What the Ops Team is Talking About

Memo to Club CFI's and other interested parties - Dec 2019 - *please forward to your instructors.*
A summary of the key items discussed at the Ops Team on-line meeting on 3 December 2019.
David Moody (North), David Hirst (Central), Graham Erikson (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Summary of Incident Reports for Oct-Nov 2019
- landing under a wave system, dumped in the circuit, failed to select alternative field, hit fence
- accidental airspace incursion due to confusion about open/closed status of Glider Flying Area
- pilot unwell during BFR, possibly suffering from toxicity caused by prior use of farm chemicals
- ground loop in crosswind, trainee pilot, taxied off centre of mowed area, tip caught in long grass
- outlanding, short field, misread wind, landed downwind, over-ran into ditch, substantial damage
- engine of self-launching glider shut down at 3,000 ft without warning, glider landed safely

Commentary:
The pilot who landed short and rolled into the threshold fence was landing after a wave flight up to 9,000 feet, and was possibly lulled by the moderate reported winds on the surface to plan a circuit more conducive to benign conditions. Hypoxia was not believed to be a factor. Immediately after entering the circuit the glider encountered sink of 1,000 ft/minute, and despite turning in early the glider failed to reach the intended landing area and rolled into a fence after touching down. A significant headwind gust on base leg did not help. No injury but considerable damage to glider. Pilot admits he was slow to recognise and act on the changing circumstances, and could have diverted to another landing area. The learning for all is that when landing under a wave system the circuit needs to be higher and faster, with plenty of energy held in reserve, plus alternate landing areas kept in mind in case of sustained heavy sink.

The accidental airspace incursion arose because the status of the General Aviation Area was not clear. The GAA had been used earlier in the day then vacated and closed by another pilot, thinking there was no-one else flying. A second pilot heard on the glider chat frequency that the area had been opened and entered it on this basis. ATC saw the transponder signal and reopened the GAA. Clearly, there needs to be clarity around the status of GAA's after they have been opened. If there is no-one on the ground taking full responsibility for the GAA status then it would be better for each pilot entering the airspace to verify open/closed directly with ATC.

The Ops Team was curious whether, when landing with one wing over tall grass, there could be a further effect whereby that wing could be "sucked down" into the grass in a manner analogous to the "squat effect" when a moving ship with low under-keel clearance is sucked down deeper into the water. This may be wild conjecture - maybe someone knows more about this?

The outlanding pilot was on a 50km attempt. After failing to find lift where expected the glider was flown to a known airstrip, which unfortunately had sheep on it. The wind direction was difficult to determine, and the adjacent fields were not very suitable. The pilot had too much speed on late final (60 kts) for the available length and combined with the light tail wind over-ran the field into a ditch. The pilot had not made a solo landing into a field prior to this. It is recommended that pilots be required make a supervised solo landing into a field prior to obtaining a cross-country clearance, otherwise the first outlanding in anger could be too much to cope with all at once. Smaller steps.

2. Moodle Program Update
This program has been submitted to CAA as required by CAA Rule Part 149.103 which states that any change to the procedures for assessment and certification of glider pilots requires "prior notification to and acceptance by the Director of Civil Aviation". No time frame has been provided for completion of this process.

3. Club Audit Program
The Club audit program remains up to date following a recent review of the Taranaki Club.

4. Circuit Procedures
The Ops Team has received expressions of concern from operators at three airfields in the North Island where power planes and gliders share a common grass runway. The issue is that a recent CAA Safety Message mandating compliance with unattended aerodrome circuit procedures means that gliders, tugs and power planes are now sharing the same circuit rather than flying circuits on opposite sides of the active runway. Copy od the safety message attached. The differences in flying speed and circuit size between power and glider, plus the need for power planes to give way to gliders, is causing some angst. ROO's would like more information from Clubs on this topic.

5. Incident and Accident Reporting System
It was proposed that glider operators in future submit an OPS-10 form as well as the mandatory CA005 form whenever an accident occurs (meaning: injury to persons or damage to aircraft). This would give the submitter an opportunity to be candid in describing what happened and suggest what could be learned by the rest of the gliding movement. A copy of every CA005 form is supposed to be sent to the Regional Operations Officer but this step is often not taken.

6. The *I Cannot Release* Exercise
The Ops Team has received vigorous arguments from both sides. One Club proposes abolishing this exercise on the grounds that it can be hazardous to recover from and unlikely to be used in anger, as it requires both tow hook failure and radio failure. Another Club, which flies without radio, contends that it is an essential exercise and has been needed in the past. The Ops Team does not propose any change, and notes that lateral movement out to or slightly beyond the wingtip of the tug should be sufficient to attract the attention of the tow pilot, where the wings can be rocked.

7. Acceptable Standards for A-Cat Instructor
The MOAP states that A-Cat gliding instructors are "the most senior ranked instructors, whose experience, wisdom and maturity can be relied upon to promote, maintain and, if necessary, enforce good standards." These standards should extend to all aspects of the sport, including record keeping. There was a view that the current standards are too light in the modern gliding environment, and that a candidate for A-Cat should have at least 500 hours glider time, be the holder of a three-diamond badge, have contest and alpine experience, and have been exposed to multiple launch methods and powered gliders. In addition, an A-Cat should ideally have taught pilots through the entire training syllabus.

It was suggested that all instructors should be logging the exercises they are teaching, and that this could be reviewed to ensure that adequate proficiency is being built up. It was also noted that the current instructor training check sheets in MOAP don't seem to be being used, as none have been submitted recently to support instructor rating and upgrade applications.

8. Incident Report Feedback
One instructor had asked what happens to incident reports after they have been submitted. The Ops Team spends considerable time and effort responding to these reports. It was agreed that wider promulgation of incident reports was desirable (with identifying details removed), along with a commentary and description of what has been changed - or should be improved - as a result. It was decided that each issue of Soaring NZ should be used for this purpose in future. Recent changes arising from incident reports included the change to the pre-takeoff check-list sequence and insisting on a sterile field around the cockpit while these checks are being made.