
CROSS-COUNTRY

Introduction

These notes are intended to remind pilots of their responsibilities when flying cross-country.

Requirements to fly cross-country

You need to have specific clearance for each cross-country flight unless you have a Blue Card rating. If you have not made a recent field landing, you lose your Blue Card rating unless you have a field-landing check in the Falke. Any rating below Blue Card, should have an annual field landing check anyway.

Any glider flying more than 5 nautical miles from its base must carry an up-to-date aeronautical chart marked with airspace and any supplementary hazards notified by NOTAMs.

You should arrange a retrieve crew. Ideally the crew should be aware of the intended route.

Briefing

On days when cross-country is expected to be possible, a briefing will normally take place in the Brown Elephant at 9:30am. At this briefing the weather will be described, tasks will be suggested and any airspace limitations will be announced.

However this briefing does not remove the responsibility from pilots to study the NOTAMs and weather forecasts themselves. A simple misunderstanding or lack of attention during the briefing might mean that the glider pilot does not take note of a significant hazard. It is therefore important to emphasise that the briefing only assists pilots and does not replace the need for their own investigation of safety issues. Pilots should therefore also study an up-to-date airspace map prior to flying as well as the daily NOTAMS and weather available in the clubhouse or briefing rooms.

Marking the planned route and hazards on the chart is an excellent way of drawing attention to potential dangers both before and during the flight.

Local airfields

Popham

Popham is a very active airfield. Powered aircraft and microlights are in circuit at most times. At the eastern end of the airfield on the approach for runway 27 is a garage. You are not allowed to over fly this garage at anytime. Approaches to 27 must be offset to the North of the Garage and a low level turn made to line on the runway once you are past it. Take offs from 09 must have a left turn out before the Garage. Popham have an air/ground frequency of **129.8 MHz** which is advisable to call if you are likely to enter the circuit. They are very friendly, a good neighbour and let us aerotow out if the main runway is in use, but do not forget that you will be required to pay the landing fee for the tug as well! Tugs must not land at Popham with the tow-rope attached.

Boscombe Down

Boscombe Down is an active airfield and has a parachute drop zone. On no account enter their ATZ without first calling on the radio. Boscombe Approach is on **126.7 MHz**. Take great care even when flying above Boscombe's ATZ as there may be traffic performing unusual manoeuvres.

Middle Wallop

Middle Wallop is also highly active airfield and also has a parachute drop zone. Do not penetrate the ATZ without first calling Middle Wallop Tower on **118.275MHz**.

Old Sarum

Old Sarum is regularly used by Lasham pilots on their first cross country flights for Silver Distance. They will appreciate a call on Old Sarum Radio **123.2MHz** so that you can ask for joining information and can alert other traffic in the vicinity of your presence.

Thrupton

Thrupton can be very busy when races are on. Call them on **130.45MHz** at any time that you would like permission to penetrate their ATZ. You will not be welcome on race-days.

Brimpton

Brimpton is another friendly airstrip just to the north of the Aldermaston Restricted Area. They would like you to call them on **135.125MHz** when you are low in the vicinity. Your circuit should be to the north, ie away from the Aldermaston zone.

Restricted and danger areas

There are two restricted areas (R101 & R104) to the north of Lasham, these protect the Aldermaston and Burghfield Atomic Research Establishments. Flight within these areas is not permitted by gliders.

Danger area (D130) to the south is an army firing range and should not be crossed below 1500 ft. The Danger areas associated with the Salisbury Plain complex and Porton Down (D127) to the west should be strictly observed. Please ensure you are familiar with the rules that apply to these areas before going close to them.

Airspace

If you fly south-west from Lasham or returning from that direction, you are likely to come close to Southampton's Class D airspace. The northernmost tip of the airspace is near the Sutton Scotney Services on the A34, (the dual carriageway between Winchester and Newbury. A straight line from Salisbury to Lasham will take you through the controlled airspace, if you are above 2500 feet AMSL. When go to or returning from the south-west, it is safest to add Bullington Cross as an extra turn-point.

Due north of Basingstoke, the London Terminal Manoeuvring Area descends to 5000 feet AMSL. Note also the height of the LTMA (4500 feet AMSL) to the east of Hampstead Norris which extends to the east edge of Newbury and almost as far as Didcot.

If lost VMC should be maintained. If there is a risk that restricted airspace has been entered, land immediately, in a field if necessary.

