

# NEWS LETTER

SPRING 2002

## Dates for your diary:-

Invitation Day                      Sunday the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2002 (N.B. If the weather is bad we will use Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> April as a fall back). This will be dedicated to voucher holders and used to clear the backlog of trial flights. It will not be “open” in the usual sense. More information below.

Open Days                              Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2002. Please note that this is a double bank holiday (Monday and Tuesday) for the Queen’s Jubilee.

A date to be fixed in September.

## The “ex-Club” K6

This has been purchased by a syndicate. It is no longer a club aircraft. See below.

## CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS.

### News

Firstly I would like to welcome Helena and Gary who have agreed to be co opted onto the committee as Social Organiser and Operations Manager respectively. I would also like to thank Brian Birlison who has agreed to organise the ladder for this year.

I would like to wish you all a successful year’s flying.

I will, however, make no apologies for the fact that most of the rest of my comments emphasis what you can do for the club and not what the club can do for you. I have attended a number of BGA events recently. These events have in part focused upon falling memberships and large churn rates, which face many clubs. It would appear that there are no easy solutions. Unfortunately the enviable assets, which we own, require considerable up keep, raising prices to exempt club members from effort is not a viable option. Club membership offers the privilege of flight but at the price of helping fellow members. I hope that we can offer you some interesting ways to help, so that we can all derive pleasure from our sport even when we are not flying.

### Trial Lessons

Further to our discussions at the AGM I am pleased to report that many of you have volunteered for evening flying teams. We have teams forming for Tuesday and Thursday evenings. There is also a demand for a team for Wednesday evening and we have a promise of a basic instructor. However more help is needed to put a full team together. In particular we need another instructor and someone willing to act as the co-ordinator. If you would like to help on any of these evenings please see the notice board for details. Friday evening flyers will continue trial lessons as they have during the last season.

Whilst evening flying volunteers are extremely encouraging we cannot expect to carry out all trial lessons during the evenings. Most of our air experience customers work and many have to travel to reach the airfield. Many of you are in similar positions. You tell me that helping in the evening is not an option. For this reason I am proposing that we operate a 'meeting and greeting' system at weekends and on Wednesday.

I am looking for those of you who cannot help during the evening to volunteer to cover half a day at weekends once or twice a month. You would meet the booked in individuals with trial lesson vouchers and smooth their progress through the system so improving the experience for the voucher holder, basic instructors, the office and members of the club. All that is needed is an understanding of the voucher system, a friendly personality and a willingness to help. (You never know you may improve your own enjoyment and get to fly on days when otherwise you wouldn't have bothered.)

There is a possibility for you to link up with individual instructors and BI's if you wish by linking with the instructors' rota thereby creating weekend teams. Hopefully a little bit of effort on your part could alleviate the chaos and bad feeling that can develop at the launch point. If I do not receive a barrage of good reasons why this system should not be implemented I will place a volunteer list on the notice board and will be expecting volunteers. I would expect an initial training session will be required to ensure helpers have the correct knowledge of the systems, however I am sure that any member could undertake this task with only a little guidance. If you think you would like to become an air experience instructor it would be an excellent place to start.

## **New Members**

It has been made obvious by our recent new members' comments that we have not been easing their way by showing them the ropes or stopping to explain the workings of the club to them. Paul Gentil has proposed an induction-training course to help new members settle in and learn the basics; he is currently producing a syllabus. I would like to think that we will not have to rely upon our already stretched Instructors to carry out this courtesy. Any seasoned member should be able to carry out this duty.

It has been suggested that we take this process further. Adopting the 'buddy / mentor' system pioneered by a couple of clubs to reduce their churn rates. Basically this system requires club members willing to help newer members by giving support and a little time to answer the inevitable questions and lend an ear when doubts creep in. I would like to hear your views.

## **Invitation Day**

The Invitation Day on March the 31<sup>st</sup> is your chance to persuade all of those friends and family with Trial Flight vouchers to come along and enjoy a flight. We will need your support on the day, as always. Please come along and help. Bring a cake if you can to sell in the kitchen.

## **New Owners for the MOD Site**

We have been contacted by the Agent acting for the new owners of the MOD site and it would appear that a sale is now underway. We can anticipate a tightening of security on the site, however at this stage we have no firm idea of the new uses the site will be put to. Tighter security will benefit the club so please remain patient as the change over takes place.

## **Safety on Runways**

Two changes in the way we use the runway are being implemented for the new season and the Operation manual will be amended to support these.

Firstly you will notice that the markings indicating where to park the bus have moved a short distance down the runway. This change will bring our operation slightly further into the airfield without significantly

reducing launch heights. This will reduce the tendency of some pilots to fly low approaches to stop by the bus and also reduce the retrieve distance to the launch point.

Secondly we will adopt a proposal that the runways are deemed active at all times. With motorgliders operating at the site, the risk of an aircraft destined for Kemble landing, or an emergency landing by any aircraft, the bus cannot be used as a reliable symbol of activity. Many members assume the runways are safe and use them to walk the dog, children, race the car, or even teach someone to drive. Unfortunately with the reduced security we have at present this practice risks rubbing off on our neighbours who may be risking the safety of an aircraft by following suit.

Please assume the runways to be active at all times, never drive down them in your car, always take great care when setting up the bus and winch and always keep a good lookout whilst towing out a glider. I should add that this will not impinge on the activities of the model club who always operate with a look-out.

