

CFI message Dec 10. ml 05/12

Dear all

Safety

Aerotow - 'Tug upsets'

A tug upset is where the glider gets too high causing the tug to have un-commanded pitch nose down. It can happen very rapidly and if this occurs, especially with in the first 1000'+ above ground, it could have very serious consequences as the tug pilot might not have sufficient height to react and subsequently recover.

For us, 1000'+ above ground level could mean the whole launch as we often tow towards rising ground. It is therefore very important that you maintain the correct tow position and certainly **do not get too high.**

If you ever loose sight of the tug must release every time.

The last BMGC tug upset I know of was at least 20 years ago. None of us want a repeat

So as a reminder to find and maintain the correct tow position:

- Just as the rope goes tight note the position in the canopy of the tug – that will give you your initial tow position.
- Once airborne maintain a safe height above the ground with careful use of the elevator until the tug is airborne.
- Do not allow the glider to get any more than about 6 -10' above the ground or about the height of GAZPA's fin
- Once the combination is at a safe height 'recalibrate' by going down on to the tug slipstream and then gently bring the glider back up into the smooth air. Maintain that position with the elevator.
- Note the position of the tug in the canopy. That is the correct tow position.
- Remember to re-trim

Do that each time you launch. It works for any combination for glider, tug and tow rope length. If you have never practiced this technique then one of the instructors would be only too pleased to demonstrate it to you.

In addition watch our Aerotow training video as a reminder.

http://www.blackmountainsgliding.co.uk/vid_aerotow.php

Winter flying

We are now into winter flying (if you have not already noticed!). The following are areas to think about

Clean the canopy

- The canopies must be cleaned at the beginning of each day as part of the DI. Flying with an unclean canopy must be avoided. This is particularly the case during the winter where the sun is lower and/or the canopy is more likely to mist up.

- If you use the club canopy cleaning kit please return it. If cleaning fluid/clean cloths have run out please tell the Duty Instructor or a member of the committee.

Late landing – low setting sun

- If you are flying in westerly conditions consider landing West instead of South West if landing late in the day towards the setting sun. The change in landing run makes a big difference in your ability to see the landing area clearly

NW ridge – flying west into sun

- Be aware when flying west late in the afternoon along the NW ridge as gliders disappear when below ridge top height which is in shadow. Gliders heading in the opposite direction become very difficult to spot.
- This is significant as you, with the ridge on your left have to give way.
- Likewise if you are flying in the opposite direction, down sun with the ridge on your right, do not assume that the glider flying in the opposite direction has seen you.
- This is made worse with an un-clean canopy

High in Wave – late in the day

- As a reminder it will get dark on the ground first so allow plenty of time to return and avoid landing when it is too dark to be safe

Canopy mist up

- Do not launch if you cannot keep the canopy clear. Assuming the canopy will demist as you launch is ok if you can see enough but do consider what you would require if you then had a launch failure
- If you leave the canopy open until the last moment on the launch – do ensure it is closed and locked and re-confirm that your brakes are closed and locked. At that stage of the launch it is very easy to get distracted
- If the canopy does mist up do not wipe it with anything other than a soft, clean material.

Changing weather

- The weather during the winter can change significantly. Be alert to any changing conditions.
- Do not be tempted into a launch if you think the conditions are then going to deteriorate. You are better off waiting for a clearance in the weather
- If you are airborne and the weather is deteriorating make a decision to return early. Do not leave it to the last minute. Not only could the conditions be changing rapidly (surface wind direction/strength, reducing visibility etc) but other pilots might also be doing the same which congests the circuit and landing area increasing your work load

Soft/boggy ground

- Be aware when launching on soft ground especially in heavier gliders. The acceleration on launch and subsequent ground run can be severely effected.
- If you are not accelerating sufficiently abandon the launch in good time before the tug pilot does. Leaving it late could leave you little room to stop

Wrap up warm / dehydration

- As we all know it can get very cold in a glider so do wear adequate clothing. Try and keep your feet dry if possible as these will get very cold quickly. However what is less obvious is dehydration. Just because it is not hot doesn't mean to say you would not get dehydrated. Make sure you still take plenty of liquid on board.

Flying close to cloud base

- You are more likely to find yourself close to cloud base when ridge soaring. The cloud will tend to 'sit' on top of the lift and therefore you could find yourself cruising around at the top of the lift band just under the cloud. Please ensure you keep yourself 100-200' clear of the cloud base if at all possible making it easy for you to see and be seen whilst maintaining adequate clearance from the ridge.

Canopy icing over

Be warned it can happen as it happened to me in October

We didn't start flying until mid afternoon after the front went through.

I was in the back of the K21 with a visiting pilot. We had a long slow ascent (1-2kts) to 6500' QFE which allowed the airframe get very cold.

