SCOTTISH GLIDING CENTRE

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 10 - March 2021

In this Issue

Restart and Currency

We are slowly getting to the point when we can all start flying again. Instructors have been allowed to restart currency flights and we can now also welcome some experienced pilots who are allowed to travel to the airfield.

Hopefully it won't be too long until travel restrictions are eased and we can all start to fly again.

However, none of us are current any more, so we do need to take care when we first fly again. There are a number of things you can do to prepare for your first flight after lockdown. Have a look at the short video produced by Mike Fox at https://youtu.be/82FJMlvhXsO and follow his guidance:

- Be well prepared
- Keep it simple
- Don't fly in marginal conditions to begin with

Look at the BGA currency barometer at https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/safety-briefings/currency-barometer-pdf/ to see how current / uncurrent you really are.

Have a flight in the club simulator, especially an aerotow launch (winch launches in the simulator are not very realistic).

There is also Kate's presentation for restarting after the last lockdown. It is still available on the Covid Restart Page at https://restart.scottishglidingcentre.com/. Have another look at this, it contains a lot of useful information.

When we restarted after last year's lockdown there were a couple of issues:

- Shallow approaches
- Heavy landings
- Ridge etiquette

And on the ground

- Lookout on retrieve
- Lookout at the launch point

Bear these in mind and don't repeat last year's mistakes.

Also, when you DI a glider, be extra careful, reread the DI guidelines in the DI book as you may have forgotten some items.

And finally a reminder of the new currency rules at Portmoak. You find them in the latest airfield manual. Its simplified, but the old 30 and 90 day requirements for check flights have been reduced to 3 and 6 weeks. We had some incidents due to currency last year and especially the 90 day period was far beyond currency requirements at other clubs.

I hope we can soon enjoy many safe flights after this long period of little or no flying.

Safety at the Launch Point

The launch point is an area where safety is a major concern. The launch point group, which has been set up after the member's consultation last year, will be implementing a number of changes at the launch point over the coming season.

Meanwhile, here are a number of things everyone should to be aware of at the launch point:

- Keep the launch area clear

- Make sure the person in the caravan has a clear sight of the wing runner
- Keep clear of cables when a launch is in progress and until the winch has stopped
- Communicate the correct glider and cable to the winch and wait for positive response from the winch before starting the launch
- If you see a problem stop the launch. Raise your hand and shout stop. Its not just the wing runner who can stop a launch, anyone should stop it if they notice a problem. A short delay can avoid damage and injury.

And when you retrieve a glider keep a good lookout. Listen to the person walking the glider, check them in the mirror or look around frequently. They may see something you missed.

Battery Capacity Tester

Does your battery hold its charge? How do you know when its time to replace it?

The Tech Office have for many years had a battery capacity tester which is used regularly to check the fleet batteries and occasionally, when asked nicely, club member's batteries.

While trying to find a new cost for this device as part of the annual Stock Check and Valuation I came across a much lower priced module which could be used to test glider batteries.

After a couple of iterations of the design the first "production" machine has been built and will shortly be installed in the Battery Room for use by members.

The device has been set up to load the battery with a nominal current of 0.4 Amps at 12 Volts and measure the battery capacity from Fully Charged down to a battery voltage of 10.5 Volts which with typical glider wiring voltage losses will give just under 10 Volts at the instruments.

The device has two built in connectors for the standard 3 pin XLR connector widely used in the club with Pin 2 being -ve and Pin 1 being +ve. The first connector provides a Polarity Check function to confirm that the XLR connector is wired to the correct polarity and should be used before connecting the battery to the Capacity Check XLR connector. A lead with Crocodile clips is available for batteries which do not have the 3 pin XLR connector. Please use the polarity checker before connecting for a capacity test.

Green light indicates correct XLR polarity, a flashing Red light warns of reversed XLR connector polarity.

Once connected to the Capacity Check connector the display will show battery voltage.

Pressing the START button will commence a test cycle. During the cycle the display will rotate through Ampere hours (Ah), Amps (A) and

Volts (V) values. When the Capacity Check is complete it will display only the Ah capacity of the battery.

Note that a Capacity Check on a full capacity 7Ah battery will take around 17 hours and for the larger 10Ah battery around 24 hours.

Bill Fulton