### **Club Gliders**

The K6 has been sold to a private syndicate; it will be remaining in the hanger so please make a mental note not to use it. I am hopeful that the Pilatus, which will replace the K6, will be on line by Easter. The Astir has its C of A and just requires rigging if you wish to fly it. Two K8's should be in service within a fortnight and I hope that a third will follow during the summer. Brian Birlison has taken sole responsibility for air tech matters following Ian's resignation. If you have any problems with aircraft please contact Brian or Gary Fryer.

### **Launch Rates**

With the summer approaching we are sure that the launch rate argument will rear its head again. We know that reasonable rates can be achieved with a little effort and organisation (Look at any course day log sheet for last year, 16 an hour at peak times) however, absolutely appalling rates can be achieved with a little apathy. (Look for a Saturday log sheet, 6 an hour at peak times).

We do not propose to enforce the Launch Master scheme, however if you wish to help yourselves we would strongly urge you to pick up the jacket and organise. If you set an example perhaps someone will take charge when it is you're turn to fly.

Simon will be publishing a few simple guidelines to help speed up operations. A copy will be available on the bus and must be understood by all members. Simple things like making sure the pilot is ready, hook checked with the right weak link ready, and the log keeper notifying the winch of the glider type before up slack is given make the difference. You will see that the penalty for not being ready in good time will be loss of position on the line.

Please support anyone who takes on the Launch Master's role and drive out the apathy that is crippling the system. Remember none-of us are above criticism.

## **WINCH NEWS**

### **Tost Winch**

Due to the poor winter weather and repairs to the Skylaunch the opportunity to run the Tost winch and train drivers has not arisen. In order to prepare for the invitation day and forthcoming flying season, A training

weekend is being arranged on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of March. The purpose being to train as many current Skylaunch drivers on the Tost winch as is possible.

If you are a current winch driver please come along and get checked out.

## **Winch Drivers**

We are still short of winch drivers in general this will cause problems at weekends when the flying season gets underway. We may not be able to find drivers when you wish to fly. If you are not yet trained on the Skylaunch see one of the driver trainers and get checked out **NOW!**

## **Invitation Day**

In order for the invitation day on the 31<sup>st</sup> March to be a success (to fly as many of the outstanding trial lessons as possible) we will be operating both winches. In order to reach the desired number of launches we will need to achieve a consistent launch rate of around 18 launches per hour.

This will require a dedicated team of winch drivers, retrieve drivers and launch point crew. It could be a long day so the more people the better so time spent in one of the operations without a break is kept as short as possible.

So please keep the day free and let Garry Fryer or myself know where you can help.

## **FROM THE SOCIAL ORGANISER – HELENA BROGDEN**

As social organiser I would love to see club members and their guests enjoying themselves in our clubhouse. It seems to me that the clubhouse is massively under-utilised. We are lucky to have the facilities that we do, well appointed and stocked bar, kitchen, bunk rooms etc. (believe me, I've been to Bicester for a rainy week,- more like diving than soaring), and it's about time that we used them to the max.

Here's some of my ideas for events at the airfield:-

- Midsummer Day flying, from dawn to dusk possibly with breakfast and evening BBQ.
- Talks, or lectures.
- Badge claim parties - hurry up and get those diamonds.
- Start/End of season barbecue and firework display.

I am sure that many of you will be able to think of other things that you want to do so just let me know by leaving me a note in my pigeonhole (under B, with your telephone number) and I will be in contact with you.

Of course you may want to go to events outside of the club, such as air displays, and perhaps we could have a club expedition - probably taking in a local tavern (or two).

I would welcome any input from members. Remember, it is your club, so let's celebrate in style!

Your social organiser, Helena.

## **A SEASONAL REMINDER TO EVERYONE FROM THE CFI**

The new soaring season is just around the corner and very soon many pilots who have been hibernating through the winter will be appearing on the airfield, all very rusty after their long sleep! The instructors will be ready to carry out check flights (note, plural) for those who are not current, so don't expect to just turn up and rig your glider and fly as though you had never been away. When you do get cleared remember your airmanship and fly properly, without taking any unnecessary risks, like hanging onto that half-knot thermal and drifting merrily downwind only to frighten yourself and everyone else by doing a low final turn, or stretching the glide back to the airfield and scraping back over the fence. I want to see a high standard of flying and airmanship at all times so that we avoid accidents of any kind.

All private owners should also remember that I require all gliders to be inspected on each day they are flown and an entry made in the DI book to indicate that the glider is serviceable. If you find anything you are unsure about, get an Inspector to check it out before completing the DI book. Instructors will be making spot checks to ensure this is being done.

We need more winch drivers, so if you haven't been trained to drive the winch please see one of the winch instructors for some training. It's not fair to keep relying on the same people all the time to get you in the air. They like to fly as well!

The holiday courses will be starting in mid-April and we will have two new Course Instructors running them. The Senior Course Instructor will be in charge of all flying during the week during normal working hours, and all club members must understand this and make themselves known to him or her if they wish to fly. You should bring evidence of your flying experience with you, because if you can't prove that you are current, you may be refused permission to fly. Also, if you want to get another club glider out of the hangar you should obtain permission from the Course Instructor first. The SCI is responsible for all flying that takes place during the week and it is only reasonable that he or she knows who and what is flying.

When you do come to fly use your air time constructively to practice all those exercises which you haven't had a go at for a while. If you want some help, ask an instructor – that's what they're there for, and they will be happy to fly with you to help with any problems. They are not there to catch you out, and P2 time is valuable time in the air, and it can be fun! So, get yourself thoroughly prepared for the season ahead and have a great time!

Paul Gentil, CFI.