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**E.U.G.C.**



Exeter University Gliding Club

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**Members Handbook  
2008**



## WELCOME

So, Congratulations! You have become a member of EUGC. We hope you will enjoy gliding and will learn a great deal, whilst having a fun filled time.

This handbook is meant as a full on, head-first plunge into some of the gliding club's inner workings , especially it's `ground operations',

But not to worry, there are no tests, no quiz at the end! This is purely informative and intended to give you some awareness about glider ground handling and safety precautions prior to actually going near a glider.

That said, the very best way to learn is by getting out there and watching and doing it.

This book is an overview of what commands and actions you may not be explicitly told; but will eventually pick up from seeing others do them. Remember that the other DSGC club members will not necessarily know how experienced you are and might ask you to do something you are not familiar with, if in doubt *ask!*



## A GENERAL DAY OUT GLIDING

The following is a brief overview of how a day at North Hill might transpire. It is, of course, dependant on the weather and delays and waiting around are all part of the gliding lifestyle! Don't expect a rigid schedule that is adhered to with military precision!

0800Hrs :

Passenger Pickup and drive to North Hill

0900Hrs :

Names put on flying list, help get equipment out + cup of tea! Gliders are DI'ed

1000Hrs :

Gliders towed to flight line

1030-1700Hrs:

Flying commences, Lunch, more flying.

17.00Hrs:

Put equipment away/pay

1800 hrs:

Go home.

As can be seen, it is a full day out, with your flying only a relatively small part of the whole experience.



## GROUND OPERATIONS

This section will deal with the major aspects of glider ground ops.

Gliding is very safe but there are parts that can be dangerous if people become distracted. By far and away, the most dangerous thing on the field is *You!* If you are not constantly aware of your surroundings you are a potential hazard. This is easy to correct, by being vigilant and looking around always you can make sure you are aware of what is going on at all times.

STOP!

IF YOU SEE A HAZARD:

Firstly, one word to remember: `Stop!'.

If at *anytime* on the field you see something *you think* is dangerous or potentially not right:

1. Raise you hands above you head (if safe\*)
2. Say loudly and clearly `STOP!'.
3. Repeat (2) until you can see that the danger has been noticed by all around.



Likewise, if you are just waiting around and you see/hear someone saying `Stop`, immediately copy them so as to pass the message on.

It is far better that you say this if unsure, rather than waiting to see what happens. Never assume someone else has seen the hazard.

A few minutes lost re-setting up a glider for launch is better than someone's legs/arm/head missing!

#### IF YOU HEAR THE STOP COMMAND

If you are holding a cable LET GO IMMEDIATELY and MOVE AWAY from the cable. If you are in the launch point vehicle and are talking to the winch driver, say `stop` to him/her.

If it is immediately clear what is going wrong i.e. a towed glider is about to hit a wall. If you are part of the team moving the glider you should try and prevent it from doing so, rather obviously!

\*If you are holding a glider wing or driving a landrover etc. (1) becomes not possible, even dangerous, i.e. dont drop a glider wing to use your hands!



## GENERAL GLIDER HANDLING

Gliders are usually made from fibreglass, or in some cases canvas and steel/wood. They are very strong but can be damaged by improper handling. The usual method when moving a glider around is to have one person holding one wing tip and the others pushing from behind the wing. Depending on the glider you can either use the wings (fibreglass gliders) or not (canvas).

If the glider is being towed by a vehicle then one person must walk in front of the wing near the cockpit and cable release toggle and one should be holding the wing. The person in front of the wing can then act as a brake (against the wing root) should the glider start to run away. If something starts to go wrong then the cable should be detached immediately.

Certain gliders require weight be put on the nose (usu. Juniors) to allow them to be turned properly.

Canopies cost a lot of money, never leave them open and don't let them slam when opening or closing, use the side panel window to hold the inner handle to lower them completely shut.



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## CABLES

Cables are probably the most dangerous item on the field (other than a careless person!). If you see a cable, always assume that it is 'live': that is, it might move (rapidly) at any time. DO NOT handle a cable until you have received the 'cable clear' message. If in doubt, ask if it is clear.

