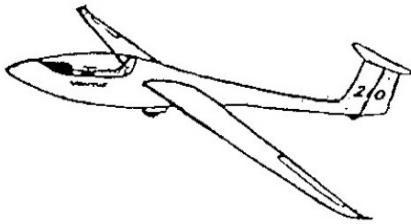


Oct  
2021  
V.26

# Meon Valley Soaring Association

Handbook and Site Rules



BMFA affiliation  
No. 2134

# WELCOME TO THE M.V.S.A

This Handbook is to enable you to enjoy your flying in the fullest and safest way. Contained within these pages, is most of the information you need including how to find the sites and the site rules that all have to follow to ensure we all fly safely and do not forfeit our sites. These rules apply to everyone who flies at any of our sites, regardless of whether they are a member of the MVSA or not, this is a requirement of the landowners.

## Club Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the second Wednesday in the month, (except July and August, when some meet informally on the slope for a fun fly) at the West Meon Sports Pavilion behind West Meon Village Hall, located just off on the A32 and just north of West Meon.

Juniors are welcome to attend but must be accompanied by a guardian. The club meetings are the best way to keep up to date with the latest club activities, listening to guest speakers, club member demos, auctions, asking other members for advice or just meeting up with fellow members for a drink and a chat.

## Safety

We owe all of our sites, to the goodwill of others. Therefore we must act responsibly. The rules are guided by the BMFA, the CAA and by the landowners.

Safety is **everyone's** responsibility and all present must ensure that safety is not compromised. If an unsafe situation arises or appears to be arising, any competent flyer present should intervene. If the unsafe situation involves a non-member, guidance should be offered and must be accepted. If an unsafe situation at Butser is not resolved, then QECP should be contacted by phone and advised so that a ranger can attend if necessary.

Novice and junior members are required to take the advice of experienced members on the slope.

All flyers must be familiar with and adhere to the contents of the BMFA handbook, CAA Article 16 and CAA CAP 722, links to which can be found on the MVSA home page and in the Useful Resources section below.

## Hang Gliders and Paragliders

A close liaison exists between the MVSA and the Sky Surfing Club (Skysurfers), using Butser Hill, the slope at Whether Down (Mercury) and Harting Down. It has been agreed that we shall endeavour to keep clear of one another's air space, but should a model and hang/paraglider appear to be on a collision course, the model must give way. A model must **never** be allowed to cross the silhouette of a hang/paraglider. Even the most experienced of pilots have little depth perception at any real distance.

Should a model make contact with a hang/paraglider, the flyer responsible, must report the incident to the Safety Officer or a Committee Member, within two days.

A written incident report will be required in the event of a near miss, injury or damage to either party.

## Full Sized Gliders

From time to time, full sized gliders make use of some of the slopes we use, principally Harting Down and the northern slopes of Butser Hill. The same rules apply regarding full sized gliders using the slopes we use as for hang/paragliders in respect of right of way, crossing of silhouette and reporting of incidents.

In addition, if there is any belief that full sized gliders may be in the area, it may be advisable to get a spotter to look out for any full sized gliders which can appear very quickly as if out of nowhere. This is particularly the case once a glider passes, the chances are it will be returning before long, or will be being followed by others. If in any doubt, land immediately and do not launch until safe to do so. Full sized gliders may be surprisingly close to the slopes, certainly well within distance of where we fly even quite modest models.

## Insurance and Assessments

**Everyone who intends to fly at any of our sites must also be a member of the BMFA or LMA. This is a requirement of the landowners and enables us to be sure that everyone is adequately insured, for the benefit of all.**

Please ensure that you carry both your BMFA / LMA membership card and MVSA membership card with you when you are flying at any of our sites as proof of membership.

**All who wish to fly unsupervised must either hold a BMFA 'Slope A', have passed the MVSA slope safety assessment or for daily visitors had had their flying assessed as safe by an MVSA slope assessor on the day they wish to fly. Please use our website to contact us for this.**

## Juniors

The clubs policy is to welcome junior members and their supervision is in line with BMFA guidelines.