As we were running out of day we followed the climb with a rapid decent (10kts) into what turned out to be a moist air mass

Quite quickly the canopy appeared to mist up until P2 tried to wipe it off. It turned out to be frost on the outside.

Vision was lost across 80+% of the front canopy leaving a clear patch by P2's left side and the rear canopy clear

Luckily we could sit on ridge to defrost. If we had to have landed it would have been a bit of a challenge to say the least.

There was a couple of thousand hours in the cockpit that had the experience and confidence to think things through.

What if it had been you on your own and you are a less experienced pilot – what would you have done?

Moral of the story – be careful and leave yourself time for a slower decent especially if the airframe is cold. Keep clear of any moisture.

Currency

It is during the winter where your currency can be difficult to maintain. Just over the last 4 weeks the opportunities to fly have been very limited. Some of you might not be current enough to fly solo already

The following is **minimum guidance only and not a target**.

Full club members

- Up to Bronze C – maximum of 4 weeks without flying
- Bronze to Silver – maximum of 6 weeks without flying
- Silver and beyond – 8 weeks or 3 landings in 90 days

Where ever possible you need to keep as current as you can.

Poor weather makes it more difficult to keep current, but it also can make the flying more challenging.

- Not just in flying the glider but your judgment and awareness will deteriorate with time
- You need to ask yourself the question. How rusty do I feel?
- How current am I for today's conditions in the glider I am about to fly in?
- Just because I flew a K6 in light conditions 6 weeks ago I might not be ok for flying today in my Cirrus in Easterly wave with strong rota!
- For instructors you also need to consider what type of flying you have done. If you have flown but have not had to do any handling you will get rusty.

The DI will also ask the question at the daily briefing and expect an honest answer. If you need support then take a flight with an instructor first. If you do so then consider using it as an opportunity to do your Annual Flight Review saving you doing it again later in the year.

Winter mid week flying has no instructor supervision. It is even more important that you are honest with yourself about your currency.

Remember ask yourself the question: Am I current enough to fly in today's conditions in the type of glider I am about to fly? Any doubt don't fly solo or take a flight with an instructor first.

Tow car incidents

There have been two this season. The first I know of in a decade of club operations.

1. **K6 - Tow car driven over wing tip**
2. **A member knocked down by glider under tow – cracked rib**

Both of these incidents happened this year. The first resulted in the K6 wing tip being damaged the other in one of our members suffering a cracked rib

It is unfortunate to have these sort of avoidable incidents. We are not alone as vehicles hitting gliders appear each year on the incident/accident summaries at clubs all over the county.

This type of incident just highlights that we have to be on the ball all of the time. This includes even doing something as apparently simple and mundane as retrieving a glider off the landing area.

Just as much care and attention is required when operating airside, especially in close proximity to gliders and people as is required when we fly. As basic guidance:

- Do not take the tow vehicle to within 2-3 meters of any part of the glider
- If the rope is not long enough, move the glider to the tow vehicle wherever possible
- Don't move the glider until the tow vehicle is stationary
- Always drive the tow vehicle with windows open to hear any instructions
- P1 of the glider is responsible for the whole combination. He/she also has the best overview.
- Be very careful when towing the glider into the launch point where there are likely to be people congregated

Conversion onto a new glider type

As minimum do not consider yourself to be converted onto a new glider type until you have completed at least the following:

- Until you have completed the conversion do not go cross country or out of gliding range of the airfield (therefore risking a field landing)
 - 10 flights and 10 hours on type
 - Solo stall & spin symptoms, recognition and recovery (check the flight manual to confirm the recovery actions and if the type is cleared for spinning)

General Club issues

Friends and Family clearance (F/F) - renewal

You may recall from previous emails that for the annual renewal of the F/F clearance you needed the following:

To maintain your clearance you need to meet the following criteria by the 30th *September* each year:

- Minimum of 20 hours and 20 launches as P1 (solo and dual)
- An Annual check flight (with any instructor) in the seat and glider that you are cleared in

I know you have done an Annual Flight Review but what I need are your total hours and launches as P1 for the period 01 Oct 09 – 30 Sept 10 I'd appreciate receiving these by the end of December after which I'll assume you no longer want the clearance.

Club fleet – 50 hour checks

We are a little more unique in the country by having much higher than average soaring time which is good of course. However for the club fleet it means the 50 hour check comes round much sooner, around five times a year.

Thanks to Peter Saundby the hours are monitored and a notification placed in the glider when 50 hour is due. This cannot be ignored. The glider cannot fly until the 50 hour check is complete. Please ensure it is done.

Recently both K13's were found to have been well over with the Junior at 90 hours. I know Peter did his bit so what happened after that?

