



GRAPEVINE

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THE SERVICES REGION FLIGHT SAFETY BULLETIN

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GIVE A WINCH AN INCH...

Following the release from a winch launch, the in use cable fell across and snagged the second cable that was lying along the full length of the strip. The second cable was dragged into the winch at high speed, causing the parachute and coiled strop assembly at the launch point to whip out, just missing a number of bystanders and a parked glider.

"Give a winch an inch and it will take a foot", was the pre-metric expression frequently heard at RAFGSA clubs following the traumatic amputation of one particular members size 10 some years ago!

In this case only luck prevented serious injury and damage, but it has served as a timely reminder that we should always treat cables as 'live'. The person that reported this incident pointed out that his operation is now considering maintaining a sterile area around the cable chutes/strops during launches - he was shocked at the violence with which the strop assembly complete with weak links and rings whipped out.

KICK THE TYRES

A very experienced pilot carried out a walk round before climbing into a motor glider, with the aim of carrying out field landing training. Having completed some checks, he then accelerated down the runway. Just after getting airborne, the pilot noticed that the handling 'felt strange' and on looking out to one side, noticed one aileron 'flapping' up and down. Realising now that the aileron was disconnected, he closed the throttle and landed ahead safely on the runway.

A thorough pre-flight would have discovered the open under wing panel and missing aileron drive bellcrank. A note in the cockpit by the person who changed the serviceability state of the aircraft would have helped. Careful pre-flight checks would have picked up that only one aileron was moving. Lessons there for all of us.

DISTRACTION & LOOKOUT

During a recent gliding expedition, a mix of very experienced and inexperienced glider pilots found themselves flying unfamiliar glider types each day in challenging conditions, and each time with different instruments, avionics and GPS. While this wasn't a problem during some phases of flight (an ASI is an ASI), most pilots found during cross-country flying that their individual lookout degraded significantly. There were even a couple of instances of pilots being unaware of other gliders sharing the same thermal! It was only when any individual went cold and thought, "oops, I haven't been looking", that the normal full-on lookout came back on line. Familiarity with the equipment as the flights progressed also helped.

Cockpit gizmo's absorb spare capacity, and unfamiliarity with the instruments and avionics is bound to be a distraction - there's a definite case for really knowing your glider and equipment before getting stuck into high workload flying eg. racing cross country, flashing up and down ridges or trying to turn your weak wave climb into a gold or diamond height.

"IT'LL BE OK"

After waiting for an hour or so to partially demist the front canopy, a K21 was lined up for an early morning tow. As the combination whizzed down the strip and the glider got airborne, the solo pilot of the K21 discovered that the canopy was misting up at an alarming rate. As the view in front completely disappeared, the pilot released and managed to pull off a fairly tidy landing from 20' by peering out of the open DV panel!

Misting canopies are a common problem in our damp winter months. The best advice has to be that if it's a struggle to keep the canopy clear, then don't launch.

HONESTY AND YOUR FELLOW PILOT

A pilot walked up to a K13 in the club hangar with the aim of carrying out a daily inspection. He immediately discovered significant damage to the fin, rudder and tailplane - it was obvious that the glider had been damaged last time it flew. The tech log indicated nothing, and nobody in the club had been told about any incident involving that glider.

If any of us are involved in an incident where there is just a SUSPICION that the glider has been damaged, then the onus is on any of us to report it to someone who can get the glider inspected. Doing nothing but hiding our embarrassment could be fatal for the next guy flying that particular aircraft. How would we feel then?