Junior members must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. The level of supervision is to be commensurate with the junior member's age, maturity, capabilities and levels of experience.

No member is to be expected to assume full responsibility for a junior member unless they have explicitly agreed to do so. When a junior member is under the supervision of an adult member, the junior member's responsible guardian must stay close by at all times in case the supervisor needs to leave unexpectedly.

Should an adult member discover a junior member is unsupervised he must assume responsibility for the junior member's safety in the first instance. The situation should then be rectified as soon as possible by seeking out the junior member's guardian or nominated supervisor. Any instance of such an occurrence is to be reported to the Club Committee as soon as possible to prevent this in the future.

A junior member is usually defined as being under 18 years of age but particular care must be taken with the supervision of those juniors under the age of 14 years.

A junior novice is required to be supervised while flying in the same way as any other novice.

## First Person View (FPV)

Rules guiding any use of FPV are guided by the BMFA, CAA and landowners.

The landowners and MVSA do NOT currently permit the use of FPV on Butser Hill or Harting Down.

The MVSA does permit the use of FPV at Mercury provided all members present agree, that there are no Skysurfers in the air and subject to BMFA and CAA requirements (see the Resources Section). The observer needs to keep a particular eye out for members of the public on the public path crossing the field and for Skysurfers considering launching. As soon as a Skysurfer becomes airborne, any FPV model must land as soon as it is safe to do so.

Currently the MVSA only permits the flying of FPV models less than 3.5kg take off / launch weight.

## Legal Liability

Being on land places a legal liability for our safety on the landowner. If a land owner believes there may be an increased risk of a claim we are likely to lose access to the land.

# CODE OF PRACTICE

## Section A - WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- **Do not switch on your transmitter** until you have made contact with other members already present and never in the car park.
- **Assess the wind direction** to locate the flying site, but be aware, there could still be flying elsewhere.
- **Locate and make contact with any flyers** already present, even if they are not at the spot from which you would personally wish to fly.
- **Never fly from more than one slope.** Stay together as a group during your visit, if the wind shifts, take a vote whether or not to move.
- **Obey the country code** during your visit.
- **If you have not** passed the MVSA safety assessment or do not hold a BMFA 'Slope A', you **MUST** be supervised by someone who has.
- **If you are a relative newcomer** to the sport, please never be afraid to ask our long-standing members for help or advice, which is usually readily and generously given.
- **Make sure your mobile phone** is turned off or in 'airplane mode' before entering the flying area, to avoid any possibility of interference to computerised control systems.

## Section B - BEFORE SWITCHING ON (35MHz)

- You must make use of the pegboard if there is one present. The peg must always be visibly clipped on your transmitter while you are in possession of it.
- Check which frequencies are in use (doubly important if the landing site is remote from the launch site and there is no pegboard in operation).
- Check that your crystals are not reversed and that you are displaying the correct pennant.

## Section C - BEFORE YOU LAUNCH

- Ensure that your transmitter and receiver cells are well charged.
- Switch on the transmitter and then the receiver. Never the other way round.
- Before your first flight or if there is any doubt at all about your gear, carry out a range check, i.e. check the control surfaces are following stick movements of your transmitter (aerial fully retracted or in range check mode if available) when model is at least 20 paces / metres away (or in line with the manufacturers guidance) and clear of other transmitters. If not achievable, **DO NOT FLY**.
- Check that the flying surfaces move in the correct sense and are reliable, smooth and slop-free before every flight.
- Before launching, ensure your transmitter aerial is fully extended if appropriate.
- Assess all possible flight hazards. These may include other models, people, sheep, hang/paragliders, kites, bushes, trees and turbulence.
- Assess the wind speed and direction (a bit of wool tied to the transmitter aerial is a practical way).
- Ensure your model is suited to the conditions. If in doubt, ask someone with more experience.
- Decide where you intend to land **before** you launch. This will be defined by flyers on the day.
- Pilots should always stand together when flying. Should you wish to fly 'cross country', first discuss this with other flyers on the slope so they are aware.
- Immediately prior to launch, loudly inform other flyers that you are "launching".

