

WEEKEND NEWS - 3RD AND 4TH FEBRUARY, 2007

I am sure that Alan O'Regan, of all the members, must be the most frustrated after the problems that we had on Saturday in getting the "Gauntlet" off the ground. Thanks to Adriaan who stepped in and did 4 launches before having to stop tugging due to the strength of the wind. He damaged his wingtip on the second-last landing although not too badly. At that point, Johnny had managed to patch-weld the exhaust of NIG and Nina carried on with the launches but had to stop on the sixth launch when the manifold broke while she was flying. Both she and Jacobus, who she was towing at the time, handled the situation very well and without incident. Unfortunately the Gauntlet launch came to a grinding halt! The wind had been very strong and, up to this point, NIG had not been able to turn in the wind so Johnny took out his "Mark 1" towing contraption which increased the turn around time in getting the tug back to the launch point tail first!

Both Quinton Hoole and Ari Cotton made a valiant effort in staying up but the conditions proved very difficult and they landed after half an hour of trying, followed by Errol in the Antares.

Those who did manage to get away did some very nice times and distances – one of which was William Whitakker in GIG who did a PB of over 300kms! Congratulations William – but that also did not go without incident as William hit a "Pothole" in the sky and damaged the canopy. Not too badly, though, and he says it should be repaired by the weekend.

The entry for the Gauntlet was the largest I have ever seen at the Club. It is a pity about the tugs – Murphy definitely played a part – but at the next gauntlet on the 3rd of March, Both tugs WILL be operational and there will be two rostered tug pilots for the day!

I am sure Alan has a record of distances flown on Saturday and will make the information known should you be interested. Thanks for all the effort put into the arranging of the Competition, Alan.

Marion and Brian manned the launch point very ably with all the effort needed in trying to get everyone off in time and were assisted by Paul Bailey and Andre who were duty instructors.

In the meantime Johnny was frantically trying to get hold of Tony, the chap that does the coded welding and managed to coerce him into driving out to Worcester to repair the welding on the tugs. Toey did so early Sunday morning and repaired MIV but had to take the manifold of NIG with him to his business premises as it needed a little more attention.

So tugging once again got underway, with a small snag raising its ugly head after lunch but was sorted out by Johnny, and now MIV is once again serviceable.

One tends to forget the times that they work non-stop and it is unfortunate that we have had two weekends with snags back to back. It is unusual and we do have short memories as to when they are indeed serviceable!

No students arrived on Sunday and Jacobus took advantage of the fact that he was there (duty pilot) and availed himself of the instruction at hand (Wally) and began his conversion onto the Rotax Falke and soloed as well!!! Well done Jacobus, and well done landing in that fairly strong cross wind, too!! We were all watching!

A reporter from the Getaway magazine was flown first in the Rotax Falke by Wally (at 6.30 in the morning!) and then she had a flight with Adriaan in GXH. She was very impressed with the weekends activities and the various gliders on the field. I took Ed for a flight in VAE – the first time he has been airborne in months!!

Paul Troskie took his 86 year old grandmotherinlaw for a flight in the Falke, too and she loved it!

Rob Kakebeeke as well as Rico launched independently as did Errol and Kevin Mitchell and all had long, good flights.

John Spargo behind the controls of MIV launched Gerhard Waller who had a great flight down the ridge to Ashton and later launched Adriaan.

Thanks to all who helped out this weekend and especially to those who understood the logistical “glitches” which can make a weekend so stressfull.

A special “THANK YOU” to Johnny who spent both days working to get the equipment serviceable so that others can enjoy their weekend’s flying.

Welcome back to Jerry Betbeder – it was nice to see you – and it was also great to see Peter Wooley and his new Lambada.

Attached too, is a letter that Mark Siegelberg has asked me to forward with the weekend news.

Until next week

Alison

05 February 2007

Firstly, my apologies to the guys who weren't able to get a launch on Saturday. I know how frustrating it is, sitting on the ground & watching everyone else flying into the sunset.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Adrian for helping us out & I am sorry that he damaged his Lambada in the process. I thought I right for me to explain what's gone wrong with the tugs.

We've had a long run of having no major problems with the tugs, but unfortunately of late, as things happen, we've been pestered by problems by both MIV & NIG. This is not due to user error or anything other than just bad luck.

I personally test flew NIG on Thursday & she performed absolutely beautifully after Stellair repaired her. Nina then brought her over & discovered that the new manifold had cracked. Johnny did his best to repair it with the equipment he had on hand but unfortunately it did not hold. It had to be removed & repaired.

MIV on the other hand, they were able to get it repaired for Sunday, other than one small hiccup, seems to have gone well. NIG will be repaired during the week & by the weekend we will have two tugs.

As frustrating as it is we have very limited options regarding tug aircraft. One of the suggestions were to sell both tugs & buy one new reliable tug. This might be a solution, though I know that the committee are looking into all the various options regarding tug aircraft.

At this point I would like to mention that Johnny has gone way beyond the call of duty in trying to keep our fleet serviceable.

Kind regards,
Mark Siegelberg
C.T.P