



Scottish Airsports Club

Latest News

Issue 1, March 2003



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Welcome to the Newsletter

As your new secretary, one of my tasks is to keep everyone up-to-date with the latest news from the club. Thankfully, the wonder of e-mail makes this relatively easy, however I need two other essential ingredients:

1. Some news
2. Your e-mail address.

So if you know of anything that's happened, or is happening, or is about to happen, please let me know about it. Either talk to me, phone me on 01786 842030 (home), 07703 158154 (mobile - normally only switched on at weekends), or e-mail me at: allan@allanphillips.co.uk.

Also, please check the circulation list on this e-mail, and let me know if I've missed anyone out or if I've used any out-of-date e-mail addresses. I'll try to get something out at least once a month, but obviously if anything important crops up I'll fire off a newsletter to let everyone know.

Allan Phillips (secretary).

A.G.M.

The Scottish Airsports Club held its A.G.M. on Saturday 15th February at the Scottish Gliding Centre, Portmoak. We discussed the following topics:

Grant Application

See separate item below

Options for Replacement Tug

We discussed various options for a possible replacement tug, including Moyes Dragonfly, Air Creation Fun, Cosmos, Pegasus XL-R, Quantum and AX 2000. There are many pros and cons for each aircraft, whilst the Dragonfly is the most popular in the Airparks it would be reasonable to assume that it would take two years to gain approval via the BHPA and CAA. Quite rightly the Tug Pilots want to use up to date machines and have a ballistic recovery system fitted. The best remaining option appeared to be to identify the best flexwing, set the specification and pay a specialist to get it certified with the CAA. The cost to do this is estimated at £5k and the timescale six months. We agreed that Ken would circulate our ideas to all the other aerotow groups to see if a fund could be set up to finance the certification of a modern UK certified Tug, complete with chute, enough power to tow dual and slow enough for intermediate pilots. Since then, Ken has discovered that another aerotow group have almost completed certification of the Air Creation Fun with a 582 engine as a tug, and this is a very appealing option.

Increasing our membership

There are many reasons why we need to increase our membership. Funding the airfield, developing our sport, it is our stated aim to create a multi-disciplined flying site, it is a prerequisite of the lottery application and not least George and Sue deserve increased revenue for access to their facilities. We do not have all the answers however it would be good to get a paragliding winch operation on the site. The paragliders are taking their time so I have asked Peter Shields of Cloudbusters to push it on to see if they are serious and if he can help them come to a decision.

Dual Flying

We will be starting Dual Flying from Thornhill. There has been a change in the regulation that allows qualified members to become Air Experience Instructors. AIS's must operate when the Chief Aerotow Coach is present however they can charge for the flights. A copy of the new regulations will appear in a future newsletter.

Safety

We will no longer tow if the field is too soft as we have found that trolley launching is dangerous in these conditions. If there is water lying on any part of the runway that we are using then towing should be cancelled. Please remember that the critical briefing is at the trolley, whoever is briefing the hang glider pilot must go through the safety procedures no matter how experienced the HG pilot is. We must maintain and improve all our standards. The BHPA produce an excellent manual on aerotowing. If you do not have one or have lost yours then please ask Donald for a copy

Finance

We are spending mostly on the airfield. After the recent tug service which cost around £1200 we have no money left in the aerotow fund to accrue for emergencies or a replacement tug. Much of the cash has been one off capital spends (grass cutter, tractor, concrete etc) however Sue has agreed to take over the cost of providing a toilet from mid 2003.

Fees

We agreed that the fees should be

- £50.00 annually
- £20.00 temporary membership (up to three visits)
- £200.00. aerotow Licences (inc £50.00 Field fee), but free for full members
- Dual Flying should include the £20.00 fee
- Tug Pilot Training = Cost of Fuel @ 10Litres /hr

Airfield Procedures

Please ensure that all flights are logged in the Airfield Book at the end of the day. Also George and Sue are keen that all visitors are welcomed to the airfield, however the responsibility to brief all visitors is with us, we must ensure that they are fully conversant with the rules for visitors to an operational airfield. Note that dogs are not allowed.

