

Long Mynd Soaring Club

Skills – Why keep a log book

By Judith Mole

When learning to fly, each pilot is required to make a note of their flying hours in a log book in order to have a record of their experience. Many pilots soon give up on keeping their log book, because it is a hassle to complete it, it seems not to matter after x amount of hours attained, etc. I believe this is a mistake. So why is it a good idea to keep a log book?

- 1) It provides an accurate assessment of the hours you have. Unless you keep a log of your hours, you just guess what you have, and this is invariably an exaggeration.
- 2) It allows you to accurately assess how many hours your glider has. If you do not know how many hours your glider has, how can you know when it is due to be serviced, have lines or wires changed, etc.? Noting in your logbook when your parachute was re-packed, when repairs were made to the glider, etc. helps you to maintain the safety of your equipment. Therefore your log book acts as a service manual for your glider. If you make modifications to your glider, your log book can be used to keep track of the effects the modification has made to the flying characteristics of the glider.
- 3) Everyone overestimates their flying hours until the day they want to sell a glider, when they suddenly have far fewer hours. When buying a second hand glider, would you trust someone who guesses their hours, or do you want to know exactly how many hours the glider has?
- 4) A log book allows you to track your development as a pilot. Your learning doesn't stop when you get your CP, P or even AP. There isn't a single pilot on this earth who claims to have learnt everything about paragliding or hang gliding. Writing down what you learnt from a flight, what you did, where you went, what the forecast was and how correctly or incorrectly you interpreted it, helps you to track your learning and development over a period. This leads on to point 5...
- 5) Keeping track of your learning allows you to reflect over a period of time where you have been, how you are performing at present and allows you to plan where you need to go as a pilot. It helps you to set goals. In your log book you can note down weaknesses in your flying and then you can work on these, noting down improvements as you go.

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- 6) It helps you learn more about flying sites and weather. Keeping track of where you flew, what the conditions were helps you to learn a lot about sites, where thermal sources are, any peculiarities in the landing area, etc.

A log book doesn't need to be boring - you can always add pictures, doodles and maps! Reading about your flights years later can be hours of fun too.