## Section D - IN THE AIR

- Be aware of other models and hang/paragliders at all times.
- Plan your flight pattern clear of other models and hang/paragliders. If it appears a head-on situation is developing, then models must give way to hang/paragliders and must do so in good time.
- Warn other flyers present, before you perform low passes along the front of the slope or if performing aerobatics such as spins, in a crowded sky.
- Do not aim a model directly towards the flight line, loss of control could result in a model crashing directly into it.
- A minimum safe distance of 25 metres must be observed between the flight line and flying models.
- Be aware all the time of the changing situation regarding obstructions in the landing area, a change in wind speed or direction, which could affect the intended landing area.
- Wherever possible, transmitters must not be taken in front of the flight line switched on. Should an unexpected situation arise which requires you to go forward, try to inform other flyers that you are going to do so and switch your transmitter off as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Always fly within the limitations of your plane and your skill, all governed by the conditions at the time.
- Remember we are constantly on view to the public, so do not fly or behave in a manner which is likely to cause any concern to them.

## Section E - THE LANDING

- Before starting your approach, call to other flyers that you intend "landing".
- See and be seen. Stand well in the clear and on relatively high ground as far as is practical.
- Ensure your approach and landing area are free and will remain so during this operation.
- Land as soon as is practical after calling, bearing in mind other models (parked as well as in the air), the public and their cars, animals and park property. If necessary, call "landing" again if a landing attempt is delayed or aborted.

## Section F - AFTER LANDING

- Clear the landing area as soon as possible so the next flyer can land. In the event of a bad landing, check the landing area for debris and clear the landing area immediately. Any post flight checks and investigation should be done in the pits so as to not impede the next person landing.
- Switch off as soon as possible.
- Return any peg to the peg board.
- Check the model for things such as clogged hinges, shifted ballast, broken wing bands etc., which could constitute a hazard on the next launch.
- Do not leave your landing spot littered with bands, segments of smashed canopies, splintered balsa, torn covering etc..

**Remember - rubber bands constitute a deadly danger to sheep if ingested.**

## Section G - COMPETITION DAYS

- If it is a day when a competition is being held, please note that general sport flying is only permitted after the event has finished or with express consent of the competition organiser. Any competition dates are on the groups.io calendar.
- During the competition, the Competition Director has total control over the flying site and his decision is final.

## Section H - FREQUENCY CONTROL

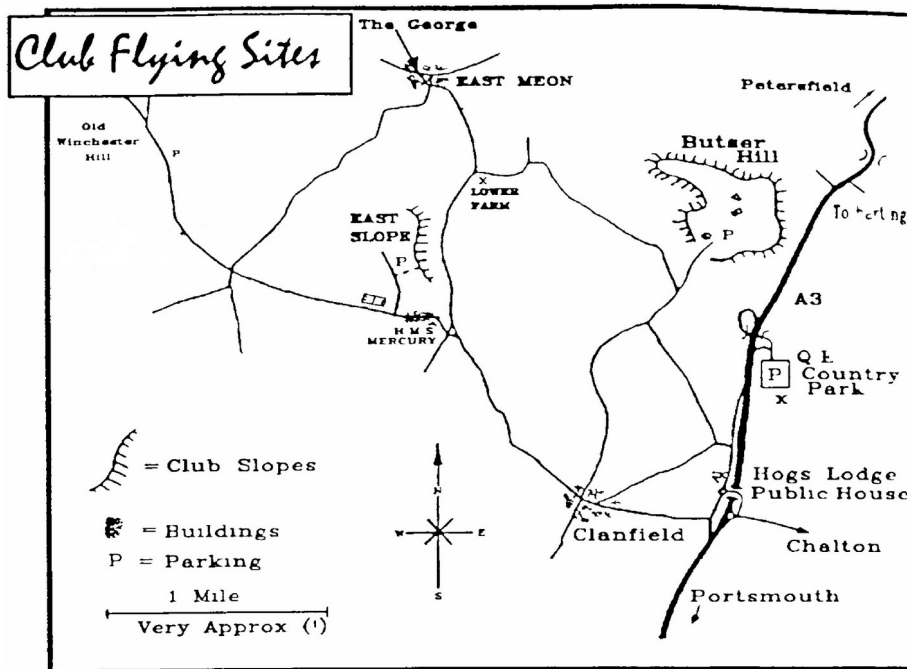
- The only frequencies permitted on our sites are 2.4 GHz, 868 MHz and 35 MHz (even frequencies only). Should you wish to use another frequency please check with the committee first. So long as the transmitter is purchased from a UK supplier there should not be a problem.
- A maximum of 13 models are allowed in the air at any one time (note - this number is reduced on certain slopes).
- The way that we operate the pegboard is known as the peg off system. This means that you must take a peg off the peg board and clip it to your transmitter before you switch it on. If your frequency peg is not on the board, then you **must not** switch on your transmitter, but locate the person with it, so that they are aware that somebody else is sharing that frequency.