Various

The Tug has been fully refurbished for 2003.
The road across the runway has been filled in (Thanks Al).
The runways have been rolled.
The grass cutter as been fully refurbished.
We have signed off five new aero tow pilots.
We are training two new tug pilots.
We have invited Sue and George out for a meal in Glasgow, the date is to be confirmed. We hope that all the members will come out and say thank you to S & G for putting up with all the HG reprobates.

Grant Applications

We are currently working on a grant application to Sport Scotland for the Sports Facilities Programme Lottery Fund, and hope to get at least £60,000 to pay for a new tug, improvements to the runways, some clubhouse facilities and a winch. To help our bid, a number of us will have to put a fair bit of effort into the application. As you can imagine, you don't get £60K without providing a lot of paperwork to support the application. However, Donald, Al, Ken, Andy, Martin, Gordon, Scott and myself are all working hard on it. To get that final vote in our favour, Andy's ready and willing to sleep with whoever it takes.

Our bid will only be successful if we can come up with a convincing plan to grow the club, and we have a number of ideas in the pipeline. We now have two dual gliders at the club, and thanks to recent changes in the rules we should be able to provide dual experience flights and hopefully even training for complete beginners in the near future. If we manage to get a winch at the airfield then hopefully paraglider pilots will want to join the club. In addition to our lottery bid, Sue and George (the landowners) are applying for a Farm Diversification grant to build a brand new £80,000 hangar.

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This should help to significantly increase the number of microlight pilots joining the club, and every one of them is a potential new tug pilot. If anyone has any other ideas for increasing the membership, please let us know.

All in all, 2003 should prove to be a very exciting year, even if the weather's as crap as it was last summer. If both grants get approved, then there will be a lot of money coming into the airfield which should make a huge difference. Our ultimate aim would be to turn it into a Florida style flight park. The new flight park at Avila is looking promising, and opens its doors in May this year. Some of us from the club including myself will be going over there, so hopefully we can pick up some ideas from them.

Easter Weekend Fly-In

Easter this year falls on the weekend of 18th - 21st April. We were thinking of painting some eggs and rolling them down a hill to celebrate, but then we decided it would be much more fun to have a Fly-In instead. Planning and preparations are still underway, but we're hoping to have lots of flying, and also winching operations for both hanggliders and paragliders. As well as airborne activities, there will be food and entertainment on the ground as well. It goes without saying that the weather will be fantastic.

For more details Ken's your man. Phone him on 0141 575 4828 or 07818 091389 to find out exactly what's happening.

Club Web Site

Just in case you didn't know, the club has its own web site: <http://www.scottishairsports.com>. You'll find various items of interest there, including a complete teach-yourself guide to aerotowing for anyone who's never tried it before and can't be bothered with the inconvenience of instruction. If anyone has any suggestions for how the web site could be improved, or has any material they think should be published on the web site, please let me know.

Working Parties

There are always jobs needing to be done around the airfield. On Saturday 8th March we will continue the excellent work Al Huntly has done in filling the track that the RSPB use to access the bird sanctuary. The next big job will be to mark the edges of the E/W runway to keep the farm inspectors off Sue's back. We'll be doing this as soon as we've got the necessary markers.

Airfield Notice Board

Questions, questions, questions. There's always someone asking questions like "How much does it cost to for an aerotow to 2000 feet, Mister?", or "How many visits does a Temporary Membership cover you for, Miss?". And quite often none of us have a clue what the answer is. Thankfully, we will soon need only one answer for any question: "Take a look at the Airfield Notice Board on the back wall of the hangar, son." Over the next few weeks we will have various notices and information covering the various charges, fees and general airfield rules and regulations. Everyone should make themselves aware of these, and we all need to ensure that any visitors are pointed in the direction of this notice board. It is located on the dividing wall in the hangar.

Scottish Airsports Club, Easter Poldar Farm, Thornhill, Stirlingshire
www.scottishairsports.com