

## GHC Newsletter Spring 2020

Well folks we have **good** and **bad** news, which shall I start with? OK, let's get the bad out of the way, not that it's going to be any surprise to the great majority.

### **BAD NEWS - FLYING HAS CEASED AT LASHAM**

As the coronavirus epidemic took its hold on the UK the Lasham Gliding Society (LGS) progressively tightened down in line with UK government advice and directives. By the 24<sup>th</sup> March all flying had ceased at Lasham (apart from the 2 Excel jet servicing operation), the clubhouse closed, and members advised to stay away from the airfield until further notice unless a visit had real urgency. The GHC committee took the decision on 17<sup>th</sup> March to cease immediately all hangar tours and organised group visits.

That's where we are currently. Note our 2 hangars, which effectively are now just serving to give safe storage for vintage gliders, are regularly checked for security.

So when will this nightmare end? We simply have no idea. The LGS will advise when they see it as safe and acceptable to restart flying, which obviously will need some relaxation on the current safe distancing advice. The LGS will advise its members by e-mail and its website. The GHC will continue to update news via its website, [www.glidingheritage.org.uk](http://www.glidingheritage.org.uk) . When flying gliders is sanctioned again we'll send out an e-mail.

### **GOOD NEWS – THE WORKSHOP**

In fact **VERY** good news! In the Autumn 2019 Newsletter I advised that we'd reached £30k in funds set aside for building the GHC (24m x 12m) workshop. The estimate was we needed £130k to complete it to a well-equipped specification and wouldn't start on the construction until we had £70k of earmarked funds. November 2019 and we became aware that we had been left a truly substantial legacy by one of our members, Trish Williams, who sadly died in April 2019. Trish had been a Lasham member for the best part of 20 years, and at RAE GC Farnborough for many years before. This bequest leaves us fully funded with respect to the completion of the workshop.

Lowthers have been chosen to construct the shell of the building, the same company who built both of our hangars. Despite the appallingly wet winter at Lasham quite a lot of preparation groundwork has been done by a small team led by Gary Pullen and Richard Moyse. Wednes 1<sup>st</sup> Apr and the foundation pits for the vertical supports were filled with concrete and the base plates positioned. Good progress, but whether we can make much more in the near future remains to be seen. It depends on when Lowthers can come along to Lasham to erect the building, all the steelwork has been manufactured and is at their factory. After that equipping the workshop is a very substantial operation. I'm very confident that with social distancing relaxed we'll get plenty of volunteers along, but, hmmm, when will that be. The thought before coronavirus was that we might be able to get the workshop operational by late Autumn. That's now looking optimistic, but with an insulated shell in place we should be able to work on finishing the project despite what Winter 2020/21 might throw

at us! The workshop will be named the “Trish Williams Workshop”, I very much look forward to a large attendance when we hold the opening ceremony.



(Work completed on 1<sup>st</sup> April, photo Gary Pullen)

## **FLYING**

**As said there isn't any!** As I write this it's the best spell of sustained Spring weather I can ever recall since starting flying at Lasham with Imperial College in the autumn of 1965! Aaarrghh! A few points to make:

- a.) It doesn't make financial sense to insure all of our potentially flyable gliders. Before the accursed coronavirus had taken over the headlines we'd decided that for 2020 our flyable gliders would be, in order of preference as follows. This extract from the Jan GHC CoM minutes: Agreement was : One of the Zugvogels; The “Beast” YS53 2 seater; The Bergfalke 2 seater; Skylark 2; Oly 2. Ideally we would also like to have an open cockpit glider, so the prototype Prefect is the obvious one. However, whether it will be seen as acceptable by the LGS to fly with the new equipment requirements from the airspace changes coming in on the 27<sup>th</sup> Feb remains to be seen. If not the prototype Prefect then the prototype Dart.

