

## GHC Newsletter Spring 2021

This time last year the Spring 2020 newsletter was announcing the grim news of the first Lasham lockdown, tempered by the better news that work on constructing the new GHC workshop had started. Fast forward a year (You could never have made it up could you?!) and real light starting to appear at the end of what has been a very long and dark tunnel. Flying recommenced at Lasham on the 29<sup>th</sup> March and the GHC started its new season flying on the 31<sup>st</sup> March with Gary Pullen flying the prototype Olympia 460 – and the workshop? Yes, that’s finally finished, or at least finished as far as operational use goes!

### THE WORKSHOP

A reminder of the start of construction, this picture featured in the newsletter one year ago.



(As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, photo Gary Pullen)

The workshop became fully operational and charging for use of its facilities on the 1<sup>st</sup> March. There’s been a lot of interest/enquiries from PO glider owners, and, oh, a fair few from “glass” owners as well! I guess they’re attracted by a large, very well equipped and warm workshop that has its own loos – and a kitchen as well! We’re still waiting for the building regulations to be signed-off by the inspector, and the required inspection should be happening shortly. Only when this has been done can the general public be admitted into the workshop viewing area. One other problem though, the

general public currently are not even allowed onto the airfield! Fingers crossed that will change in June if the government's Covid unlocking plans stay on schedule.

And where we are today.



There's a **really great** video tour with commentary of the workshop put together by Paul Haliday. Go to the Home page of our website to see it.

## **HONOURS! – AND GETTING RECOGNITION**

Gary Pullen has been a member of the GHC since its very inception back in 2011/2012. He's always been at the very heart of everything that's being going on, whether it's the construction of our buildings, maintenance of them and our gliders, or flying/instruction in GHC gliders.

This has not gone unnoticed! – and Gary was proposed to the Royal Aeronautical Club as being worthy of being awarded recognition for his fantastic efforts over the years. I'm delighted to tell you they concurred, and he's been very deservedly awarded their Bronze medal. The only sad thing is the usual very glittery awards ceremony won't be going ahead this year because of Covid.



(Gary giving a commentary during the GHC September 2015 Open Day)

Do you know what the acronym MAHN stands for? A couple of months ago I didn't – its' "Military Aviation Heritage Networks". Go check it out, do a Google on MAHN, it's a very impressive website and an even more impressive list of members! Well, the GHC were asked if we would like to join which we very happily agreed to. All of the huge amount of work the members have put in over the past 10 years is paying off, we're getting "recognition".

## **FLYING**

Ahh, that's started again! Here's a picture of the first GHC glider just about to take to the air in 2021 – the Oly 460 prototype test flown by Gary Pullen on the 31<sup>st</sup> March.



(Ready for its first flight since Sept 1999, photo Paul Haliday)

Which of the GHC owned gliders with a CofA can be flown is decided through a combination of factors. The norm in the soaring months is we'd have six or seven available to fly, perhaps even more if we're participating in a task week. Right now because of Covid just three of our gliders can be airborne at the same time, that's one two-seater and two single seaters.

Gliders that have a valid CofA and are currently insured to fly are:

- YS53 Sovereign two-seater
- EoN Olympia 460 prototype
- Skylark 2

With a resumption of normal flying at Lasham, and an obvious demand for more GHC gliders to be available, we can increase this number at short notice. Any block will be because they're out of CofA.

Not set in stone but new gliders expected to be getting CofAs so they can be added to the list of three above are:

- Dart 15 prototype
- Zugvogel 3b
- Another two-seater, Bergfalke the likely one.

Any queries on which GHC gliders can currently be flown and how many can be airborne at the same time, speak to Gary Pullen or myself.

## **EVENTS**

We're very much hoping we will be able to support some external events in 2021. Normally our first one is the BGA annual conference up in Nottingham, but that hasn't happened this year because of Covid. Any events we can attend are conditional on the government lockdown calendar being implemented as scheduled – and us being invited! We'll update everyone via the website when the current "red" light switches to a hopeful "amber", and finally a, fingers crossed, "green".

## **NEW GLIDERS**

Just one expected which should be arriving at Lasham shortly, the Torva Sprite which will be coming from Norfolk. This was the first British designed and built "glass" glider, a single seater.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

### **SHORT TERM**

- Restart hosting GHC tours. This can't happen until the LGS agree to the general public being able to come to the airfield again. Earliest possible date would appear to be post the 21<sup>st</sup> June, unlikely I think after the 17<sup>th</sup> May, and it's well possible we might have to wait for the government to completely remove all the Covid restrictions. We'll announce it on the website.
- Get back to regularly flying our airworthy gliders, especially on the first Sunday of the month and in the "soaring" season (Apr – Sept) the third as well.

### **THE MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK**

- An opening event for the Trish Williams Memorial Workshop. The GHC CoM are agreed that we do not want this to be blighted by Covid restrictions.
- A celebratory event for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary – the GHC officially came into being when the company was incorporated on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012.
- Whilst it's not yet been formally agreed by the CoM it's anticipated that our next major project will be extending the second hangar by 20m.
- We actually have the money to do this right now, there doesn't need to be any fund raising. However, after the odyssey of getting the workshop completed and the phenomenal amount of work put in by a small team, it's agreed we need a break! So the hangar extension is unlikely to go ahead until the Spring of 2022 earliest. In the meantime we'll be monitoring the Covid situation in the UK. All fingers crossed it just becomes one very, very bad memory.

### **LOOKING OVER THE HORIZON**

- Our long-term aspiration has always been to have a Museum building where we could have displays, give lectures, keep our archives, have a shop – and maybe even a café! The original plan was for it to also house a workshop. That is no longer a requirement for the Museum building as a workshop has been very successfully provided by a separate project. Back in 2014 we approached the Heritage Lottery Fund for a substantial grant to fund the construction of a Museum building. This they refused in 2015 citing their reasons as A.) "We were a very young organisation" B.) "We didn't have any paid staff". Well, things have

moved on a long way since then! We could decide to reapply, though the memories of the enormous amount of work involved in submitting the first bid, and its eventual outcome, aren't pleasant ones.

Glyn Bradney, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021