

LEARNING TO FLY AT LASHAM

Introduction

Lasham is a big club with over 650 members, and especially on your first few visits it seems as though there is much to learn, not least about the way the club operates. These notes will give you some guidance, and go a long way towards answering the many questions that you will have. Because prices may change, these are available on separate sheets.

Can anybody learn to fly a glider at Lasham?

Anybody can learn to fly a glider and Lasham's facilities and standards make it one of the best places to learn.

No qualifications are needed. You do not need to be particularly courageous, mechanically-minded, wealthy or young. It is often said that if you can drive a car, you can fly a glider. Throughout your training, your progress will be carefully monitored. You will never be allowed to do anything beyond your competence.

You need to sign a medical declaration before you fly. If you have a condition that causes you doubts, especially a tendency to epilepsy or black-outs, then consult your doctor. Your eye-sight must be good. If it has not been checked within the past two years, have an eye-test and change your glasses, if necessary. Your doctor will have to certify your health before you can fly solo.

Lasham has a two-seat glider that has been equipped with hand controls to assist people that have limited use of their legs.

Age ranges

Anyone under 18 years old will require the written consent of a parent or guardian. Children under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian while at the airfield. Children over 12 years old will be able to fly at the discretion of the instructor conducting the lesson. Children under twelve years old are unlikely to be within the height and weight limits. The legal minimum age for solo flight in a glider is sixteen years old. This means that anyone learning more than a year or so before their sixteenth birthday will have a long and frustrating wait before they can fly solo. See also "*Advice to Parents*" available from the Lasham office. Special arrangements and prices are available to pilots under 26 years old. See the separate document "*Lasham Youth*"

Sizes and weights

If you are heavier than 16st 4lb (228lb, 103 kg), you will not be able to fly in our gliders as most gliders have a weight limit of 242 lb (110 kg) for each seat. The pilot's weight must include the weight of a parachute (15 lb or 7 kg). **If you weigh more than 103kg or 228lbs then you cannot fly in a glider.** People over 6' 4" (193cm) may not be able to fly in our gliders. The lower weight limit is approximately 44kg (7 stone or 98 pounds). The minimum height for pupils is approximately five feet (152 cm).

How do I start?

The first step is to arrange trial membership with the Lasham Office (Tel: 01256 384900). Flights under this scheme are available seven days a week, weather permitting. You can give vouchers

for trial membership as gifts. The trial lesson will enable you to determine whether you could take pleasure in piloting an aircraft, though almost everyone thoroughly enjoys their trial flights.

You can book a single trial flight or a 'Flying Start' which is three flights. Each of these introductory flights is by a tow behind a powered aircraft, known as an aero-tow. Each tow is to 2,500 feet.

Trial membership gives you three months' membership of the club to enable you to continue to fly at club rates. After the trial lesson, your instructor will explain what options exist to continue training at Lasham. This document also sets out these options and how the training of pilots is organised at Lasham.

Evening trial lessons

It is also possible to book trial lessons for groups of between six and twenty five people in the evenings at a lower cost than the trial lessons during the day. Evening trial flights can be booked between April to September. The office can provide details of group and corporate events. A separate document entitled "Evening Trial Lessons" is available from the office.

Method of training

Training is essentially practical and 'hands-on'. A small multiple choice examination is given shortly after solo, but there is very little 'theory' up to this stage.

As might be expected, safety is a constant pre-occupation of everyone associated with gliding. It inevitably has greater risks than sitting in a deck-chair, but these can be minimised greatly by careful training and sound procedures. Before you are allowed on the airfield, you must receive a briefing on "Health and Safety on Lasham Airfield". This is because everyone on the airfield faces hazards from aircraft, the associated equipment and the exposed location. On no account must you leave the fenced area of the club house to enter the airfield until you have been briefed on health and safety.

Training is done by Lasham's team of instructors. All are experienced glider pilots who have to pass a rigorous course to become instructors. After their courses they have to stay in practice and regularly get checked out by senior instructors. Note that with the exception of the Chief Flying Instructor, the Deputy Chief Flying Instructor and a seasonal weekly-course instructor, all the instructors at Lasham are unpaid. They receive no benefits from the club for devoting their time to the sport. Their only motivation is the promotion of the sport that they love and the satisfaction of teaching.

Training is conducted in two-seat gliders with dual controls. The instructor usually sits in the rear seat to monitor the actions of the pupil. (Occasionally a side-by-side motor glider is used for some training exercises.) With dual controls, the instructor can easily take charge long before a dangerous situation can develop.

