Ref. no.:   FSC.SN.11
Date: 08/96
Pages: 1 (Pink)

British Hang Gliding   The Old Schoolroom   Tel (0116) 261 1322
and Paragliding   Loughborough Road   24 hour answering
Association Ltd   Leicester LE4 5PJ   Fax (0116) 261 1323

SAFETY NOTICE

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee - 7 August 1996

All hang glider pilots (including Safety Officers, Coaches and Instructors).

If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.

Hang Glider Luff Lines (reflex bridle)

An accident has occurred in Scotland in which a Solar Wings Rumour 1 glider tumbled. Luckily the pilot escaped without injury. The glider was rebuilt and it was found that the reflex was significantly less than that specified for that model of glider.

Further checking of the glider revealed no obvious cause for this measurement having altered: eg the luff lines had not stretched and the dimensions of all tubes and wires were within the build specification tolerances. The most likely cause is therefore thought to be sail stretch, perhaps not helped by a reduction of trailing edge tension as the leading edge tubes acquire a slight set with age.

The glider was tested on the BHPA Test Rig and was found to be unable to pass the Pitch Test requirements for a BHPA C of A. When the glider was adjusted to restore the reflex to the build standard the glider was able to pass the Pitch Test without problems.

This incident has many similarities with one involving an Airwave K4 which occurred in 1993, where again the glider reflex was found to have drifted out of specification, and again it was only discovered after the glider tumbled.

Pilots should therefore assume that the very serious problem of reducing reflex will affect all types of hang glider. Annual checking of the reflex is an absolute must. (The Operator's Handbook will detail how to conduct this check and will provide the necessary data. Any pilot experiencing difficulty should contact the glider manufacturer.)

The FSC would be grateful if pilots could inform us when such checks have been carried out where the results are (even slightly) outside the specified tolerances, as it may be possible to identify models particularly at risk.