

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Contribution

Charles Carter

Those of you who attended the club's 70th birthday party on the evening of 2nd October will know what a splendid party it was. For those who missed it, book early for the 140th. A hundred members and guests were comfortably seated in the clubhouse which had been beautifully decorated throughout and enjoyed a delicious dinner courtesy of Jo and her team followed by the usual mixture of Mynd entertainment until the small hours. At the committee meeting the following morning the contribution from some was somewhat muted.

Many thanks to all who contributed in so many ways to make it such a special event and start the next 70 years with such a bang.

Unfortunately, it may be the last big party with Jo as kitchen supremo because she is giving up the franchise at the end of November. The committee are actively seeking a new franchisee and there are several interested parties so watch this space.

You may be aware that we have been in negotiation with the Faulkes Foundation to purchase one of their DG 505s. They are curtailing their operation from the end of this year and so will have little use for them. Elsewhere the CFI will be outlining his strategy for integrating this modern high performance two seater into the training programme. Those of you who have flown the DG will know what a beautiful glider it is. The committee is unanimous in its desire to provide a training glider which is closer to the single seat gliders which all of us fly or aspire to fly.

Whether we purchase the DG or not, the parties of Faulkes children being brought to the Mynd to fly will disappear. We anticipate that the contact with local youth groups will go on as before but that the volume of young person flights will decrease substantially.

The heavy rainfall has made the airfield very prone to damage so please take care when driving the Land Rovers on the grass surface and keep movements to a minimum by moving gliders by hand whenever possible. No cars should be driven on the grass surface when it is wet.

Competition Enterprise is to be held at the Mynd in early July 2005. For those of you not familiar with Enterprise it is an annual competition where the emphasis is placed on taking every opportunity to fly for the maximum amount of time and fun. Points are gained for enterprising flying, not just for speed around a race course. The Enterprise organisers bring their own task setting and met team with them but there will be a need for local volunteers to help run the airfield and make the launching system foolproof so nearer the time I will be asking for help. Hosting Competition Enterprise will not impact on the Mynd's Task Week in any way.

Finally I would just like to remind you of the winter flying programme which is the same as the last few years. John Stuart will be flying the Shrewsbury School pupils on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons which will give solo pilots an opportunity to fly and John will be available to instruct club members all day on Fridays. Saturday and Sunday are as per the rota.

If you think that you have spotted an outstanding day not covered by the above and can get a team together with a full cat instructor then flying can proceed. There are many excellent training and flying opportunities to be had in the winter so make sure that you do not miss them.

CFI's Bits

Neal Clements

DI and Failures

Recently we have had two incidents regarding loose items in the glider, in neither case were the controls jammed. However this was luck and only luck. Having a large steel picket peg floating around inside the fuselage of a wooden glider and having a hand held radio floating around in the back of a glider fuselage are just fatalities waiting to happen. It is very simple, on DI you must check as much of the fuselage as you possibly can, loose items will jam controls with usually, disastrous consequences. If you suspect a glider has something loose floating around inside it then you must ground the aeroplane immediately, do not ask someone else to.

Incidents

Incidents are still being reported on an informal ad hoc basis, this is fine but please can you remember to scribble the raw facts down on a bit of paper, head it INCIDENT and put into the office or better still send me an email or call me. The reason for this is that ALL incidents get raised with Launch Directors and Instructors in case there are operational procedures that need changing.

Launch Point Feedback Form

We are trying to continually improve the operation and one tool to help us do this is the new flying list. This now has a section which asks for details on the day regarding problems. If you spot a problem that you can be specific about then please ask the Launch Director to note it on the flying list feedback form.

Winter Flying

The onset of winter always brings two significant problems for us. The first is misting canopies and the last is the setting sun. I was at Dunstable the other day and watched them getting their gliders out, they are immaculate yet the same age or older than ours, each one is washed and the canopy thoroughly cleaned, both inside and out as part of the DI. This has three benefits, firstly the canopy will be less liable to mist, secondly flying into the setting sun will be less fraught as there is less dirt to refract the sun's rays and lastly a clean, well maintained aeroplane stays a clean well maintained aeroplane. Please don't forget, a wash and canopy clean are a part of the DI. We have the equipment available to do it, so ask yourself at DI, would I be proud to fly this? If you do have misted canopies on the ground then think to yourself, how would I cope with a launch failure given the fact that I cannot see?

N_clements@bluevonder.co.uk

Driving the Land Rovers

Charles Carter

The committee has decided that only members with full driving licences may drive the club Land Rovers at any time. This is because of insurance implications, especially relating to the public's access to the airfield on the rights of way.

This rule replaces any previous rules and must be adhered to.