The gliders themselves are designed for training. This means that they have all the characteristics that pilots need to learn about. They are also extremely robust compared to some of the high performance gliders that you will see on the airfield. Every day every glider is inspected before it flies. Every year every glider must also have a thorough overhaul. Serious failure of the gliders themselves is very rare. Parachutes are always worn but are used extremely rarely.

Lessons are generally given as a block of three winch launches. Since aero-tows give longer flights, you may only have one or two aero-tows per block. However if you have a long soaring flight, it is likely that there will be many other people wanting to use the glider when you return and in any case you will probably want a rest. After a block of lessons, you can put your name on the flying list again and we will try to fly again with you on that day if there is time.

Lasham also has a simulator which can greatly assist with training especially when the weather is not 'flyable'. This can be booked through the office. See separate document on use of Lasham's Simulator for training.

Making progress

Before you start taking lessons, you should get a log-book from the office at Lasham. Make sure that you have your flying logbook and progress sheet with you every time you go to the launch-point. The log book enables the instructors to record the progress that you make by writing comments. The next instructor will read your logbook to establish how you are getting on before flying with you. In addition, at the back of the log book is a 'Pre-solo Progress Sheet'. This lists the exercises that the pupil must perform satisfactorily before being allowed to fly solo. Instructors use this to record briefings on various topics and to record progress made on each exercise. Look after your logbook.

The exercises on the pre-solo progress sheet are designed to ensure that you have all the flying skills and judgement required to fly on your own in good conditions. A minimum of 20 launches is mandatory before your first solo, although it is very unusual for someone to solo so quickly, unless they have previous flying experience. The norm tends to be between about 60 and 100 launches, depending on aptitude and how regularly you fly. The most important thing is to learn at your own pace, and enjoy it.

Before each flight, the instructor will discuss with you the specific exercises on the progress sheet that will be covered. After the flights, the instructor will record the progress made on the progress sheet and will also write the comments in the log-book including the suggested next exercises to be attempted. The training syllabus is described in a separate document, "Training Syllabus".

You will make more progress by flying regularly. Even after two weeks away you will notice that it takes a little while to attain your previous level of skill.

Types of courses

Pilots can book on courses at the office to ensure a series of flights with the same instructor. This often assists with making rapid progress. Full details of all courses are available on the Lasham web site <http://www.lasham.org.uk> or from the Lasham Office.

Bookable weekend training

As an experiment we are trying a system where any Lasham full flying member can book a professional instructor for a morning or afternoon session at weekends. The student instructor ratio will not exceed 2 to 1. This is only available to FULL flying members of Lasham.

There will be 2 sessions a day: Morning (08.30 to 1300) or afternoon session (14.00 to 18.00) per person plus flying. If the weather is bad then you will receive ground and simulator instruction

depending on your requirements. You will not get a refund as we still have to pay the instructor! The key points are:

- Morning session 08.30 - 13.00. No more than 2 students per instructor.
- Afternoon session 14.00 - 18.00. No more than 2 students per instructor.
- All weather instruction (no refunds!) If the weather is bad then simulator or ground briefings will take place.
- There will be a charge for each session. You then pay for flying at normal club rates.

Five-day courses

If you can spare the time, this is probably the best option. Flying with the same instructor throughout the week will help you to make rapid progress. You and normally up to two other pupils will be assigned to an instructor and a dedicated glider. Courses run most weeks (Monday to Friday) from April to the end of September.

If you are not a full flying member, a course fee is payable that includes six aero-tows, glider hire, unlimited winch launches, a log-book and a sun-hat, You will also get three months' membership for you to continue to fly at club rates after the course. There is a scale of refunds if fewer than twenty winch launches are possible in a five day course (one aero-tow equals two winches). Full flying members can also enrol on five-day courses and pay a course fee and all flying at normal club rates.

Lasham has a bunk-house and camping facilities or you can stay in a local pub or hotel.

Weekend courses

2-day courses run most weekends throughout the summer. Once again, usually you and up to two other pupils will be assigned to an instructor and a dedicated glider with similar benefits to the five-day course.

If you are not a full flying member, the fee includes six aerotows, glider hire, log-book and three month membership for you to continue flying at club rates. For full flying members a course fee is also payable and flying is charged at normal club rates.

