

# **Cotswold Gliding Club**

## **Briefing Sheet for Aircraft Movements at Aston Down**

### **Overview**

This document is for aircraft visiting Aston Down. Generally only aircraft visiting for gliding-related purposes will be accepted. The airfield is strictly PPO contact the Office 01285 760415, Clubhouse 01285 760473 or Launch point on 077-2178-5825. All aircraft, including visiting tugs, should pay special attention to the airfield operations section and the noise abatement procedures.

### **The airfield**

Aston Down is an ex-wartime airfield shared between the Cotswold Gliding Club and the MOD. It lies 6nm west of Cirencester and about 5nm E of the Cotswold edge escarpment. To the north there is a deep valley, and another less obvious to the east. The valley to the north amplifies any powered aircraft noise, hence the importance of the noise abatement procedures.



There are two tarmac runways, the main 21/03 and the secondary 27/09 and a number of grass areas suitable for landing.

Kemble airfield lies 6nm to the SE. Both airfields look quite similar and there have been many instances of aircraft landing at the wrong airfield.

You should be able to see Kemble in the distance with hangar showing white in the photo on the left.

Kemble is active with high-speed jet traffic as well as microlights and light aircraft and the ATZ must not be penetrated without calling Kemble on 118.900.

Further east lies the Brize Norton zone and to the south east Lyneham. Fairford is also quite close and from time to time, during times of semi-hostilities as well as once a year air show, this zone can be very active with high speed military traffic. You are advised to check the zone activities carefully before coming to Aston Down.

### **Gliding operations**

The main glider operations are by winch and aerotow from primarily 21/03. On stronger wind days 27/09 may be in use. When operations are in progress, there will be a double-decker bus parked on the runway at the landing end. This acts as the launch controller and should be visible from several miles. This is a fairly sure indication of which runway is in operation.

The photograph to the right, (facing south) shows operations on 21 in use with the bus on the runway. To the left of the bus is a glider in position for a winch launch; generally there will be a second glider on the second cable on the grass to the left.

The winch, which is blue and yellow, (not on this photo) will be parked at the other end of the active runway.



Cables are drawn by a truck driving down the edge of the runway, laying the 2 cables on the grass to the E of 21/03 (or to the S of 27/09 when that runway is active). You could expect the cables to lie about 15 to 20 yards to the left the eastern side of the runway, over 27/09 to the far end where the winch will be positioned.

These cables will naturally cross the in-active runway. The gliders will be launching very steeply from the launch end and climbing to around 2000 ft QFE on still days, and up to 3000 QFE (3600 QNH) with a reasonable headwind component.

***Therefore at no time must you cross the runway itself unless you are well above 3500 feet QFE (4100 QNH)***

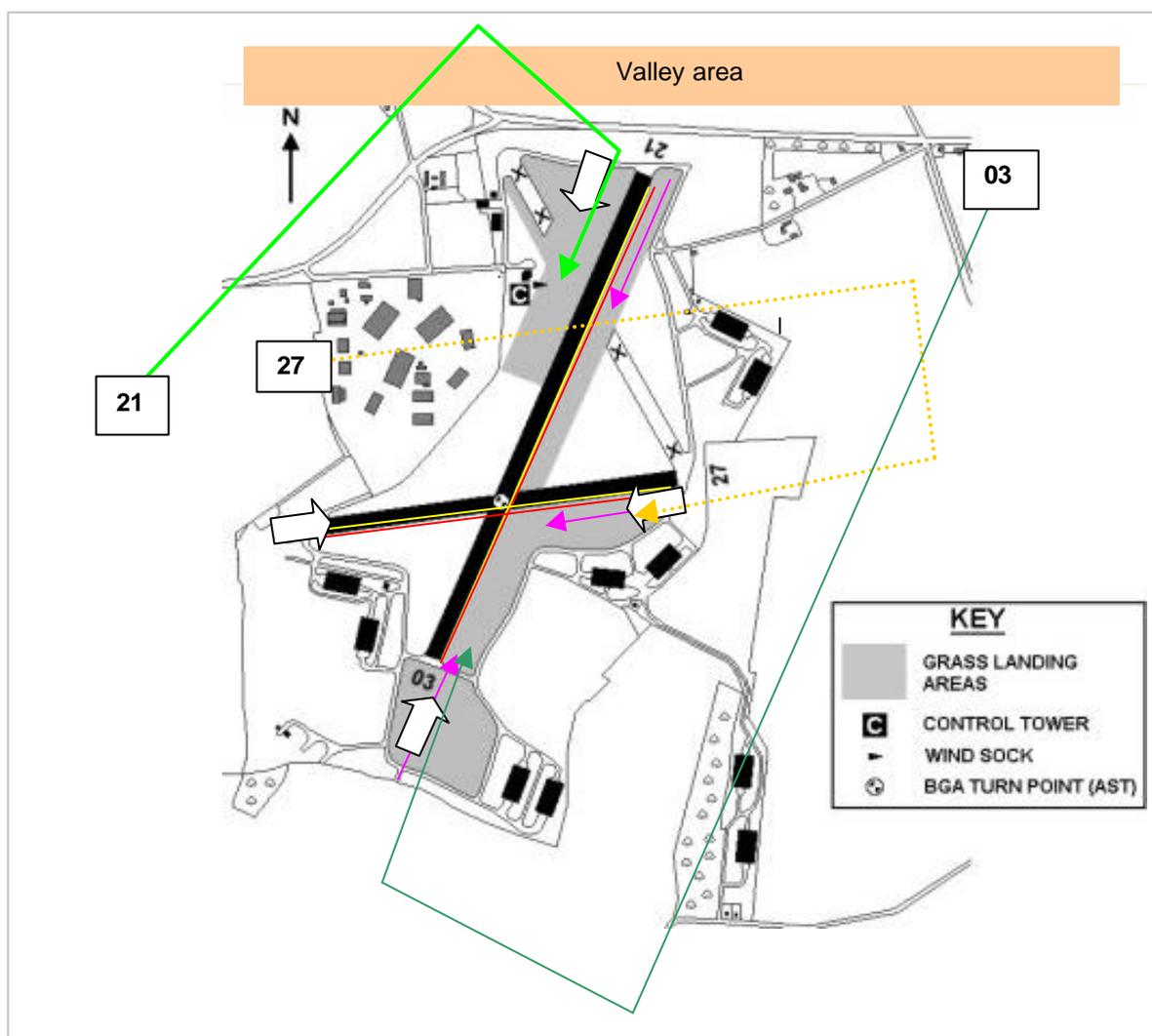
Please remember that gliders will be operating well away from Aston Down and Nymphsfield up to cloudbase. When the wave is running well gliders could be climbing to around 12,000 ft to the west of Aston Down so keep a good lookout at all times.

