

September 2003

Dear S&H Members,

Parachutes

I get to have most of the fun looking after the Surrey & Hants parachutes. Trying to keep them together with the right bag in the right place through the season makes me wonder whether everyone is fully aware of how the system is supposed to work.

The evidence of the season suggests maybe not, so forgive me if I remind everyone what is meant to happen, and point out some of the inconvenience for us all if it does not.

If you think you already know the system, then fast forward to the Consequences then do read the System section, after all, to make sure it is never, ever you that is responsible for the Consequences!

The System:

- 1 Almost invariably, a S&H glider will be used with a S&H parachute (i.e. not a LGS parachute).
- 2 Every S&H glider has its own labelled parachute, usually identified by a blue cloth label on the right shoulder strap.
- 3 Every S&H parachute has its own bag, usually sky blue and always with the glider number marked, usually in black on at least one of the carrying straps.
- 4 S&H parachutes are stored in the Clubhouse parachute room on the mid-height shelves facing the door.
- 5 The correct parachute should be taken (with its bag) when the glider is to be used, the bag should stay with the glider (yes, there is room), and the parachute should be returned at the end of flying in its own bag to the parachute room.
- 6 Every 6 months, every parachute has to be re-packed and this takes typically 7-14 days. Dates are staggered to minimise the inconvenience. If you cannot quickly find the right parachute, ask the Office for the 'parachute book' and check to see whether the one you want has gone for re-packing. If it has, all is not lost. There are about 5 'spare' parachutes, bagged and labelled in the same way as those designated to a particular glider – take one of these and use it for the day exactly as you would use the glider's own parachute.
- 7 Encourage and help others, especially new S&H members, to follow the system above for the benefit of all.

Some Consequences:

- 1 Anyone taking a 'wrong' parachute is forcing others to do the same after wasting time searching for their own.

- 2 Using the wrong bag at the end of the day will prompt at least one other person to do the same thing. By the next day it is difficult for everyone to find the proper parachutes for their gliders, and the confusion gets steadily worse. Note that this affects the original wrongdoer as well when he/she next wishes to fly.
- 3 Leaving a parachute bag in the parachute room invites others to use it when they should not (see point above).
- 4 Using the wrong bag, when the right one is in the launch-point bus or a car boot – see point 2 above again. (By the way, I suspect the bags for SH3 and SH5 parachutes must be in car boots – please can they come back!)
- 5 From a personal perspective, I unnecessarily waste about half an hour once per fortnight taking most of the parachutes out of wrong bags and putting them into right ones (if I can find them) when checking that all are in order.

Final Thought:

What we all wish to do is to fly gliders with the same level of convenience and enjoyment as we would if they belonged to a syndicate of two – ourself and one other. Imagine yourself getting ready for an important flight, one that needs your full attention and all the preparation time you have. How much patience would you have with a syndicate partner who had not bothered to leave the parachute in its own bag and in its normal storage location? Not much, I dare say.

Final, final thought: A recent event very close to Lasham heavily underlined the importance of taking proper care of parachutes.

Happy flying!

Colin Hunt