Aerotow solo in a week (Monday to Friday)

This programme is available to full members only plus a course fee and flying charges at normal club rates. With a dedicated instructor and using the Falke motor glider where appropriate, Lasham will endeavour to ensure a solo from an aerotow by Friday. You will have individual one to one training.

Because club members have already paid a subscription, they pay lower course fees. Joining Lasham involves paying a subscription and an entrance fee. However the entrance fee is waived if the new member joins within three months of the start of trial membership period or their course.

Lasham also runs more advanced courses for solo to Bronze, aerobatics, and cross-country flying.

Club flying

If you cannot spare the time for a course, another option is to just turn up on any day of the week and fly whenever you can, by adding your name to the flying list when you arrive. When it is your

turn, you will get one or two aero-tows and up to three winch launches with an instructor. This arrangement suits some people as it is a flexible way to learn, however throughout your training you will fly with many different instructors. Once you have flown your block of flights, if you have time, you can always add your name to the list to fly again later in the day.

The flying list is hung on the wall opposite the office hatch in the early morning. Write your name on the list and the type of training that you require. Usually this will be "pre-solo", sometimes abbreviated on the list to "PS". You will notice that there will be other requests such as check flights for people who are trained but 'rusty', and flights that use particular gliders. There is no particular need to get to Lasham very early to get to the top of the list. If you fly first, you will still be expected to help out afterwards.

On a day when the weather will be good, it saves times if you arrive at 8:30am or even earlier to get the gliders out of the hangar before briefing. Help wash, inspect and equip the gliders with parachutes and batteries.

At 9am each morning the flying list is taken down by the duty instructor and used at the morning briefing that occurs in the building called the 'Brown Elephant' (it is on the far side of the clubhouse and bunk-house). At this briefing the arrangements for the day are announced, the available instructors introduced and a weather forecast is given. Some initial tasks will also be assigned to those wanting to fly. If you are new to Lasham, you should introduce yourself to the duty instructor who will ensure that you are properly briefed and looked after by a more experienced member.

After the briefing, all the pupils and instructors will get the gliders and other equipment ready and positioned. This includes checking of the gliders and equipment. Ensure that if you are asked to do anything, say that you are new and have to be told what to do. These tasks include moving a glider out of the hangar, getting parachutes out of the store or walking with the glider to the launch point.

The flying list is attached to the front of the launch-point control vehicle (the bus) and you can add your name to it at any time of the day. However there is no guarantee that late arrivals will fly. If you are new to Lasham and arrive after the briefing, tell the office of your arrival. They will arrange for you to be met and briefed by an experienced member before going out onto the airfield. The office will also ensure that you have an account number to record the cost of your flying.

Weekend groups

At weekends and bank holidays, flying operations are run by one of six groups. This means the same group operates every third Saturday or Sunday. Each group consists of a group leader, several instructors, launch point controllers and general helpers, all of them volunteers. You will probably want to fly with more than one group, but eventually you may wish to associate in particular to one of these groups to provide some continuity. The groups will also appreciate having a regular helper.

Evening groups

From April to September, groups of instructors operate in the evening from 6pm. Each group consists of the same instructors and the same pupils who meet throughout the season on the same day. This provides continuity of instruction and enables you to meet the same people every week. Some of the popular groups book quickly up at the beginning of the season so it is best to make enquiries at the office around February or March but spaces are often available later.

Getting to the launch point

In your briefing on health and safety you will be told about how to cross the airfield to reach the launch-point. However on your first visits you should only cross on the advice of more experienced members.

Once briefed, you should be able to spot the launch point by looking for the red and white bus. If you cannot see the bus, ask at the office and they will tell you which runway is in use that day. The runways are named by the direction of take-off and landing, leaving the final "0" off their compass heading. The main runway used when taking off to the east is therefore known as 09 and the same runway when used towards the west is known as 27. There is a map of the airfield on the back of your progress sheet which shows the location of each of the runways.

You can leave bags, coats and snacks etc in the bus at the launch point, while you are flying or doing other tasks. However Lasham cannot take responsibility for any lost items. If you are planning to spend a long time there, remember to take some water with you!

Helping out

Lasham is not a flying school but a gliding **club**. Training is only one aspect of flying. Gliding is a social sport; it is not possible to glide without the help of volunteers to instruct you, hold your wing-tip, control the launch, fly the tug, retrieve the winch cables, to move the gliders and to retrieve gliders from distant fields. Do not therefore expect to have it all done for you. You have to pitch in and in return people will help you. Do not disappear until your turn to fly and after you have flown. Get to know people and learn the safe and proper way to do things.

