Shropshire Soaring Group - Flying Notes 2021

Introduction

These notes form guidance relating to the operation of gliders at Sleap with the Shropshire Soaring Group. They supplement the BGA's "Managing Flying Risk" and other operational regulations with which all members must comply and be fully knowledgable. All glider pilots operating from Sleap must also comply with Shropshire Aero Club's rules relating to flying and the operation of the airfield except only where they are obviously inapplicable for glider flying. Even in such cases, gliders must not be operated in conflict with the power flying rules.

Self-Authorisation - the basic principle of gliding at Sleap

As the Group aims to provide soaring facilities for relatively experienced pilots operating without direct supervision, all members fly on a 'self authorised' basis and must show high standards of individual responsibility. As there is no duty instructor arrangement, individual pilots are responsible for ensuring the safe operation of their own flying, and for supporting other members. Before flying on a self-authorised basis, pilots must read and familiarise themselves with these notes which will also be supplemented by an on site briefing for those new to operating from Sleap.

Flight authorisation and currency requirements

The minimum currency requirements for self authorisation are:-

- 10 glider flights in the preceding 12 months including at least one in the preceding three months.
- P1 gliding time of 100 hours, including 15 hours in the preceding year,
- Silver C,
- a satisfactory check flight with a BGA rated instructor or equivalent during the preceding 2 year period
- no accidents or serious incidents without subsequent clearance to fly.
- valid medical or declaration

Current members authorise their own flights including cross-country flights. As such they take individual responsibility for weather interpretation and flight planning including checking of NOTAMS and use of current charts as well as ensuring that they operate only in conditions which are within their own and their gliders limits.

Members who do not satisfy the minimum currency requirements must obtain the approval of the CFI to fly P1. They must also maintain extra safety margins and not fly out of gliding range of the site until they are current again.

Any member involved as P1 in a flying accident or serious incident at Sleap or elsewhere must report this as soon as possible to the CFI or, if he is not available, any other SSG BGA instructor and must not fly P1 again until approval is obtained. Such incidents will include any failure to rig correctly and any known or suspected air-misses or airspace infringements.

Visiting glider pilots must meet similar currency standards to members. If you require a general briefing or have any queries, please check with the CFI before coming to Sleap as we do not operate a Duty Instructor rota.

All pilots must also ensure that if they are flying cross country that details of their intended task and route are known to other members present on the day in the event that overdue procedures need to be commenced (see later).

Defined Roles - variations from normal (training) gliding club practice

We do not have rotas for duty pilots, duty Instructors or duty launch marshalls. Each pilot is responsible for the conduct of his or her flying and, as a responsible pilot, for supporting the flying of other members. Appropriate functions are covered by the normal airfield operation - including the use of Sleap Radio for an Air/Ground Service.

Instructional Flying

Any instructional flying including 'check flights' must be by qualified instructors specifically authorised by the CFI for that purpose. They will be responsible for the operation of the glider(s) in which the instruction or supervised flying is taking place - including solo flights by pilots who do not meet the currency requirements. They will not necessarily act as 'duty instructors' on the day for the supervision of self authorised flying by other members who meet the currency requirements.

Dual flying of two seat gliders

All other dual flying other than instructional flights must be designated clearly into one of the following categories according to the experience, qualifications and authorisation of the P1, the purpose for the flight, and compliance with any restrictions on the glider insurance.

- Passenger flights when the P1 is authorised by the CFI for passenger carrying, meets the appropriate medical and currency standards and is the handling pilot at all times.
- Mutual flights when both P1 and P2 are current solo pilots and the nominated P1 is the handling pilot at all times below 500'
- Safety flights when the P1 has a medical restriction and the P2 is present to assist or take over if necessary - as specifically authorised by the CFI

