

What the Ops Team is Talking About . . .

A summary of key items discussed at the Operations Team on-line meeting on 26 January 2021. David Moody (North), David Hirst (Central), Gavin Wills (South) and Martyn Cook (NOO).

1. Incident Reports for Dec 2020 - Jan 2021

- rudder jammed in flight - hair tie jammed inside rudder push-rod bearing - lots of force required
- Arcus wing dragged on ground during self-launch, encountered long grass, veered off into fence
- wing drop stall on winch, slow start followed by a power surge, winch driver comms issues
- cross-country aerotow, glider on wrong frequency, brief cloud entry due to inadequate comms
- ground loop after landing, cross-wind gust, long grass under wing, glider rotated 180°, no damage
- ice formed between flap and fuselage, aileron control "not normal", wing ballast tank leaking
- wheel up landing - wheel not retracted after launch then moved to opposite position pre-landing
- l'Hotellier connection to left flap not properly connected - discovered just prior to launch
- multi-probe not inserted far enough into fin receptacle - no ASI - glider unfamiliar to this pilot
- winch launch with airbrakes unlocked - first flight on type - pre-launch check list not followed
- tail skid detached during landing after temporary repair made the previous day, minor damage

Commentary on Selected Incidents:

This is the second time recently in which a loose object in the cockpit has caused controls to jam in flight. The previous example was a plastic pill container which jammed the aileron linkage. Loose objects can be introduced by passengers who may not be aware of the hazard. Some gliders have "gaps" where loose articles can drop into the cavities in which control linkages run. These should be blocked off with tape or other means. In these two cases the foreign objects could be deformed and control regained, but lots of force was required. A more solid object (like a coin, key or even cell phone) could be more serious. Another possible culprit is the ballpoint pen, often kept in the cockpit. Best to have a biro with no moving parts, as some retractable ones can come apart.

The second incident is a warning to operators of the Arcus glider type, which has a distinctive wing configuration and lots of dihedral. As a result, when a wing tip is on the ground it is very heavy to lift up. The glider is tilted over by about 10°. A wing-down launch on a grass runway becomes a risky manoeuvre because the wing tip can become snagged in long grass as it did in this incident. A second factor with the self-launch version of the Arcus is the high thrust line of the propeller, which means the tail lifts easily, resulting in a loss of steering authority from the tail wheel.

There is very little room to vary the standard procedure on a winch launch, especially in the first 100 feet of altitude. If the glider gets airborne but does not accelerate to a safe launch speed before entering full climb there is a high risk of a wing-drop stall. The winch driver must always open the throttle at the correct rate (typically 3-4 seconds from idle to "climb power") and must then hold the correct power setting for the glider type. There won't be time to salvage a poor initial launch using radio calls - the glider pilot must abandon the launch if it is not proceeding normally. Pilots are advised to "preload" critical actions using the five eventualities in the WASOB checklist.

On a cross-country ferry flight the glider pilot must be on the same radio frequency as the tow plane, particularly operating in controlled airspace. In this case the tow pilot elected to increase air speed to navigate around a front that was approaching faster than forecast, but was unable to advise the glider pilot - who was not on the frequency that had been agreed at the pre-flight briefing. The glider pilot elected to release due to the high aerotow speed and briefly entered cloud before gliding safely to the destination. The tow pilot was concerned for the safety of the glider and alerted ATC, who later filed a report with CAA. Gliding NZ was then asked for an investigation report, which is still pending. This is a classic case of a series of small decisions leading to a more serious situation.

2. Re-training Pilots After Incidents

A number of clubs have reported that they have chosen to restrict privileges for a pilot who has not maintained currency, made a serious error of judgement, or perhaps been involved in an incident or other action which could have resulted in an accident. The Ops Team discussed how Gliding NZ might provide support to CFI's in how to handle these delicate situations, which can be demanding on CFI's and senior instructors. Key points arising from the discussion:

- some form of report is useful as a "handover" to other instructors, especially in a larger club
- each restriction has its own unique aspects so a standard response is unlikely to fit
- a written "re-training plan", agreed to by all parties, could be useful - including pass standards
- be clear about what needs to be achieved to enable the restrictions to be lifted

3. Log Book Ratings and Endorsements

While conducting BFR's it has become apparent that not all pilots maintain a satisfactory record of their log book endorsements and aircraft type ratings. All required endorsements have been listed in a separate section in the new training program. For example, a separate log book endorsement is required for each launch method. A complication with high-hour pilots is that these endorsements and ratings can be scattered through several log books, and hard to find. One idea considered was a summary document putting all the endorsements in one place - a kind of *gliding passport*. This would make it easier for pilots visiting another site to prove their credentials. NZ gliding log books have a short section in the front where endorsements can be listed, and pages for type conversions may be at the back. These should be verified during a BFR to ensure that the pilot has all the required ratings and endorsements for the type of flying being done.

4. Distribution of "Ops Team Talking"

This issue of *Ops Team Talking* is being emailed directly to all instructors on the Gliding NZ database. Previously the ROO's were emailing out to Club CFI's, and asking them to forward to members of their instructor panels. It has come to our attention that some instructors have not been receiving their own copy, so we have decided to change to providing a direct email link. We have been advised that there could still be a problem getting past some email spam filters. The 22 back copies have been placed on the Gliding NZ web site under [News > Safety Bulletins](#) and new issues will be added.

5. Post-Launch Check List

One suggestion submitted to the Ops Team was to train pilots to apply a post-launch check list, which could include such items as wheel up, trim, frequency. The arguments raised against this suggestion were that there are already plenty of check lists for more critical phases of flight, and that most pilots can figure out their own post-launch actions for themselves.

Martyn Cook
National Operations Officer
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