In the same manner, do not cross the field over the cables unless you are sure that you have been cleared to and that you can be seen by others near the launch point.

Sometimes due to miscommunication or other errors, the wrong cable may start to launch, and you don't want to be holding it or crossing it when that happens.

Remember, if you see something going wrong say STOP!



## DRIVING THE LANDROVERS

We have on site 3 Landrovers/a ride on lawnmower. If you hold a driving license then you can, after being shown how, help out immensely by retrieving gliders and cables.

They should be moved off in 2nd gear then taken up through the gears as normal. We only use low ratio as we never have the need to go above 30.

Care should be taken when towing a glider that you can hear commands by the people on the glider: often they do speak too quietly and you have to get them to speak up over the engine!

Always keep a good lookout round the cab as you have restricted upwards view. If in doubt stop where you are.

For towing, 2nd gear clutch up with maybe a small amount of accelerator is all that is required. If your glider handlers are a bit younger you might get away with 3rd, clutch up, no power. But this is a brisk walk!





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## LAUNCH POINT VEHICLE (often called the `bubble`)

This is the 'control tower' of the day's operations. It contains a laptop, radio and phone for communications and flight logging. You will be shown how to use the LPV equipment when it is suitable; DSGC rules state that you should have had 25 launches prior to being able to operate it safely. It can be a bit hectic if a glider radios in, someone on the ground is launching a glider and people are asking you for flight times etc. The logging system on the laptop is straightforward and easy to learn.

It is from here that the operator contacts the winch driver to relay commands for launching and visual confirmation of gliders that land long etc.

Radio communication has certain etiquette that you will pick up or be shown. It is not a military/commercial operation however so it is not required that you are highly trained in such matters! Knowing the pilots alphabet will come in handy however (alpha, bravo charlie...x-ray, yankee, zulu) as gliders will call in using their tail numbers: HCX = 'Hotel Charlie X-ray'.



## CLOTHES


At North Hill we have the advantage of being able to use the 900' ridges bordering the field for lift when the wind is right. What this also means is that you are also standing right on the top of a very exposed hill!

It is always advisable to assume that you will be both too hot and too cold, so bring the appropriate clothing. Use multiple layers! In the winter it can get very cold and you don't want to get caught out.

One thing that is easy to forget is that you can get windburn/exposure. It can seem like a very nice mild day, but standing around for 9-10 hours in it can cause sunburn. Always bring sunscreen and try to protect yourself. Hats (some very stylish glider 'bucket hats' are the in-thing!) are a necessity as are a good pair of sunglasses for both summer and winter flying. The sun can be quite low in the sky and a good pair of sunnies should help.

## FOOD & DRINK

Water, in a word. Always have a bottle with you. Dehydration can cause you to lose concentration



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and feel really quite rubbish. It would be a shame to spend a day on the field only to find you feel too ill to fly, come your turn.

Food is provided on site by the lovely 'H' (its her name!) and is very, very reasonably priced and is often just the ticket. A bacon sandwich and a cuppa has never looked so inviting when you have been standing around in the biting cold waiting for your turn in the glider!

If you don't wish to buy food at the club you are more than welcome to bring your own food, and I suggest you do; you will be at the club for the whole day and not to have some snacks at the least would be foolish.

## PAYING & FLYING ACCOUNTS

DSGC operate a 'credit' flying account system. This means that you have a personal flying account that should ALWAYS be at least £25 in credit at all times.

You can put as much money in this account as you like (you don't earn interest however!). i.e. if at the beginning of term you feel particularly rich, you can credit say, £100 and then you wont have to worry



about paying each week. Obviously If you do not pay for your flights at the end of the day, it is easy to forget, and then your name gets put on the 'blacklist' of people who's account is in debt. This means you cannot not fly until the account is back in credit.

## Payment Methods

Cheque: Payable to DSGC.

Debit Card: If the right people are at the club you may pay directly with your debit card. It is often better to have your cheque-book with you always, just in case.

## ENJOY

I hope this little introduction makes certain things a little clearer without seeming too daunting, as this was not my intention at all. Most of what you have read will become very obvious very quickly by simply seeing it happen. If you ever are unsure about anything please make sure you ask someone!

Happy Gliding!