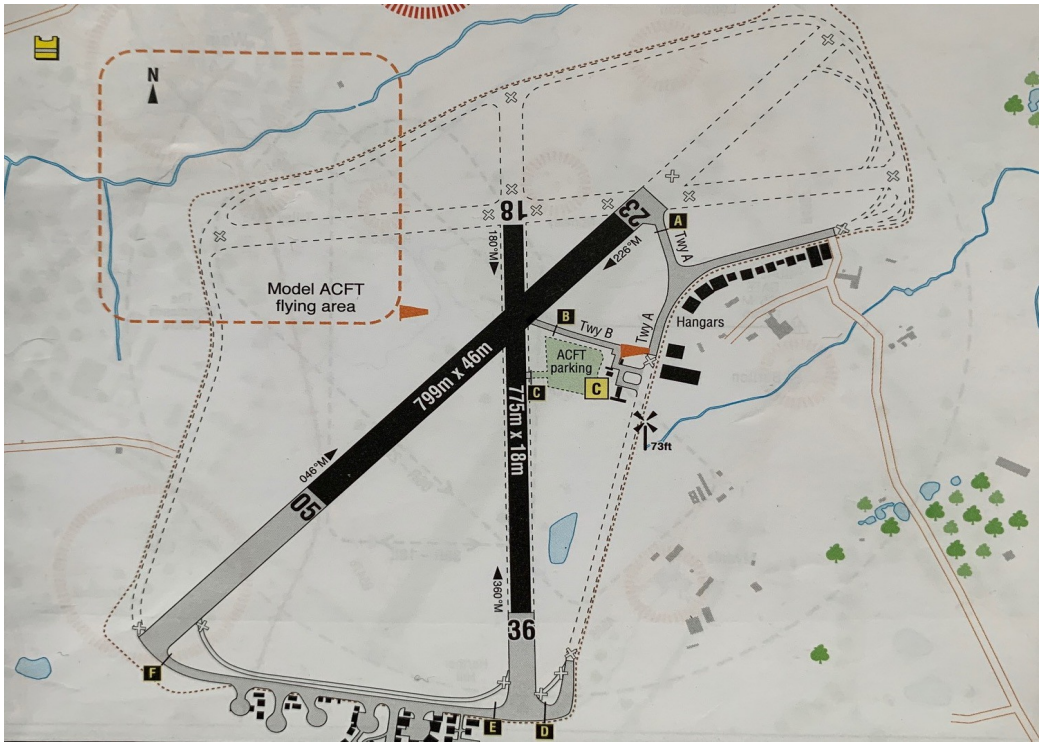
For further guidance, refer to the BGA Managing Flying Risk “Flying with other pilots” and additional documents in the group website Flying notes section.

Airfield Radio

All airfield radio communications are on the Sleap Radio frequency of 122.455. This is an air/ground service and as such only able to provide limited information. When the airfield is operational, the air/ground operator and/or SAC office should always be consulted before glider operations commence. When Sleap Radio is not active, members must operate with due regard for other known and unknown users of the site. This will include appropriate use of radio calls to “Sleap Traffic” to announce your position and intentions. When using 122.455, begin your radio call sign with the word "Glider" (e.g. "Glider 258") to avoid any confusion with power traffic and heighten awareness of your status. In general, do not use “G” or “Golf” registration prefixes as this may lead to confusion as to whether you are a powered aircraft.

Rigging Area and Launch Queue

Glider rigging normally takes place on a disused runway 10/28, positioning subject to runway in use or on the dispersal area to the east of the 05 or 36 thresholds. This should ensure the road and taxiway remain clear and not interfere with the approach undershoot area. The location of the glider operations should be advised to the duty tower operator/SAC office and should take into account current and forecast wind directions. This should be done by the first pilot who wishes to move his or her glider onto to the airfield, and who will then organise the initial set up of the rigging area. Vehical access to the rigging area should be via the perimeter track and non-active runways. Whenever gliders are rigged, parked or queued for launching, there must be sufficient clearance from the active runway to avoid any real or apparent danger to other traffic including other gliders landing and turning off into the rigging area.



Logging of flights

Agreement must be reached as to who will keep a daily flying log and be responsible for prompt submission to the Treasurer.

Glider Launching

The key difference when launching gliders at Sleap is the need to cut the time spent on the active runway to the safe minimum required to line up the glider behind the tug, remove any ground handling equipment, attach the rope and start the aerotow. By prior agreement between the ground crew, glider and tug pilot then the initial line up and up slack may be commenced at a shallow angle from the rigging area immediately adjacent to the runway ensuring consideration for any runway lighting or other obstacles and the effects of crosswinds.

Wing tip holders for launch operations should be competent to act in that capacity, and be fully aware of aerotow procedures at Sleap.

In order to be ready to line up on the runway the pilot must first:

- complete the glider pre-flight checks;
- advise by suitable means that the glider is ready to launch and establish that the tug pilot is also ready;
- have at least 2 members standing by to push out. (or as noted above)

The tug pilot will then advise the air/gound operator of the launch intentions or announce to 'Sleap traffic' as required. The wingtip holder (or other ground helpers) will also monitor the circuit and advise the glider pilot of any confliction with the planned launch.

