



GRAPEVINE

THE SERVICES REGION FLIGHT SAFETY BULLETIN

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Edited by Pete Stratten 01280 709788 / strats.peter@virgin.net

Weight a minute....

A Discus CS was climbing on a winch launch when the pilot felt something move back into the rudder pedals, restricting the rudder movement. He managed to kick the restriction clear and then went on to unsuccessfully attempt to soar away from the launch.

This glider had previously been extensively repaired after an accident that had broken off the rear fuselage boom. It appears as if the repairer had fitted nose weights to keep the C of G within normal limits. The weights, attached to a plate in the nose cone of the glider had eventually pulled the GRP plate away from the fuselage wall - hence the restriction.

If you get a problem with a glider, in particular a control restriction, it is very unwise to attempt to extend the flight! This pilot had a clear 8,000' runway to land on.

Blue is the Colour

While carrying out a fuel sample test on a Supermunk and T61F, the fuel sample was found to be the incorrect colour for 100 LL avgas - in this case the sample was pink. The aircraft were grounded for further investigation of the club's fuel supply.

The club uses diesel fuel in the ground equipment, which is stored in a bowser parked alongside the avgas bowser. It appears as if the untrained diesel delivery driver had pumped diesel into the avgas bowser! An expensive and potentially lethal cock up that was caught just in time by good airmanship.

Do you carry out a fuel sample check as part of every powered aircraft or motorglider DI?

I have....!

A two-seat glider was carrying out instructor training. The coach was role playing a solo pilot who was out of currency, with the u/t instructor in the rear cockpit being expected to sit and monitor / prompt / take control as appropriate.

The glider was established on the later stages of the approach with the coach handling the glider. The coach deliberately ballooned at the flare. The u/t instructor prompted, paused, and then took control. Unfortunately, he failed to immediately close the airbrakes and the coach did not have enough time to recover from the ensuing high sink rate. The glider hit the ground in a level (stalled) attitude with the airbrake extended. The glider was slightly damaged and the pilots, **both of who were sat on impact cushions**, were shaken not stirred.

P1's - near the ground, ie. below 50', if you're in doubt, take full control. If you subsequently feel embarrassed for taking over too early, buy the student another launch!

Instructor training - coaches need to clearly brief on takeover considerations in role-playing scenarios, particularly low down. Also, the guy in the back may let you go a bit further than he would with a real student (particularly if he's training to be a full cat) knowing, subconsciously, that you will sort it out if things go wrong....

Finally, and most important - do not put your student into a situation that you cannot sort out when he or she subsequently gets it wrong.

Nearly, but not quite...

How often have you seen something nearly go wrong at the club, with disaster only just averted by good fortune? Unfortunately, the only people who learn

from these 'incidents' are those present. Unless of course, we pass on the information!

How about instigating an internal incident reporting system at your club? All you need to do is encourage all members to report anything that they think constitutes a problem to the club Safety Officer or CFI who should act accordingly.

To give an example, a club that frequently used the incorrect weak link when wire-launching in the muddy Winter only really noted the problem after a club member filled in a club incident report form. This form was dropped into the CFI's mail slot, and the next time he was at the club, he read the form, and discussed a solution with the Engineering member. The loop was closed by advertising the potential problem and the solution (in this case modified, open weak link sheaths) to the club membership. It can be that simple.

All Clear Above and Behind...

A K13 was flown into a circuit to land nearer the hangar. The planned circuit over flew the in use winch launching run.

As the K13 was established on late final, a cable that had just been used to launch a second glider fell on the K13, stopping the aircraft suddenly and tearing off its fin and rudder. Both occupants were injured in the impact.

It's clear that the launch marshal should not have allowed the second glider to launch.

Poor communication and a lack of supervision led to a very nasty accident. People generally don't expect the unexpected, so if you're doing something different, like approaching from an unusual direction, try to let people know what's going on. It can only help, particularly at poorly supervised sites - and there are lots of them!

Single Man Wrecking Kit

While towing a Puchacz down a slight slope towards the hangar, the glider overran and collided with a tractor crushing the forward fuselage area.

A Janus was being moved onto the airfield using a single man tow out kit when the wing dolly collapsed causing the glider to swing through 90 degrees, severely damaging the fin and tail plane mounting.

An LS8 was being taken on to the airfield at speed using a tow out kit - the spectacular ground loop as the (ballasted) wing changed in the crosswind caused £8000 of damage.

All of these 'incidents' caused aircraft down-time for the owners, involved expensive insurance excess costs, contributed to rising insurance premiums and were easily avoidable. One man tow out kits are rarely maintained - don't trust them too much. If you can get someone to walk by the wingtip and if you drive at walking pace with your window down then it's got to help.

...and All Clear in Front.

A two seat glider was lined up behind the tug in preparation for launching on an instructor training flight, with a Full Cat in the front seat (P1) and a trainee Full Cat in the rear seat as handling pilot.

The tug pilot checked above and behind, noting that a glider in circuit would be clear providing the launch got underway, and taxied forward. As he did so, the wingtip holder (a solo pilot visitor from a winch only site) shouted at the glider pilots to release - he was concerned about the glider on base leg. Because of the tug engine noise, the glider pilots could not hear the wingtip holder, who then put the wing down and moved in towards the cockpit. As he got about half way along the wing, the glider moved forward and knocked the wingtip holder over, with the wing striking his head. The launch continued successfully and the wingtip holder recovered his composure, despite one or two bruises.

Oops. Who didn't get it wrong here? The tug pilot should have checked his mirror before the final 'all out' to full throttle, the glider pilots should have been ready to release at any time, particularly if someone got in the way, and the suicidal wingtip holder should have waited for the rope to be released before stepping in front of the wing.

Those Old Chestnuts

Does your club have a proactive approach to making sure all club pilots, including instructors, get testing winch launch failure checks? Just because they're a regular, 'good egg' member doesn't mean they don't develop bad habits.

Do your supervisors watch for and rectify poor circuit flying and approach techniques that will eventually lead to problems for the pilot concerned?