It is usual to have to wait some time before it is your turn to fly. There is always plenty to do at the launch point to make sure that the day runs smoothly. Helping out is always greatly appreciated, both before and after you fly. Doing what you can to help makes your time at the launch point go more quickly, you will get to know people, and especially in the early stages you will learn a great deal just by being there and being involved with what goes on. Introduce yourself to the launch point controller and ask what you can do to help. Do not worry if it is all new to you as there are usually more experienced pilots there who will be more than happy to show you how things work. Jobs which need doing at the launch point include:

- Keeping the flying logs updated
- Helping to launch gliders both on the winch and on aerotow
- Bringing gliders back to the launch point once they have landed
- Driving the retrieve truck or retrieve winch

At any stage if you are unsure of anything please ask and make sure that you have a full briefing before taking on a job which is new to you!

Meeting people

At the launch point while you are waiting your turn, you will often encounter people who have been part way through the Lasham system and who can help by saying what it is like. You can gain a great deal by merely asking what is happening, who everyone is and what stage they have reached. Meeting up in the canteen and the bar after is a great way to find out more about Lasham.

Getting gliders out and putting them away

Each morning the gliders to be flown that day are taken out of the hangar, given their daily inspections and taken to the launch point. The more people there are to help with this, the sooner launching will start. At the end of the day, the gliders need to be packed away again. It is easy to damage gliders on the ground, especially in the confines of the hangar, so make sure you are working with someone who can show you how to move them around safely. If at any stage you see something which you think is not quite right, speak up.

Flying logs

Flying logs are one of Lasham's main sources of revenue. It is important that they are diligently maintained. If you are given the job of keeping a log, fill it out legibly to record the full details every take-off. All take-offs of gliders must be logged to ensure that the launch is charged for. The landings of all club gliders, including Surrey & Hants gliders, must also be logged. The landings of privately owned aircraft and tugs are not logged, because there are no soaring fees payable. If you want to pass on the task of keeping the log, you are responsible for handing the job on to someone else who will then also maintain the log carefully.

After your air experience flight, all subsequent flights must be recorded using a Lasham account number. The office will assign one to you. Before you leave the launch-point after your flights, remember to check the flying log to make sure that your take-off and landing have been recorded. If there is no record of your landing time, you may be charged for 2 hours of soaring!

Payment

The scale of charges is displayed near the office. Basically you pay for the launch and how long you are airborne (unless you have chosen the 'fixed price' deal). You can make a payment for the exact amount after each day's flights, ie pay as you go. There are charts near the office hatch that give the costs for winch and aerotow launches. In addition there is a charge for the time in the air for each type of glider. If the office is open they will accept payment. If the office is shut, write your name and account number on a payment slip and put the money (cash or cheque) in one of the cylindrical containers near the hatch, then put the container in the night safe drawer to the right of the hatch. You can also pay using your credit card. If you become a permanent member, you will probably just pay in lump sums to keep a credit balance on your account. Debit balances outstanding at the end of each month attract an interest charge. You can also pay for accommodation and anything else you might buy at the office via your account. Payment can also be made by phone or through Lasham's web site via Paypal.

Fixed price to solo

There is an attractive option which you may wish to consider. This is the fixed price to solo. You can fly as many winch launches as you need until you go solo or within twelve months, whichever

comes first, with no additional launch or soaring fees. The offer also includes up to six aerotows, twelve months' membership, log book, text book and sun-hat.

The office

The office can answer a wide range of queries. If they cannot answer a question, they will direct you to someone who can. It is open from 0900hrs to 1700hrs each day. You can buy books, souvenirs and some clothing from the office. In the unlikely event that you have any complaints or any comments about club operations have a chat with the Executive Manager or the Chief Flying Instructor.

Books

There are several books for early pilots which are well worth reading to reinforce the training you are getting from the instructors. Ask at the office or check out the website for those which are available to buy at the club. Ken Stewart's "Glider Pilot's Manual" and Derek Piggott's "Beginning Gliding" are particularly good for pilots learning to fly.

Other information about Lasham

If you are new to Lasham, two other documents in this series should be read: 'Health and Safety on Lasham Airfield' and 'Facilities'. These are available from the office or via the Lasham web site. (www.lasham.org.uk)

Membership & flying fees

Costs are updated each year and so are listed in a separate document available from the Lasham Office.