- The tug moving toward the runway will indicate to the ground crew that it is clear to push out and line up, the glider pilot should also monitor the tug pilots radio transmissions to do so and advise the crew if needed;
- Once the glider is lined up and the tail dolly confirmed removed then the rope may be attached and normal aerotow launching procedures followed.

If a succesive launch is to carried out behind the landing tug and traffic permits then the glider pilot will advise on the radio of the intended launch eg “Sleap Radio, glider 258 lining up behind the landing Chipmunk” - this will also assist the tug pilot to be aware to remain on the runway after landing.

Operations from runway 36 and 05 -

Gliders should only be positioned in the undershoot area for launch when fully ready, particularly using 36 due to the proximity of the displaced threshold. If a launch is to be carried out after the tug has landed then be aware that a significant gap in traffic will be needed if the tug pilot has to backtrack and that they may have to vacate at the intersection first prior to doing so if traffic is close behind.

Operations from runway 36 and 18 -

Due to raised threshold lighting the departing combination should consider the need to taxy forward until the glider is abeam the threshold bar particularly in cross wind conditions. This should be pre-briefed along with a means of final 'all out' signalling (eg use of radio).

Departing the airfield

Low rope breaks: In view of possible conflicts with other traffic, it is not advisable to return downwind to the active runway following a low rope break. (There are 'landable' fields in most directions.) If a break occurs at a height which allows a reasonable circuit and if time permits, try to report your situation and intention to Sleap Radio (or Traffic) on 122.455.

Clearing the field after take off: The aim is to clear the circuit area expeditiously and routing should be agreed with the glider pilot before departure – depending on the runway in use then mid week may require the combination to climb out conforming to the circuit pattern due to RAF Shawbury operation. At other times then a direct departure from the circuit may be achievable and intentions transmitted by the tug pilot for the awareness of other aircraft. The glider and tug should change to the chosen glider frequency (normally 130.130) as they clear the circuit to enable aerotow guidance without interfering with Sleap Radio communication. The tug pilot shall make any necessary radio calls e.g. “G-HL and glider changing to gliding frequency, will call when rejoining”. If communication with RAF Shawbury is required (133.150) then this shall be carried out by the tug pilot and ideally his intention to do so pre-briefed prior to take off or advised when airborne.

Sleap rejoin and circuit procedure

The normal practice at Sleap is for power traffic to fly circuits to the east of the airfield eg 23LH, 36RH. Be aware that gyrocopter traffic may be encountered inside the normal power pattern and use an 800' circuit. Aerobatics are also carried out in the vicinity and model aircraft flying takes place at the western end of runway 28/10.

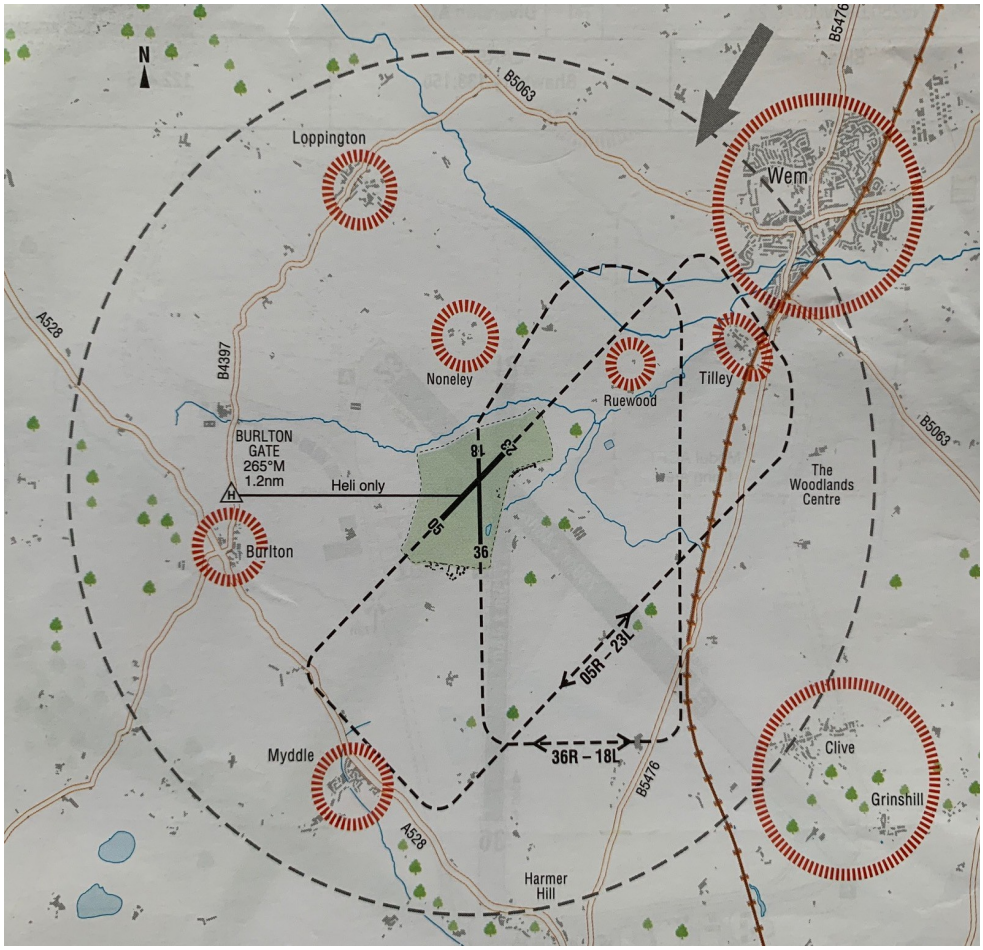
Suitable power traffic may also use runway 23/05 grass (485x20m), its use for gliders should be carefully considered due to width and proximity to runway lights and crop.