### Identification of Frequencies

- When operating on 35 MHz, **an orange pennant must be attached** to the transmitter with your frequency number marked in white.
- When changing crystals make sure :-
  - (a) You read the numbers on them (many crystals simply have an orange mark to indicate 35 MHz band).
  - (b) You put the transmitter crystal in the transmitter and the receiver crystal in the receiver.
  - (c) You change your frequency pennant.
  - (d) If the frequency you require is already in use, you should introduce yourself to the person who has the peg, so that you are both aware that the frequency is shared. As a general rule, if the person is in the air, you can reasonably expect them to land within 30 minutes. Before switching on, ensure that they have switched off their transmitter and receiver and that you have the peg.
- Due to the way they work, 2.4 GHz and 868MHz transmitter do not require frequency identification.

Much of the above is obvious, but these are things that can cause crashes. So make sure it's not you. If you see something that is not right on another model, don't be frightened to say so, it can save models and insurance claims.

# CLUB FLYING SITES



Club members have use of four slope soaring sites, Butser Hill serving multiple directions, an East slope at Whether Down (near the former HMS Mercury site) and Harting Down, on the A2141 above South Harting, which flies North to North-North-West. All these slopes are shared with the Skysurfers. We also have a reciprocal arrangement with CADMAC which gives us permission to use 'The Trundle' under CADMAC rules. Butser Hill is also open to all BMFA members, but subject to ALL MVSA rules.

In the following pages are the locations of each slope site and any special rules applicable to each site. Before flying at any site for the first time, please get a briefing from another member familiar with the site as to where to launch, land, what potential hazards exist and other important information. Ideally watch others fly to see where the best / normal areas to fly are.

Please follow the rules laid down for each site to ensure we keep them for the future.

## BUTSER HILL

Butser Hill is part of the Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QECF) and comes under the jurisdiction of Hampshire County Council (HCC). Contact Number 02392 595040. The MVSA has an agreement with HCC, which gives us the controlling interest for model soaring on the hill and as such the MVSA rules prevail. See map on following page.

There is an entrance fee to Butser Hill car park. If you use the site on a regular basis, it is worth buying a season ticket from the QECF centre.

