

DSGC

Devon & Somerset Gliding Club

Newsletter February 2025

Welcome to the first of our rejuvenated Newsletters!
We hope you find them informative and something else to read whilst we await the return of a brilliant soaring season!
We aim to send at least 3 newsletters each year and I welcome any members feedback and/or suggestions for topics to include so please feel free to contact me directly lhgliding@gmail.com

Safety



Occurrence Reporting

Please remember to report any occurrences or near misses that could have affected safety, both on the ground and in the air. It's vital that we all report anything that could affect safety so that we can share the learning points from it to keep everyone safe. No one will ever be criticized for putting their hand up and saying they've had a near miss or incident, we are all human, and we all occasionally make mistakes.

If you have a safety occurrence, near miss or incident, please complete a report form. These are available here: https://www.dsgc.co.uk/pdf/documents/dsgc_occurrence_report.pdf or can be found in the briefing room in the club house. Alternatively complete the online form at <https://www.dsgc.co.uk/members-area/safety-bits-members-only/271-occurrence-report>

Radio calls

Following an occurrence at North Hill and based on BGA recommendations don't forget we are now encouraging all pilots to give a "North Hill Traffic Glider XXX right or left base North Hill" radio call in addition to the normal downwind call. BUT please don't let this distract you from flying the glider! Only give the call if you have the capacity to do so - Aviate, navigate then communicate!

Are you ready for a wing drop on take off?

Here's a brilliant example of sharing your own personal learning from an occurrence that really emphasises the need to be vigilant when winch launching. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3Pchi3wAT8>

Fly safe everyone! James F



Eurofox



Having had the Eurofox for just over 12 months it has become a very important part of our fantastic fleet.

As you all know we had some teething problems in the beginning however we are constantly learning about the aircraft and we have been building a reserve of aircraft spares to minimize any issues in the future.

With the reduced aerotow rates - thankyou Tom! - members have been able to improve their skills which is fantastic! This also makes aerotowing much safer, especially the Tug pilots who are in your hands!

I would just like to thank you for taking the time to improve your skills and end by informing you that the standard of aerotowing has impressed the Tuggies so please keep it up and stay current.

Stuart

Winter Flying



Well, the poor summer weather continued into autumn and then on into winter! Attendance has been poor for the last few months; this is despite the offer of ground school and simulator training, which is a bit disappointing.

I know I'm banging the same drum, but please apply for your SPL if you are suitably qualified. Several people have passed the bronze exams, which is the first step toward qualification for the SPL license. Pete Harmer is always keen to set the exam, test, and debrief, so start studying!

Winter flying days, when they come along, are perfect for annual card checks. Why wait until the soaring season to get this done? Nobody wants to waste a good soaring day in the spring and summer doing cable breaks!

Instructor training has started for our homegrown candidates. We are also helping Brentor with some of their basic instructors who want to step up to Ass Cat; the simulator has come into its own for this.

Regular attendance is key to maintaining your skill set. Avoid the inevitable spring rush by keeping yourself current. There's no better feeling than jumping in the Junior and looking at the long queue of people needing check flights.

See you at the club

Mark C

Tom from 'Accounts'



2024, as well as our previous financial year, weren't as financially strong as we would have hoped to have. The Club's overall income stream looks very sluggish while our costs continue to rise. To be fair, we haven't performed as badly as many UK gliding clubs, and I can at least say we're still financially sound and our cash reserves are at a safe level. But we can't be complacent.

Gliding is being affected in several ways, and if we want the sport to continue in the way we love, we must recognise, and address, several issues that affect DSGC.

Two of the key factors are:

Weather, particularly what we're increasing seeing during the Autumn and Winter, has forced the cancellation of many flying days.

Member turnout, when it is flyable, isn't as high as it could (and needs to) be.

There's nothing we can directly do to change the weather. But one of the things I love about our club is that there almost always is someone who will provide ancillary instruction on non-flying days. From the basics such as principles of flight, air law and weather to cross country planning and flight analysis. And you get all this instruction free of charge!

We're fortunate to have one of the most sophisticated gliding simulators in the UK. It's been demonstrated that those pilots who practice their flying on a simulator, have improved flying skills when they're in an actual glider. Again, a freebie to you!

But your Club management knows it needs to do more. Here are a few things for 2025:

We've held the two seat glider soaring charges without any increase from 2024.

