

## 2 - GROUND HANDLING

The first lesson in any proper training course is a ground briefing. Many trainees will have already taken a trial lesson before deciding to learn to glide, and if it was their first flight ever the briefing will usually have been pretty sketchy; as it could afford to be, given the degree of supervision exercised over them and the very limited extent to which they are expected to participate in the team side of flying - running the launch point, driving retrieve vehicles and so on.

When the trainee decides subsequently to take up gliding proper and joins a course or a club, then a fuller briefing is needed in the following key areas:

- airfield discipline - SAFETY FIRST
- glider and tug handling
- how the club's system works, especially the training syllabus.

### BRIEFING POINTS

#### Airfield discipline

#### [1] Launch points

- launch point locations for different wind directions, and how to reach them safely. Are there separate launch points for winch and aerotow/question

#### [2] Moving about the airfield

- where to look for traffic in the circuit (and for unexpected traffic arriving from cable-breaks or simulated field landings etc)
- how to decide whether a winch launch is about to take place or not (perhaps by looking at the antics of the cable retrieve tractor, or by looking for a glider wings level, or other signalling)
- whether cars or other vehicles are permissible on the active airfield and if so, under what conditions. How to tow gliders out to the launch point in the morning.

#### [3] Cable runs

- where they are and why they might be dangerous. Which way the wind will drift the wire as it falls.

#### [4] Team effort

- retrieving landed gliders, etc.

#### [5] Keeping the log and keeping it up to date

#### [6] Hooking on gliders and signalling

- especially weak link strengths/colour codes, and who is allowed to initiate a 'stop' signal.

#### Glider and Tug handling

#### [7] Handling points

- grab handles, leading edges, wing tips, cockpit frames, tail or wing dollies and tow-out gear are all useful

#### [8] Non-handling points

- trailing edges, tailplanes, rudders, 'no push'/'no handling' labels, canopies, propellers, etc

#### [9] Canopy discipline

- why do some clubs fit external handles to their canopies? To save time remonstrating with members who keep reaching through the DV (Direct Vision) panel to release the cable, or who try to lift the canopy by its edge. The need to leave canopies open or closed in such a way that they can't fall shut and shatter, or blow open and do the same. Clean canopies.

#### [10] Into-wind wing

- for general ground handling, the need to develop the habit of always holding the into-wind wing. This isn't always essential, but the habit is part of good long-term airmanship
- for parking gliders - those that are susceptible to blowing over need parking with the into-wind wing down and enough tyres on it to hold it down - clean any grit off the tyre before placing it on the wing. Heavier gliders can safely be left with the into-wind wing up. They won't blow anywhere, but in rare circumstances may need to be parked like lighter gliders. GRP single seaters don't normally require tyres to hold them down, and their owners don't usually use them because of the resulting muck and scratches.

#### [11] Towing behind cars

- a rope at least as long as the wingspan is a good idea. The rope should not be too elastic and ideally should have a weak link. Crummy loops at the end of the rope instead of proper rings (or a simple chain link) are a false economy. Have someone by the nose of the glider to act as a human buffer. Anticipate overruns (eg., when approaching a downslope). Keep the glider straight behind the car if overrunning slightly - do not to hold one tip back and accelerate the other into the car's rear windscreen! It is the job of the person by the nose to prevent any overrun. Ensure the car driver is awake, with the radio off and a window open, so that they can hear requests such as STOP! Attach the cable to the winch hook so that in an emergency it back-releases.

#### [12] Tugs and their propellers

- approach tugs and motor gliders from behind the wing. PROPELLERS CAN KILL. Stationary propellers are just as dangerous as moving ones because the tiniest movement of the prop can cause the engine to start. Always treat them as live. Be aware of the effects of prop-wash.

#### [13] Daily Inspections

- ....as and when required by the club's policy. Daily inspections need to be carefully taught and trainees checked out for each glider type. Emphasise the importance of positive control checks at every DI. If in doubt, do them again. Also get the trainee to check the glider's flight manual and the BGA Glider Maintenance Schedule. It's not usually appropriate to teach a trainee

how to do a DI until he is at or near to solo standard, but the rules vary, depending on who owns the glider - talk to a club BGA inspector. [See also section 31, Rigging, De-rigging and Daily Inspection].

#### The Club's system

- it is very useful to prepare a handout for new members
- flying list
  - when to arrive and what to do to make progress
  - how to keep tabs on the flying list without going insane
- how to obtain check flights at sensible times
- training syllabus
  - post-solo goals and progression
  - the club fleet
- log book/Progress card
  - their value to the instructor, and particularly to the trainee, of having these available and up-to-date
- membership privileges
  - when you can fly. Can guests be brought, and if so, at what cost
- reciprocal membership at other BGA clubs. Special group flying (eg. evening/early morning groups)
- club and BGA expeditions and courses (especially the value and cost-effectiveness of such training - even if it means going elsewhere for a week)
- introductions
  - club officers (especially the CFI and the duty instructor on the day - and, of course, the treasurer!)
  - who and how to pay for flying
  - in the larger clubs especially, it is quite important to be introduced to one or two contemporaries and, if at all possible, a mentor or buddy instructor
- the chain of command on the airfield and within the club
  - and to whom the trainee needs to speak if he feels that he is not progressing
- the BGA system and what is available within gliding (e.g. Bronze badge goals and beyond) - hopefully including some reasonable objectives for the trainee to pursue, perhaps aiming to go solo by some particular date
- commitment and cost
  - be honest. Say what is really expected of the trainee, and the minimum level of commitment necessary to make the training worthwhile.