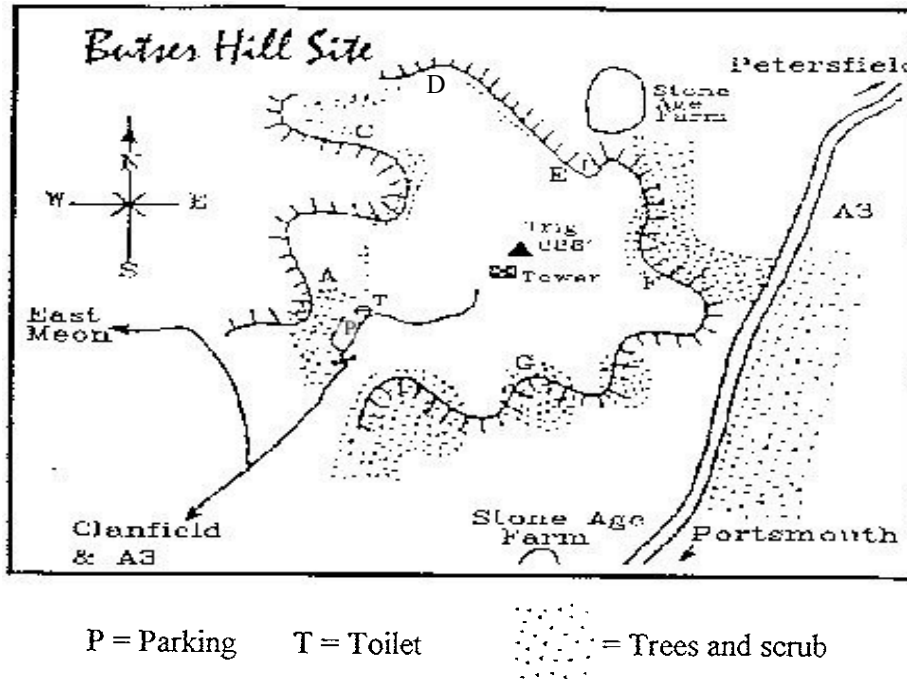
### Visitors

Because Butser is a public site, any BMFA member can fly there, but subject to all MVSA rules.

If a non MVSA member wishes to fly unsupervised, they are still required to pass the MVSA safety assessment or have a BMFA 'Slope A' and carry their BMFA membership card with them as proof.

MVSA members should extend a polite and friendly welcome to visitors and ensure they fly with the club in a safe fashion, abiding by frequency control and safety rules.

After several visits, a visitor will be encouraged to become a member. Members introducing a guest will be held responsible for their conduct.



## Butser Hill rules of use

Butser is a public open space and during the summer it becomes crowded. When such conditions exist, members should be constantly aware that the public have every right to be on the hill, albeit that from time to time they foul our approach and landing areas. It is in our interest to fly and act responsibly so as not to jeopardise this site.

Remember to be polite and diplomatic when dealing with the public, even if they seem to be 'in your way'. The public should always take priority, even if it means endangering the model.

No bungees or tow-lines are allowed on Butser.

There is a limit of 13 airborne models at any one time, although clearly there may be times when this number should be reduced, particularly if any hang/paragliders are airborne.

Only model gliders and electrically "power assisted gliders" (i.e. are able to stay aloft without a motor in all but sinking conditions) are allowed.

Electric motors must be very quiet and are only to be used occasionally for the purpose of gaining height in order to soar. They are not to be used to gain height for the purpose of performance runs after the climb.

**All other powered models are forbidden.**

Most Butser slopes are shared with the Skysurfers and there are no fixed allocation of airspace. Contact should be made with the Skysurfers on the day to agree safe operational use for the day, this being a requirement from QECP.

### Butser West MVSA / SSC agreement

The MVSA and SSC have however agreed that when we are sharing Butser West that SSC will take the south side of the slope and we will take the north side of the slope as far as possible. The delineation can be identified as follows: from the gap in the bushes behind the flight line on Butser West look towards the barn visible at the bottom of the slope which has a nicely visible gable end. The top of the gable end marks the division. SSC try to put their windsock at this division (and usually but not always get it in the right place). If you believe the windsock is in the wrong place, politely advise them of such to avoid potential conflict of airspace.