Monday-Friday

Due to RAF operations on the dead (west) side mid week then gliders should conform to the power circuit but due to the unique nature of gliding operations it is accepted that a rejoin to the opposite circuit may be required and intentions should be clearly broadcast. The mixed glider and power circuits work well in practice provided that the glider pilots join correctly with sufficient height to be able to adjust the circuit to fit in with other traffic. This may also include the capability to fly a circuit at increased speed if height and performance allows.

Saturday & Sunday

The gliding circuit on the west side may be utilised by both gliders and the tug, again intentions should be clearly broadcast and utmost vigilance utilised as the opposing circuit is approached in the final turn area.



Before rejoining the circuit:

Approximately 5 mins prior to rejoining, announce your intention to join the circuit on the Sleap frequency giving your current position and height. This will assist the awareness of other aircraft joining or departing the airfield.
For example “Sleap Radio (or traffic), Glider 258 3 miles west of the field at 1500’, will shortly joining the glider circuit downwind right hand for runway 23”.

Return to the immediate area upwind with enough height for a safe circuit. Continue to monitor 122.455 before rejoining in order to plan your circuit with regard for other traffic and the current runway. However, as some traffic may not have radio, you must also maintain a good look-out throughout particularly for power traffic on long finals when you are on the base leg.

Plan to join downwind not above 800' – below the height of any rejoining power traffic descending on the 'dead side' or minimising conflict if flying on the power circuit side. If you are likely to arrive much lower and need to execute an abbreviated circuit and/or use a different runway, warn Sleap Radio or Sleap Traffic as soon as possible and while you still have enough height to select an alternative field if necessary.

Unless otherwise required, glider pilots should:

- fly traditional (square) circuits for the active runway ;
- call on 122.455 at the start of the downwind leg,

  e.g. "Sleap Radio, Glider 258 downwind *right hand 23*." (In the absence of Sleap Radio, similar calls to "Sleap Traffic" should be made to tell other aircraft your position and intentions.);
- further calls (e.g. “Glider 258 late downwind *right hand*” or "Glider 258 *right* base") may assist to inform other circuit traffic of your position;
- call final to the landing runway;
- aim to land in the appropriate place to allow a turn off into the rigging area or other non- active runway provided this can be done safely, otherwise stop on the runway and push the glider clear as soon as possible.

Landing runway 36/05

If ground support may not be available then a long landing to vacate on to the non active runway or disused 10/28 should be carrried out to avoid blocking the runway. Caution other aircraft that may be carrying out checks prior to departure and retrieve the glider at the earliest opportunity. If this requires access to active areas of the airfield then radio must be used to ensure other traffic is aware of the glider retrieval and the non active runway/perimeter track used to return the glider to the rigging area. This may also apply equally to runway 18 in calm or light winds when making the disused from the undershoot may not be achievable.

