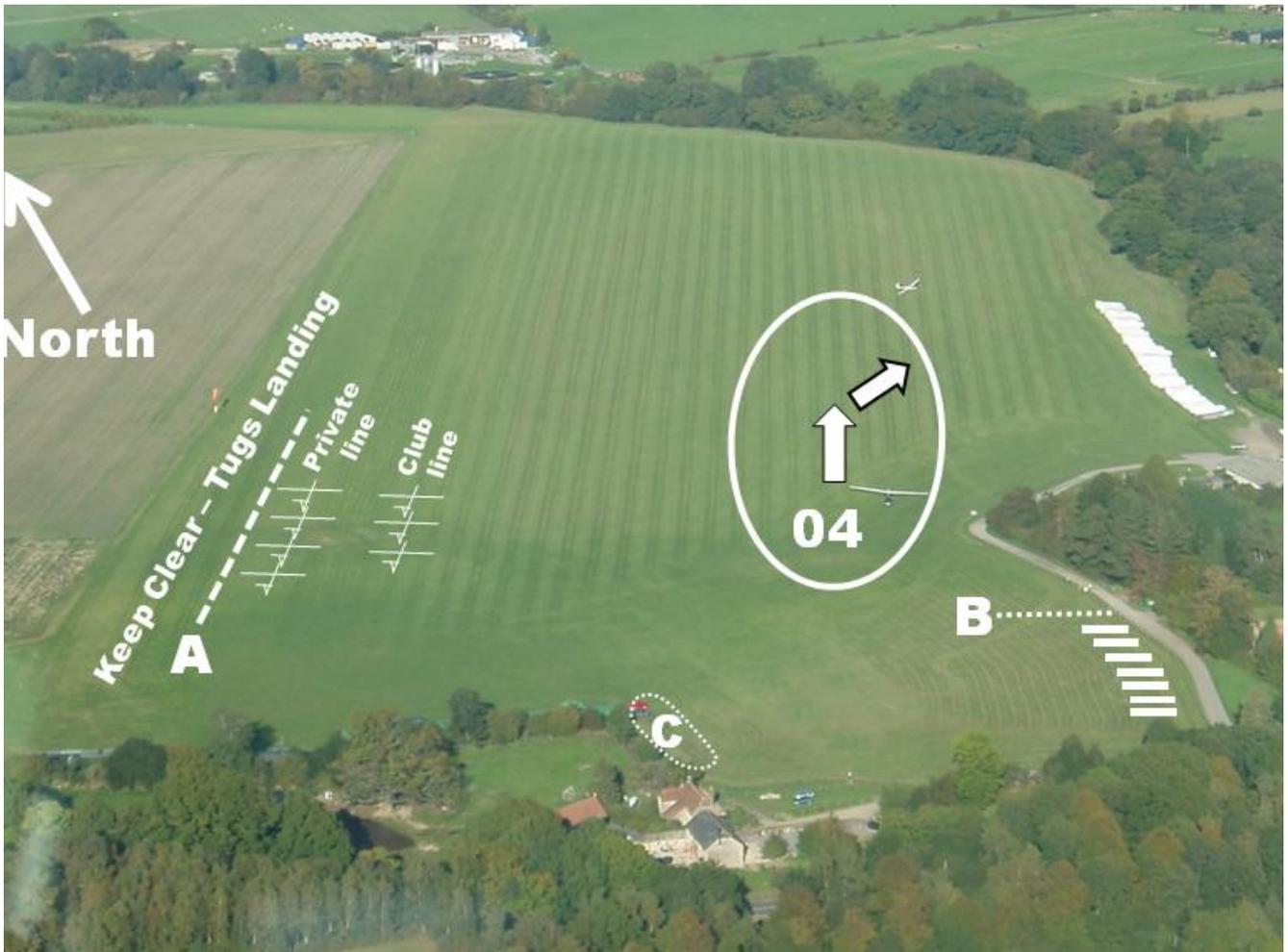


Visiting to fly the Southdown Ridge

Flying the Southdowns is becoming increasingly popular and these notes aim to help visiting pilots with some of the procedures we follow to avoid problems on the airfield and ridge. **WE ARE A PART-TIME CLUB... CALL TO CHECK WE ARE OPEN & LET US KNOW YOU ARE COMING.**

Be familiar with the Airfield layout



Things to be aware of :-

- Park your trailers in the SE corner near the gate. NO trailers north of the entrance into the car garage (Shown as line 'B' above)
- When club flying is in operation we normally operate two launch lines. This allows club glider to rotate freely without being impacted by private glider launching and vis.a.vis
- As gliders launch keep moving the gliders forward otherwise it can become chaos at the back of the launch line.
- Be careful to consider space available for tug landing. No glider tips beyond the line 'A' which is marked by concrete slabs in the ground
- The launchpoint can get busy. Park your glider in-line and then leave your cars in the area marked 'C'
- When you land don't try and land too short. The '04' above is a good reference point
- After landing try and roll-out to the east to avoid blocking the field for others
- You should arrange temporary membership & get permission to fly from the duty instructor or appointed responsible member before putting your glider on line.