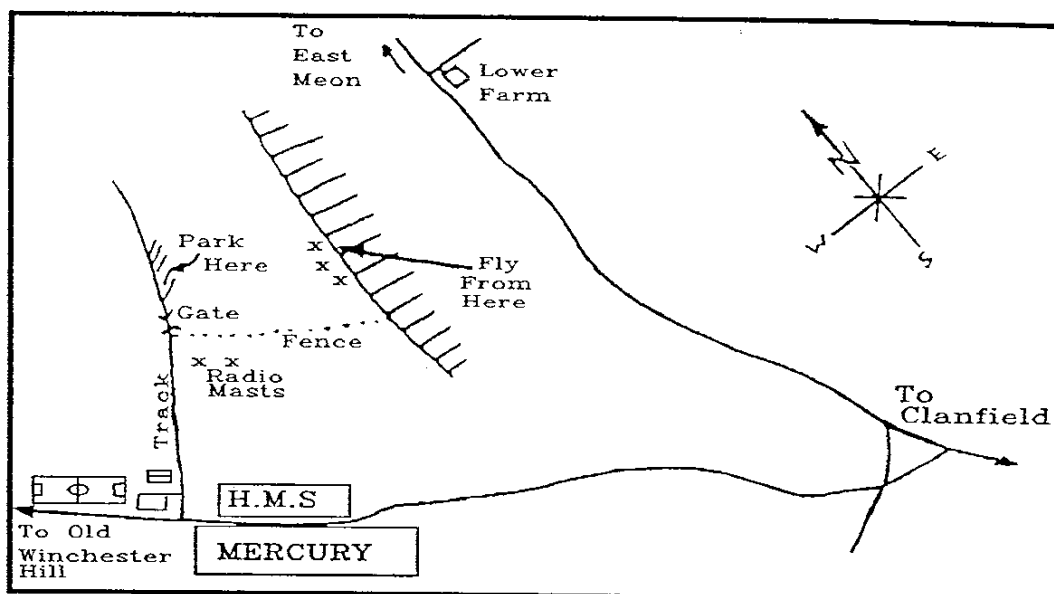


## EAST SLOPE (Private)

This slope is for the exclusive use of the MVSA members and the Sky Surfing Club.

The club's private East slope is on Whether Down (behind the former HMS Mercury site). Access is gained from the track a little to the West of the Sustainability Centre car park and on the north side of the road. Proceed along this track, past the farm buildings and radio masts, to a gate on the right, inside the gate and along the wire fence. The gate must be kept shut.

Note: Near the start of the access track there is a road traffic sign suggesting vehicle access is not permitted, we have however received written permission to use this track for access to the slope.



A charge of £1 **per flyer** is charged by the land-owner and a pillar is provided for the purpose near the gate. (PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU PAY, THIS IS A SMALL PRICE FOR SUCH A FINE SITE)

No dogs, litter, kite flying or games are allowed.

To avoid interference with members of other clubs, who fly close to Mercury, it is essential members using 35 MHz only use **EVEN** frequencies **from 56** to 90. The other clubs have agreed to use odds.

Do not climb over the fence, there are stiles to the north and south ends which can be used if you need to go down the slope to retrieve a model etc..

Only model gliders and electrically "power assisted gliders" (i.e. are able to stay aloft without a motor in all but sinking conditions) are allowed. **All other powered models are forbidden.**

We share the Mercury site with the Skysurfers, they take the south end of the field and we the north end.

There is a marker on a fence post delineating where each normally fly, however this does not prevent the Skysurfers from 'transiting' north in good lift and at good height or south in order to return to the slope. Similarly, when no Skysurfers are airborne, we may fly beyond the marker.

There is a natural hollow in the ground a little to the left of the fence marker, we must stand to the north (left) of this hollow when flying. When the field is very muddy it is permissible to park cars in the barn area south of the field, subject to this not being in use by the farmer. Site fees are still payable. In the event that you need to retrieve a model from below the fence line, there are stiles to the north and south of the field which must be used.

We are permitted to fly electric thermal models in all wind directions.

Note:- CADMAC have an open invitation to fly, under MVSA rules.

## NORTH SLOPE - HARTING DOWN (Private)

This site is the property of the National Trust with whom the MVSA have a signed agreement. Model flying is exclusively for MVSA members and guests invited **by the club** (including CADMAC). The slope is also used by the Sky Surfing Club.