Do not land on the grass or crop within the airfield perimeter except in emergencies. Do not roll across the runway edges onto or off any runways due to unknown surfaces and on 05/23 and 18/36 the risk of hitting runway edge lights. Any landing on runway 18/36 should consider the position of the raised threshold lighting.

In the event of circuit emergencies including serious traffic conflicts or height misjudgments, remember your priorities are to AVIATE, NAVIGATE & COMMUNICATE strictly in that order. ie:-

- The first priority is to maintain a good look-out, safe airspeed and height margins.
- The second priority is to land safely on any part of the airfield or elsewhere that does not endanger anyone else.
- Finally, and only if you have time, tell Sleap Radio and/or other traffic of your revised intentions.

Multiple glider landings

If there are one or more gliders close ahead of you in the circuit, it is likely that the normal turn-off area will be obstructed. In this case consideration should be given to -

- utilising the turn off to the opposite side of the rigging area of disused runway 28/10 if applicable;
- landing long to vacate on the non active runway;
- if a landing requires the glider to stop on the runway then it should be pushed clear by ground crew and previous landing pilots as quickly as possible

Gliders ahead should be aware of those following behind and if safe to do so plan their ground roll to maximise the space available for others to vacate the runway.

End of the Day Procedures - Missing Gliders

No member shall leave the airfield on a flying day without either ensuring that all gliders launched from Sleap are accounted for, or that someone else is staying until all are accounted for. Search procedures must be initiated no later than the end of official daylight in the event of any glider remaining unaccounted.

Any pilot who lands out, even on a pre-declared flight to another airfield, must report his or her situation to Sleap as soon as possible - if only to prevent false alarms. In the event of a field landing it is also worth considering contacting the Distress and Diversion (D & D) cell by telephone (01489 612406) if you think your field landing may have caused alarm to people nearby.

Runway Lights

In the event of a return to the airfield in poor light, the runway lights on 05/23 or 18/36 may be activated by calling Sleap Radio. This is not an invitation to contravene regulations for flying gliders at night and operation close to official night should be avoided.

Local Flying - Sleap ATZ , Shawbury MATZ and ATZ

Never attempt to soar in the Sleap ATZ and try to avoid flying in it all times except during take off and the rejoin for landing. When approaching the ATZ, listen out on 122.455 so that you are aware of traffic and airfield conditions - even if you don't intend landing immediately.

If you need to penetrate the MATZ when Shawbury is active, inform them of your position, height and intentions on 133.150. ***Do not*** fly in their ATZ and ***avoid*** the extended main runway centre line inside the MATZ at heights and positions that are likely to conflict with their instrument approach traffic.

Be particularly aware during mid week operations that the immediate environment around Sleap even outside the MATZ experiences intense helicopter activity carrying out flying exercises or transiting to and from Shawbury.

Wave Flying

One of the attractions of flying from Sleap is the opporunity for wave flying. Enjoy it within your own personal limitations but also pay particular attention to the following.

- Airspace and alitmeter settings. Ensure any GPS devices are up to date and carry a current aeronautical chart which displays the airspace at the heights you intend to fly at. Use the correct altimeter setting when operating near to the base of any airspace;
- TRA(G) aka 'wave boxes' will require activation for any operations anticipated above FL195. Ideally at least 2 hours notice should be given to Swanwick Mil and details of how to open them can be found in a seperate document on the group or BGA websites;
- Hypoxia - the effects of oxygen deprivation are insidious. Familiar yourself with the symtpons of Hypoxia and ensure you have a functioning oxygen system for flights above 10,000ft;
- Sunset times - be aware that sunset times at height are later than on the ground and descents from height take longer than you think. Plan your flight to be on the ground with sufficient daylight and in any event no later than official sunset;
- Cloud flying - wave gaps can close quickly and permanently. If you do not have appropriate instrumentation or are not comfortable with cloud flying then plan your flight to always have the option of a descent in the clear air.

Summary

These notes have been written to minimise duplication of BGA guidance and recommended practices and maximise the use of sensible decision making and good judgement. Good communication, be it with the airfield operator, your ground crew, tug pilot or to other traffic will enhance the safe operation of gliders at Sleap and is vital to our continued enjoyment and existance at this busy GA airfield.

If you have any questions, no matter how seemingly trivial then please speak to any of the following -

Alistair Gillson	CFI & Tug Master
Paul Cooper	Chairman & Secretary
Nick Peatfield	Treasurer