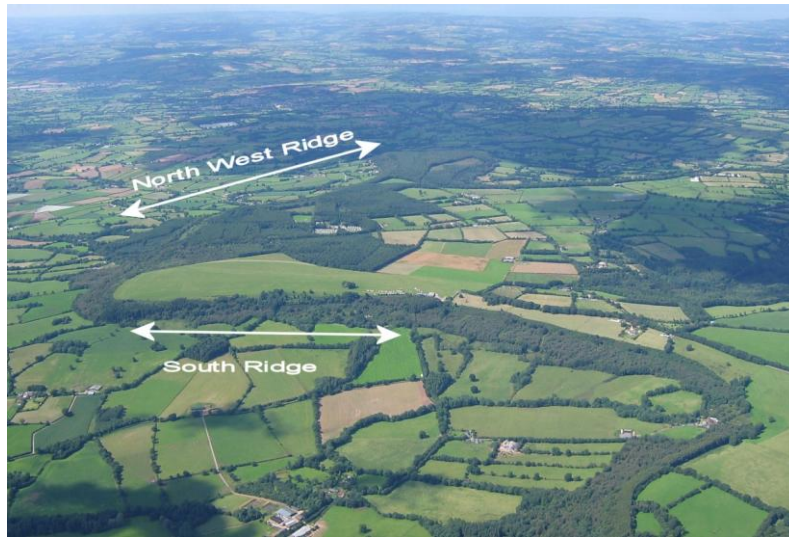
- 5.11. 26 nm (50 km) ENE of North Hill is the Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) at Yeovilton, and about half way is its satellite airfield at Merryfield, both are within the Yeovilton Area of Intense Aerial Activity (AIAA). The AIAA covers an area of almost 3000 square kilometers from the surface to 6000', it stretches from the north coast of Somerset to the south coast of Dorset and from the eastern edge of the Blackdown Hills to Shaftsbury. So any worthwhile cross countries to the east of North Hill are obviously going to be flown through the AIAA.
- 5.12. Whilst there is no legal requirement to have radio communication with Yeovilton, unless wishing to enter the ATZ, it is always wise to contact them if flying within, or near the MATZ and Stubs. They would also prefer to be contacted whilst you are flying through the AIAA. Yeovilton LARS is 127.350 MHz.

## 6. Soaring

- 6.1. The north west ridge is North Hill's principal ridge. When the wind has a north westerly component, this ridge can produce varying levels of hill lift and, when conditions are suitable, can act as a trigger for thermals.
- 6.2. The south ridge is much shorter and of less benefit but it can produce some measure of lift on occasions.



- 6.3. There is also a north facing ridge - but of very little use.
- 6.4. The flat ground immediately to the north east of the site, in summer months, can also be a source of thermals, especially when the wind direction is from that quarter.



- 6.5. Attention should be drawn to the existence of the North Hill N, Culmstock and Hembury Hill turning points. The use of these is encouraged for North Hill gliders going on and returning from cross-country flights:
  - to ensure Dunkeswell ATZ and the parachute jumping zones are not compromised
  - to keep cross-country routes clear of Exeter Airport's extended centre line, which goes out as far as Honiton.

## 7. Club Aircraft

- 7.1. Visitors may be permitted to fly club aircraft, subject to satisfactory gliding and aircraft type experience and to appropriate instruction and check flights.

## 8. Friends & Families

- 8.1. All visitors and their families and friends must at all times exercise due care and attention to flying and ground activities, especially if it is necessary to cross active areas of the airfield. Visitors must seek a briefing from a DSGC member before venturing on to the airfield from the Clubhouse.
- 8.2. Visitors' children below the age of 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times in accordance with DSGC's Child Protection Policy.
- 8.3. Dogs may be permitted at North Hill but must be kept on a lead at all times and well clear of operational areas and aviation and ground activities.
- 8.4. Limited camping / caravanning facilities may be available, subject to prior application to the Club.
- 8.5. Catering is available in the Clubhouse during the day, generally from about 10 am to at least 2 pm on operational days.