A parking fee is payable by phone or internet. Since this is a National Trust site, National Trust members may be able to park in line with NT member parking policies.

Model flying is subject to the following conditions:-

Up to 6 model gliders may be flown at a time.

We launch to the right of the bushes which have a bench in front of them. You should stand far enough from the bushes in order that you have a clear line to the west so you can see any incoming full sized gliders well in advance of their arrival.

Landing areas are in front of and behind the pathways (see map). IMPORTANT - Do not fly below 25ft or land within 50ft of the two pathways. Use common sense by avoiding public, horse riders, livestock & kites.

Members must carry MVSA and BMFA membership cards in case NT staff wish to inspect them.

Strictly **no use of power** of any type (not even electrically assisted gliders). This is a NT countrywide requirement. To avoid perceived or actual breach of this NT requirement, propellers must be overtly taped in place such that it is clear that they cannot be used. SLS/EDF hatches should be similarly disabled and overtly taped shut.

Abide by the MVSA code of conduct (including frequency requirements), obey NT bye-laws and requests by NT representatives.

Make other model flyers aware they are not allowed to fly, use only reasonable endeavours, we are not policing the site. Should visitors persist in flying, ensure usual care with frequency control.

Co-operate with Skysurfers who also have a NT agreement. Please speak to them if you think a dangerous situation is developing, discussion is appreciated.

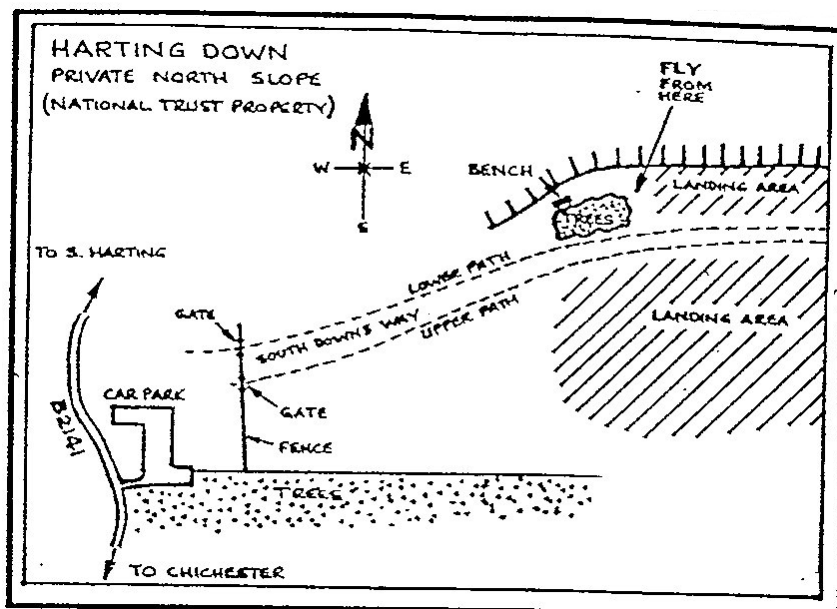
No competitions.

If any member is unable to ensure that the above terms of agreement are met, he **MUST** make reasonable endeavours to prevent flying taking place, until they are met.

Members **MUST** inform a NT Warden / Manager & a MVSA Committee Member of any incident, near miss or unresolved disagreement.

At Harting Down, members are legally regarded as "representatives of the MVSA".

Remember Cross-Country type activity should not be attempted, unless other members remain in the launch area to maintain frequency control.



## 'The Trundle' South West (Private)

The MVSA has a reciprocal arrangement with CADMAC which gives us permission to fly on the Trundle under their rules. The Trundle is near to Goodwood.

For further details, please see the CADMAC website and ensure you read the rules for use of the site and abide by them. In particular, note a number of unusual restrictions and requirements which you will need to be aware of before you leave home and may need to action upon your arrival.

Please ensure that you carry proof of MVSA membership with you in case anyone wants to see it and your BMFA membership card and proof of insurance.