Thanks to John Clark and team for doing the last checks a couple of weekends ago.

Log sheet's

It is down to everyone to keep the log sheets up to date, not just the few. Unfortunately this does not always happen and the sheets become a mess. Not only does it become an admin nightmare for Liz in the office leading to miss billing, but it is also an important safety issue and legal requirement. If you are doing the log please make sure you handover the log keeping to another member. Do not just leave it thinking 'someone else' will pick it up, because they won't.

Country members

All pilots wishing to fly should attend the daily briefing if possible or at least speak to the duty instructor before you fly

This is even more important if you are a visiting pilot or country member. Just because you have had a site check and have been released to fly solo doesn't automatically entitle you to do the same the next time you visit.

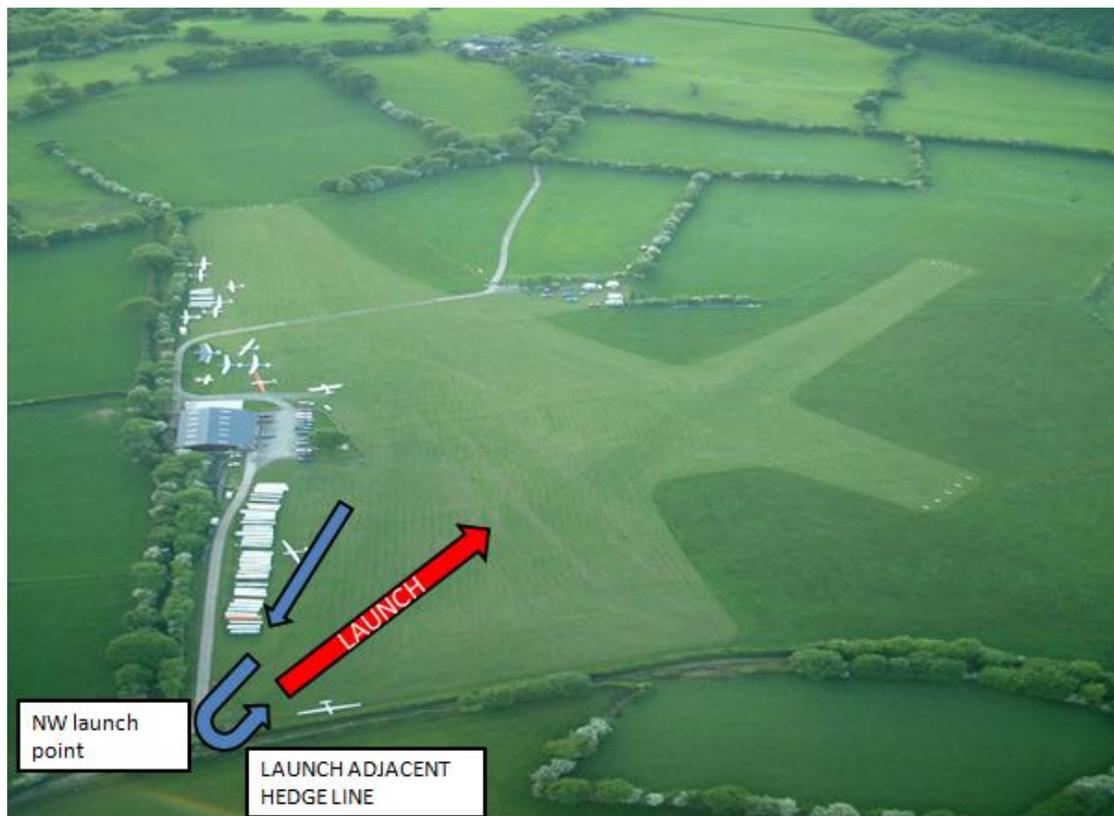
The amount of flying at Talgarth, exposure to the different conditions and even the different landing area's have to be considered together with your experience and the usual currency type issues both generally and at Talgarth. If the Duty Instructor is not happy he may want you to fly dual first.

Please do not just use us as a launching facility. The club like most is run by volunteers and as such needs just as much support on the day as any other. So do help with the log, getting the kit out, towing gliders etc and not leave it to just the full club membership.

Managing the North West Launch Point

When we are busy and launching from the NW corner it can get quite congested at the launch point. To help prevent this and allow for a smoother launch rate from now on we will organize the launch queue and take off run adjacent to the hedge with gliders moved into place as per the blue arrows in the diagram below. The operation should be a lot more effective and alleviate congestion.

Before any launch remember to check that you have at least a clear path of at least 45 degrees either side of your take off run.



Christmas Flying

The club should be operating normally from Sunday 26th Dec to Monday 03rd Jan

Cheers

Martin
CFI