The Basic Ridge Flying Rules:

- The glider with the ridge on its right has priority, gliders with the ridge on their left must give way.
- Always make your turn away from the ridge.
- Overtaking gliders pass on the ridge side of the slower glider.

Congestion on the home ridge.

If winds are light so that it is difficult to leave the home ridge, or there are a lot of local soaring pilots, the home ridge can become very congested. At peak times it may be necessary to conform to a disciplined traffic pattern with the non-priority gliders standing out into the valley for perhaps the entire beat of the home ridge. Be wary of turning in hot spots in front of on-coming gliders, it may be better to make a full beat of the ridge in the interests of traffic discipline.

Poor-visibility

During periods of low cloud, rain or adverse lighting conditions the duty team will impose a limit on the number of gliders flying the home ridge. In low cloud conditions, fly a couple of hundred feet below cloud base to maintain good visibility.

Pull-ups, Chandelles etc.

Flying fast along the ridge and pulling up is a fun activity, but probably best avoided when the ridge is busy due to the risk of collision.

Transition to non-ridge rule flying

On thermic days it is likely that you will want to climb away from the ridge in a thermal. Low on the ridge you will need to make S turns in the hot spot firstly to conform to the rule about always turning away from the ridge, and secondly to avoid hitting the ridge. The decision when to make a full circle in the thermal will depend on your height above the ridge, and how busy the ridge is. Don't circle if it is going to interfere with other gliders using the ridge lift.

Leaving the home ridge

When the wind strength and direction is suitable you will be able to cross the gaps to other parts of the ridge. Have a plan for how much height you need to cross the gap and arrive at a height you are comfortable with. Land out opportunities in the gaps, being close to rivers and towns, are usually not very good. Be ready to turn back and try again.

Other parts of the ridge may face in various directions and will work well or negatively given the wind strength and direction on the day.

Certain parts of the ridge, eg Chantonbury on a north easterly day, or Bignor Bowl in a north westerly, can feel quite crowded with only a few gliders patrolling them. If it looks like 3 gliders are stuck in Bignor Bowl, don't go there.

If you haven't gone cross-country on the Southdown ridge get a briefing from one of the more experienced members or go with someone in the DG505, depending upon your experience. The booklet 'Flying the Southdown Ridge' by Dick Dixon is recommended and is on-sale in the clubhouse.

Land-Outs

You will inevitably be making field landing decisions from much lower heights than in normal thermal cross country flights. Assess the fields during the good times, you may not have much time when the crisis is upon you.

Returning to the airfield

Gliders have been known to land out between the ridge and the airfield. The fields closest to the airfield are not very good for landing in. Either wait for a better opportunity to return, or land in the large fields close to the ridge.

If you have a low performance glider, you probably need to leave the ridge as close to the airfield as possible and avoid pushing straight into wind, eg leave from towards the east end of the ridge on a North Easterly day.

If you are low, a straight in approach is a good idea. You will be obscured by trees to people on the airfield, so a radio call on 129.975 should be made.

If you have more height, fly as much of a circuit as you can to give yourself and others time to land safely. If you are flying up the down-wind leg the wrong way... keep a good look-out.

Congestion on the Airfield

If you are loitering on the airfield between the yellow warning sign and the launch point, expect to see gliders returning from the ridge pop over the trees. Please keep the glider landing area clear at all times. When you have landed, please pull your glider off to the side.

Mass Landing Procedure

If the weather conditions change abruptly it may cause all the gliders on the home ridge to return at once. Two or three well (badly?) placed gliders in the middle of the field can make further landings difficult. To avoid blocking the field for following gliders, the first to land should land long and as far to the east side as possible. The following gliders should land behind the first and so on.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Remember to pay your temporary membership (except Ringmer and Lasham) & flying fees. We are a small all-voluntary club and struggle to chase visitors who don't pay their fees. Our fees are very reasonable for what is likely to be a great days flying....