Aerotowing will mostly depart from the runway but tugs will be landing on the grass except when operating on runway 09.

## Arrivals

Gliders will generally be landing on the grass areas as shown on the diagram below (white arrows), however from time to time gliders may land on any of the grass or tarmac areas. Tugs will be following the tug routes on departure and returning to land on the landing areas shown by the thin arrows below. Gliders will generally be carrying out circuits to the W of 21/03 and to the S of 27/09.

The bus will monitor 129.975 and should be called if at all possible to confirm operations and landing areas. If you cannot do this try calling the launch controller on the bus by phone before departing on 077-2178-5825.



**Landing on 21:** Make a right circuit if possible avoiding flying over the valley as much as possible, i.e. a short base to land on the grass to the west of 21.

There is a motorglider in the photo on the right backtracking in about the right place for the landing run.

This area is divided into two fields, the boundary being roughly the apex of the building complex in the photo on the right. Be careful not to overshoot into the second field and caution when wet this area can get boggy.

Only active tugs will be landing on the left of the runway, as this is the side with the cables.



**Landing on 03:** make a right circuit to land on the grass to the south of the runway – remember it is now possible to cross the taxi strip to the adjacent grass to the E of the runway as shown as this has been seeded. Everyone else will be using this area, so keep a good lookout at all times for both gliders and tugs.

If you are confident of the available distance and know the airfield, you may land on the grass by the control tower in the opposite direction to landings for 21 but please be careful as there is no overrun.

**Landing on 09:** *This is very difficult as all operations are from the runway at this end. You must speak to the launch controller if you are intending arriving in strong easterly winds, otherwise you may use the 03 landing procedure but be aware the cables will be crossing the end of that grass area as shown.*

**Landing on 27:** (right photo) Make a tight right circuit to avoid the valley, and land on the grass to the left of the runway. Be careful crossing the centreline of the runway as gliders or tugs could be using the runway itself.

In the photo on the right, part of the landing area is being repaired and you won't have the brown mark to the left of the runway.

If you use this runway when operations are taking place on 21 make sure you stop 50 yards short of the intersection as the cables will be crossing 27 on this side of the main 21/03 runway. The aeromodellers will generally be using the runway at this end when 21 is in use.



**Motor gliders:** whilst not as noisy, should try and follow similar pattern for arrival and departure, avoiding the valley where possible. Providing you take off from the south end you should have plenty of height to turn before the end of the runway 03.

**All Aircraft:** Having landed, backtrack down the landing area to the launch point and await directions. Do not cross the winch cables! Also avoid runway edges unless martialled because some of the drain covers are loose.

## Fuel

There is no fuel on the airfield: the nearest fuel is available from either Gloucester Staverton, or with PPO Oaksey or Kemble, and for Tugs it will be possible to refuel at Nympsfield. Be aware that landing in Nympsfield is very tricky in stronger winds, particularly from the North and should not be attempted without prior knowledge or a briefing from qualified tug pilots.

## Departures

Before departing, please brief yourself on the mandatory departure routes, described on a separate briefing sheet and can be found on the Website, in the Tower and on the Bus.

*Tug Pilots please read very carefully the procedure for 03 as this is quite demanding, particularly in low powered tugs.*

Gain permission from the launch controller before manoeuvring on the airfield (callsign Cotswold Bus) on 129.975. The taxiways are not generally usable, so seek advice on how to taxi to the departing runway before start-up.

Follow the noise abatement routes on departure.

**Tugs departing to Nympsfield or Usk from 03:** follow the 03 departure and when at the south-western end of the airfield turn right to the quarry (dropping zone B on the map above and on the tug routes). After passing the quarry (d/zone B), reduce power and cruise/climb westwards. Following a track south of the valley, but north of Minchinhampton.

Don't forget to call Kemble if departing in an easterly direction as soon as possible, followed by Fairford if appropriate, Lynham and Brize.

Again, don't forget that gliders may well be anywhere in the area, so set up the navigation gear before you depart and keep a good lookout at all times.

We look forward to seeing you!