When you return

If you are returning low, it is advisable to check the direction of launching. Lasham is occasionally subject to sea-breezes and so there can be a significant change in the wind direction.

There is no automatic right for returning pilots to practice competition finishes. If there are any other gliders in the circuit competition finishes should not be attempted. It is possible that the sudden appearance of a fast moving glider would seriously distract a less experienced pilot (see *Local flying rules and procedures.*)

Are you back?

There is a risk that a pilot may have had an accident but no-one else knows about it. It is therefore strongly recommended that you leave the doors of the glider's trailer open, (or the lower flap on Cobra-type trailers. This will enable any missing pilots to be identified at the end of the day. It is also good practice to keep another pilot informed (briefly!) of your whereabouts during your flight, especially if landing-out seems probable.

Cross-Country Book

After your return you should enter your flight in Lasham's Cross Country Book. It is important that Lasham collects the statistics on how much it uses airspace. Any field landing should also be recorded in the book to ensure that we invite the landowner or tenant to the Farmers' Party at the end of the season.

Outlandings

If you have been flying cross-country, you have an obligation to other pilots to retrieve them if they have landed out. You should check that the cards on the land-out board are all dealt with. Each favour that you do will pay dividends in future in terms of reciprocal retrieves and maintaining the club's spirit.

CROSS-COUNTRY BRIEFING SHEET

This should be completed before every cross-country flight until the pilot has been cleared for unlimited flying (Blue Card rating). The sheet should be kept by the pilot.

Pilot's name..... Glider type.....

Time..... Day..... Date.....

Intended task: Lasham to.....

Trailer checked as serviceable today?.....

Nominated crew for retrieve.....

Maximum launch height (Silver C attempts only).....

Surface winds..... Visibility.....

Cloud base now..... Expected cloud base.....

Correct maps with route clearly marked.....

Restricted areas and danger areas en route.....

Airways, ATZ and other airspace restrictions.....

State of fields..... Warning about slopes.....

Warning about approach speeds for uphill slopes.....

Heights for selecting fields and decision to land.....

Possibility and hazards of sea breeze front.....

Permission to land at the destination airfield.....

Minimum height to leave airfield.....

Airfields to avoid landing at.....

Useable airfields en route.....

NOTAMs in force today.....

Landing certificate for Silver C.....

Briefing instructor's name (Block capitals).....

Field selection

At about 2000 feet AGL, look at the terrain ahead and decide if it contains any likely fields. You still have the height to fly many kilometres to somewhere better.

By 1500 feet AGL, you should be looking at an area with some potential fields. You still have plenty of time to choose the field, while being alert to any lift that may appear in the locality. If no field has appeared by now, flying down-wind will enable you to cover more ground.

By 1000 feet AGL, you should have chosen your field, and by 800 feet you should have started your downwind leg. If you encounter lift below 800 feet on the downwind leg, you should ignore it. You are now committed to landing in your chosen field.

Six attributes are important. They have the initial letters WSSSSO:

- Wind
- Size
- Slope
- Surface
- Stock
- Obstructions

A working wheel-brake is essential to minimise the ground run.

The landing run is greatest along the diagonal, if slope, obstructions, furrows and the wind permit.

Avoid all down-slopes and cross-slopes. Any slope that is visible from 1000 feet other than an up-slope, is unacceptable.

Always land in the same direction as the wheel-tracks, even in stubble fields.

If you just clear a 15 metre obstruction, you will round out further into the field by at least ten times this height, ie over 150 metres into the field. Give obstructions adequate clearance. Be wary of poles running along the boundary of a field or across a field. Electric fences and post-and-wire fences are often difficult to see from the air.

Do not forget the normal pre-landing checks, including tightening your straps and lowering the undercarriage. Fly a wide circuit. Do not fly close to keep checking the field. If too high, use airbrakes liberally. Aim to fly two average fields out to the side and two fields downwind.

If you have chosen an uphill field, you must be aware of the optical illusion that you will experience. You will instinctively imagine that the field is flat, and so you will tend to adjust the attitude of the glider to make the approach look normal. An approach speed of 65 knots, and even 70 knots for steep up-slopes, should therefore be maintained if you are landing on an up-slope, especially if you are landing into wind because there may be curl-over. You should also round out sooner than normal because you have to raise the nose further.