# BEGINNERS SECTION

## Choice of Radio

The short answer is the best that you can afford. It is suggested that a reasonable yardstick to go by when making this decision, is to be guided by the equipment most commonly used by other flyers. Taking this approach increases your chances of getting assistance on the slope should you need it. Talk to them about their gear. Most modellers will give you an honest assessment of its performance and reliability.

## NEW MEMBERS/NOVICES

This procedure is to be followed by all new members.

- As a new member you will have received this Handbook which includes site rules, a membership card, a list of assessors, the MVSA test sheet and a car sticker.
- Flying must be supervised by a full member of the MVSA, until your ability is proved by successfully passing the MVSA safety assessment, witnessed by at least one of the listed assessors or you have a BMFA 'Slope A'. **REMEMBER** If you fly alone - you may have your membership withdrawn.
- Novices are not permitted to use airspace when SSC are flying, or attempt landing unless accompanied by a competent flyer.
- When you have gained sufficient experience and confidence and wish to progress from Novice to Slope status, you must successfully pass the MVSA safety assessment as below.

The above procedures have been adopted by the club to ensure a basic level, to reduce the risk of injury to yourself, other members, the general public and damage to property. This in turn helps the club maintain its flying sites. It also helps to keep your nice new model in one piece. So please follow the above ruling, whenever the temptation is to have a go.

- If a new member is seen flying without assistance, for whatever reason, the incident should be reported to the Safety Officer, who may arrange for membership to be withdrawn without refund.
- If the Safety Officer or any Committee Member feels a full member is not flying in a competent or safe manner, he may request the test flights be retaken, before flying again without assistance or withdraw membership totally, if both verbal and the following written cautions are ignored.

# MVSA SAFETY ASSESSMENT DETAILS

## Slope

Read and understand the MVSA code of practice.

The safety assessment involves correctly answering 5 questions on the information in this Handbook and successful completion of an assessed flight. After this the member may fly unaccompanied.

Further details can be found in the safety assessment sheet.

Once a candidate has been assessed as safe, the Assessor should inform the Membership Secretary.

However, remember there is nothing quite like experience. It can take years to make a plane do just what you want, so do continue to fly safely and within your capabilities.

If a novice passed the test with a 'rudder/elevator' model, as a safety measure, it is recommended the assistance of an experienced member is sought on the initial flights of a first 'aileron' model, as it will require acclimatization to the reduced stability and quicker responses.

As you progress and maybe start to fly types of model new to you, be they larger, faster, more dynamic, remember that there is never any shame in asking those familiar with that type of model for assistance on everything from control surface throws to even if they would be willing to maiden it for you to check all is well.

### **Rejoining Policy**

If a solo member leaves the club for more than one year, then upon re-application, they must pass a safety and flying test to fly solo again.

If membership is not renewed by 31st January, the joining fee is levied.

# Remember safe flying is no accident!

# Useful Resources

Members may find the following resources of use.

It should be noted that all the following are dynamic documents subject to continual change.

<http://mvsa.bmfa.org/> - MVSA Website



<https://groups.io/g/mvsa/> - MVSA groups.io forum

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/334541189982284/> - MVSA Facebook Group

<https://bmfa.org/Info/Downloads/BMFA-Handbook> - BMFA Members Handbook etc.

<https://rcc.bmfa.uk/article-16> - CAA Article 16

[https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP722%20Edition8\(p\).pdf](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP722%20Edition8(p).pdf) - CAP 722

[https://www.bhpa.co.uk/pdf/BHPA\\_BMFA\\_operating\\_code.pdf](https://www.bhpa.co.uk/pdf/BHPA_BMFA_operating_code.pdf) - Operating Code for Hang/Paragliders sharing airspace with model flyers

<https://skysurfingclub.co.uk/> - Sky Surfing Club website which is a useful reference for the rules they are required to abide by, in case any visitors forget them.



We hope you have enjoyed reading this Handbook  
and that you will reap the benefits of membership of the  
**MEON VALLEY SOARING ASSOCIATION**