Trailer Towing and Your Driving Licence

Julian Fack

At one time you just hitched up and went, but things have changed if you passed your driving test after 1/1/1997. From that date you are restricted in your towing until you have undergone an additional test called part E *. There are two cases:

1) Passed test before 1/1/97 and/or have passed part E.

You are allowed to tow up to a Total Train Weight of 8.25 tonnes. TTW is the maximum all up weight of your car added to the maximum (plated) weight of the trailer. It is *recommended* (but not written into the law) that the towed weight should not exceed 85% of the kerb weight (unladen weight) of the car. In practice this recommendation means that a medium sized car like an Astra or Golf or Peugeot 306 can tow a single seater trailer, but not a two seater. Single seater trailers are usually plated (see mandatory plate on trailer) at about 850kg and two seaters at about 1300kg.

Two seaters need a medium sized car like a Mondeo, Vectra or VW Passat to tow them if the 85% ratio is to be adhered to, but you will not be breaking the law regarding licensing if you tow a two seater with an Astra, Golf or 306, provided you passed your test before 1/1/97 or have passed the E test. You will however need to obey the manufacturer's maximum trailer weight.

At the other end of the scale you are highly unlikely to exceed the very high maximum TTW unless you are towing with an American motorhome.

2) Passed test after 1/1/97 and have not passed part E.

For you things are very different. Unless your glider trailer is plated below 750kg (unlikely apart from ME7, PW5 etc), you need to adhere to a maximum TTW of 3.5 tonnes, and at the same time the unladen weight of the car *must* exceed the plated weight of the trailer. You can tow a two seater provided you use the right car. Let's consider some examples. The Duo Discus trailer is plated at 1300kg and my motorhome (an outstanding tow vehicle) is plated at 3300kg. Because the TTW exceeds 3500kg only a driver qualified before 1/1/97 or one who has passed the E test can drive the combination. Now change to a 5 series BMW with a maximum laden weight of 2170kg and add the 1300kg trailer giving a TTW of 3470, you are just within the limit. Since the unladen weight of the car is 1670kg, the trailer fits nicely within the recommended ratio at 78%, so a driver who passed the basic test after 1/1/97 may drive it. A Mondeo, Vectra or Passat would also be legal, although with some models you might exceed the recommended 85% limit, and you would also need to obey the manufacturers maximum trailer weight.

At the other end of the scale take note that you will not be able to use most large 4x4s to tow a two seater because this would exceed the 3500kg TTW. The very latest Discovery (just announced) weighs an incredible 2700kg unladen, so you will not be able to tow even a single seater with it until you have passed the E test. Using the above figures you will see that anything heavier than a 5 series BMW will break the TTW limit when towing a two seater.

Using an Astra, Golf or 306 to tow the Duo will not do, since the trailer is heavier than the car, but these cars will tow single seaters without problems. It seems strange that you may tow a single seater using a small car but not using a Discovery, but that is the Law for you!

So the message is watch out for the restrictions if you passed your test after 1/1/97 and have not yet taken the E test *. Further information can be found on the www.dvla.gov.uk website. The plated weight of your trailer can be found on the trailer, and the unladen, gross weight and maximum trailer weights for your car are in the handbook. Please also note that it is irrelevant whether the trailer is loaded or empty, or what it actually weighs with the glider on board, it is the *plated* weight that counts. If you are thinking of buying another car, look at Parker's Guide to Used Car Prices for kerb weights, and then consult the handbook of the car you are looking at to check the maximum gross weight and the maximum trailer weights.

Note that this article is purely from the point of view of the driver licensing authorities. Construction and Use Regulations are another subject entirely, your car's manual will list a maximum trailer weight

(which is unlikely to bear any resemblance to the above limits), but, your insurers are likely to use it as an overriding limit, so you should check the fine print. If you are tempted to take the risk, remember that in the event of an accident you will not be insured if your licence does not cover you for whatever you are towing. You could just be personally liable for enormous third party claims as well as the loss of a towcar plus an expensive two seater and its trailer.

I have checked the facts as carefully as possible, but things change all the time, so you need to keep up to date using the above references.

*Information on how to take the E test can be found on the Driving Standards website www.dsa.gov.uk or by ringing 0845 345 5151.

From the Flying Field

Richard Platt and Ann Parry

Apologies to Les Potton for omitting his five hour duration flight last issue. He achieved it on July 23rd. Dave Rance has had some good wave flying in his Ventus. On the 28th August he achieved 12,000 feet QNH around Mount Snowdon. On 10th September he again went to 12,000 feet, in SW wave, flying between Montgomery and Telford. On another occasion he went out to Conway and Bangor. On 26th September Ian Macarthur flew his new acquisition LS4 DZ (we think he may have a syndicate partner) to 16,000 feet (14,900 feet height gain), touring over 250 km in 7 hours. Congratulations to Felix Dethier and Michael Rogers on going solo in the last week of the course season. The courses (John Stuart and Dave Crowson) have run well this year, with reasonable numbers attending despite sometimes poor weather. The evening course was run from May to August by Tony Danbury and Bob Williams, and evening parties of trial lessons were run on Wednesday and Friday evenings through the summer.