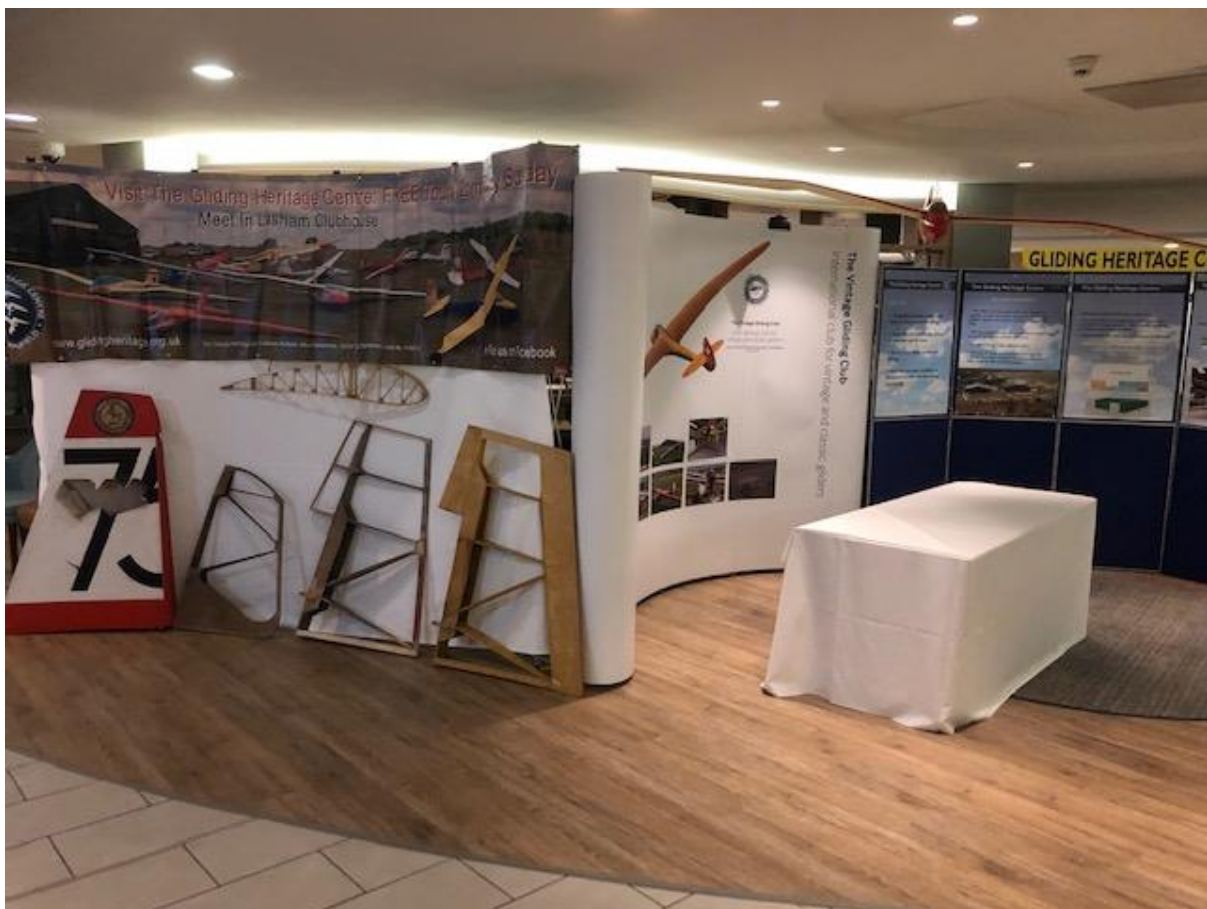
This list could well get changed / truncated depending on when we start flying again. No point in carrying out a CofA for a glider and paying for it when you're pretty sure it's not going to fly.

- b.) “New equipment requirements” relating to the Farnborough airspace are mentioned above. The LGS flying committee have mandated that to fly from Lasham following the introduction of the new airspace your glider has to have:

- FLARM. The GHC has currently acquired 4 FLARM units which will be fitted into our gliders as per a.). Note they need to be fixed rather than portable.
- A radio. This can be a hand held and the GHC has 1 at the moment and actively looking to acquire more. If you have your own hand held and are intending to fly a GHC glider a good idea to bring it with you.
- A moving map display to show the airspace. How to handle this is being researched. It doesn't have to be an expensive dedicated piece of kit such as an Oudie. There are a number of free or cheap airspace apps that you can run on a mobile. We'll be advising further on how the GHC is going to meet this requirement – have no doubt that once flying resumes at Lasham you'll need to show this capability before getting a launch!

## EVENTS

The GHC had a big stand in prime position in the foyer of the Belfry hotel, Nottingham, for the BGA annual conference on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> February. It marked the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the BGA and explains why we were given such a good spot to exhibit in! The conference just sneaked in before the door on all mass gathering events got slammed shut as the coronavirus epidemic started to seriously escalate.



(GHC stand at the BGA conference, photo Gary Pullen)

Gary Pullen organised the stand which attracted a lot of interest, estimated attendance at the event was 350 - 400. A number of Lasham GHC members helped man it during the day and it was agreed

that it had been worth doing and justified what was quite a significant journey. Sadly it could well be that the BGA conference is the only external event we go to in 2020. We normally support local fetes and open days at venues such as Popham, Brooklands, Blackbushe, Goodwood, etc. I'll be pleasantly surprised if we do manage to support any further external events in 2020.

### **TASK WEEK 2020**

We've scheduled this for Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> August to Fri 28<sup>th</sup> so a possible date for your diary. Impossible in the current circumstances to say whether it will actually go ahead. I would like to make a decision Yeah or Nay at least 2 months before.

### **NEW GLIDERS**

- Gary Pullen and I retrieved an ex ATC T31 from the Solent Sky museum donated by them on the 11th March. It needs recovering before it can go on display so eventually no doubt it will be spending some time in our new workshop. Too early to say whether we'll look to get it airworthy. I'd never been before but the Solent Sky museum is well worth a visit – now temporarily closed because of the coronavirus.
- We've been offered a Schweizer TG3a 2 seater by the Imperial War museum. This glider was definitely used by the USAAF in WW2 for training military glider pilots who went on to fly the Waco C4G in action. We're interested but a firm decision to say "Yes" hasn't been made. On the plus side the IWM say it's in very good condition, on the negative we already have the Laister – Kaufmann TG4. So when "non-essential" trips become acceptable again we'll probably go up to Duxford to have a look at it, assuming the offer still stands. Looking forward to it, the IWM is another museum I haven't been to!
- A Torva 15 has also been offered, one of I believe 3 built in the UK in the early 1970s. The Torva is the first British designed and built "glass" glider – "Good Heavens" I hear you say, "The GHC thinking of acquiring a glass glider!". Like the TG3a no decision has been taken at this time.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

- Get flying again!
- Complete the workshop, fully kitted out, and get it operational.
- Looking ahead beyond the workshop it looks like our next major project will be an extension of the 2<sup>nd</sup> hangar. We may well have the financing for this already in place.
- Out over the horizon a building in the GHC meadow to house our archives, provide lecturing facilities, and act as a display area for visitors. Perhaps also a shop and a café – dreaming now!

That's the Newsletter, folks. Unprecedented times! – and very much looking forward to the return of happier ones, stay safe!

Glyn Bradney (GHC Secretary) - 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020