But we've also significantly lowered the soaring price for our two Junior gliders from 55p to 40p/minute.

We've reduced the cost for renting club gliders on both club and private expeditions to other sites.

2025 week-long courses will initially be limited to members. Only if we can't fill the courses with members will non-members be allowed to enrol. (As of the end of January, there are only 5 slots remaining unfilled).

We're continuing to increase the number of instructors. And we've increased the instructor training bursary for new instructor training.

We're in the process of updating the DSGC website. And I hope you're already taking advantage of now having online access to your flying accounts and gliding logs through DSGlide. Your cost to fly at DSGC is the lowest of any comparable club (fleet, facilities and number of members). We're below aerotow and winch charges at other clubs and our membership subs are substantially less expensive. Part of that stems from recognising personal disposable income in the Southwest is lower than many other parts of the country. But also it's that because we're a 100% volunteer operated club. Having no employees holds down our costs, and the Club is enormously grateful to those who already put so much of their free time into making DSGC a better place for everyone. If you're not already doing so, please offer up your skills and help out.

Clubhouse Update - Peter Smith



As many of you know the Committee have been considering how to address the future of the Clubhouse mindful of its considerable age, state of repair, and what our future needs will be. A committee meeting was held last Wednesday specifically to consider this.

A new building would be nice but it is beyond our means. Therefore, we have to pursue refurbishment of the existing building. We hope to move forward with essential repairs including replacement of the metal roof sheets and some structural repairs during the coming summer. Once that is complete, we can proceed with re-cladding the outside of the building, renewing windows and doors, adding a fire escape at the east end of the building, and then move towards a modest extension on the south west corner.

Initial thoughts are that this will provide a separate small room IT equipment, an office for the CFI and flying records etc and a separate Club office thus releasing the area of the existing office into an enlarged briefing room. The main entrance will be moved to the northwest side and have level access from the field onto an enlarged outside area for warm sunny days. However, it isn't fixed in tablets of stone so may yet change! Firstly, there will be more investigation works to ascertain what repairs are needed to the roof structure.

Windssock—Our trusty windssock built by the founding fathers is no more. Resurrecting it from the gorse bushes was one of the first jobs I did after joining the Club but it has now reached the point of no return. The guarantee expired last year. A replacement is under way and we have most of the components now. It should be erected within the next few weeks and we hope it will be much easier to lower and maintain.

Absent Friends

Andreas Kraemer 3rd December 1958 – 30th December 2024



Andreas was born and grew up in Saxony, Germany. He had a younger brother Peter and also a younger sister. Peter gave a moving tribute during the service. Andreas's early interests included sailing with a 420 Class dinghy. He was also a keen skier and qualified as an instructor. He skied extensively in Germany and the Alps. He also loved walking in the mountains when the snow receded, and by contrast also developed a particular affinity with the hills and moors of Ireland. One of his colleagues from Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton spoke similarly. Andreas was hugely respected both for his ability and commitment, never leaving until he was satisfied that all was as in the best order it could be.

He settled in Taunton with his partner Beth and as we all know was then able to pursue another interest, gliding, he started flying in January 2012, going solo in September. He was measured and cautious and very safety conscious. He was also one of most modest, polite, caring people one could ever wish to meet and loved every minute airborne, but equally happy to drive the retrieve until someone told him he had to stop.

He passed away aged 66 on 30th December after a short illness. We were fortunate to enjoy his company, we will miss him. - Peter Smith

Rick Andrews - 8 October 1949 – 1 December 2024



There was a large congregation for Rick's funeral, and the many tributes to him spoke much of a lifetime of dedicated service, most particularly as a military helicopter pilot, and latterly his unstinting work for the local community, which he ably represented as, inter alia, the town's mayor.

Rick started gliding in March 2013, solo in a glider in July, achieving Bronze and Cross Country endorsement in 2014.

A poignant element of the traditional service was the gathering of Rick's former colleagues who touchingly delivered a rendition of the Army Air Corp Song. A reception later took place in the Bradninch Guildhall. - Barbara Fairclough

And finally, a note from our chairman.

My great hope is that we shall be able to operate this year on more of the fine midweek days which have so often been wasted in the past.

I should like to mention that we are planning to have a vintage GC meeting at North Hill next year. If any club members know of other groups that may enjoy a day at the club or longer and sample Vicky's excellent catering please let us know.

Nick
Chairman DSGC