Office Copy

Martin McCurdie

To All Members With Email Addresses

When sending out messages to members I am getting a lot returned as wrong address or "this email has closed down". Could all members with email addresses please send me a test message so I can check your address and correct it if wrong. Email: office@longmynd.com

Sweatshirts

We have a new consignment of sweatshirts and polo shirts in. They are available in red, blue, black and burgundy sized S to XL. The sweatshirts are £16 and polo shirts are £14, and are available from the office.

Kitchen

If you owe any money to Jo Beadman in the kitchen please settle up as soon as possible because she is giving up the franchise at the end of November.

“Eye Candy” - A Health Warning

Paul Garnham

Eye candy, of course, is an American expression, but it describes succinctly that which gratuitously delights the eye. Now eye candy is all very well, but when it gets in the way of something much more important like lookout it can be distracting and potentially lethal. What follows was stimulated by a recent discussion in Soaring Pilot newsgroup to which I subscribe. Soaring Pilot is free task software operating on the Palm PDA and is quite sophisticated. I used it on Euroglide recently and was quite impressed. It is still being developed.

Take a look at the instrument panel in a typical T21 2 seater of yesteryear. Not much there. Just the basics, an altimeter, an ASI, a vario (a Cosim even!), a compass or a turn and slip if you're lucky but that's usually it. By contrast, take a modern glass glider, say a DG505 of my acquaintance. The panels are packed with instruments and there's scope for even more beyond the panels. On several of the instruments, some with multi-screen displays, there's a multitude of tiny switches with abbreviated nomenclature that demands a very thorough knowledge of the systems or a copy of the handbooks close at hand. I recall that the Zander that was fitted to the Discus when we bought it seemed to require that the operator possessed a PhD. Just the thing on a boring flight, and of course in a two seater the P2 could play or read for ages. Of course these instruments are meant to aid our flying, particularly task or competition flying, but they come with significant risks. Anything that attracts our attention away from looking-out is increasing our risk of a collision.

There are actually several important elements here, the eye candy factor, the choice of instruments and the ergonomics of the panel. A useful lesson comes from the automotive area where car radios are becoming more appealing (eye candy again) with coloured lights, messages and so on, but they are also becoming more difficult to operate. Hands up all those who have been fiddling with the radio, tape or disc and have come close to an “incident” on the road as a result? Is your car, like mine, fitted with a radio somewhere near the gear lever?! Miniaturisation is another of my gripes. The tendency of things like mobile phones and camcorders to get smaller and smaller has surely gone too far. Our digits are not getting smaller, nor does our dexterity improve with age.

I guess what I'm coming to think is that we need to be more discerning about the devices we need to give us sufficient information in the air. Julian Fack points out that concentrating on a map and worrying about where one is in relation to airspace can possibly be more distracting than viewing a clear display of the situation on, say, a PDA. I agree. But some displays and devices are seductive rather than truly informative and must surely fall into the category of distracting eye candy. Similarly, clever instrumentation that demands much fiddling or interrogation, distracts us from actually flying safely. I think that a great deal of care is necessary in designing a panel that optimises the presentation of information with minimum reduction of lookout time.

It was stated in the newsgroup to which I referred that the French authorities were investigating an unconfirmed report that a pilot was refused permission to fly from one club because he had too many distractions in the cockpit and that he was later involved in a mid-air having flown from another airfield. In one period of 14 days there were 7 fatalities in the French Alps. Now it doesn't follow that all were caused by cockpit distractions but it makes one think. Lookout must surely suffer if eyes are drawn away from the real action out there.

A checklist

- Do your instruments display vital or really useful information or do some fall into the category of eye candy?
- Is information revealed by a quick glance or is a time-consuming interrogation process involved?
- Do you understand how to operate all the instruments and evaluate the information that is displayed?!
- When required, can you reach, adjust and manipulate all the instruments?

- Do any items not on the panel compromise the safe operation of the glider?

I Like Wave

Dave Rance

I like wave. I like the challenge of reading the sky and working a way into the rising air. The smug satisfaction of climbing above the clouds and watching them fall away. The fantastic bright white dazzling view of which I will never tire. And the splendid loneliness of sliding along in all that space.

And I am beginning to think we could slide rather a long way. At Aboyne, just up the road from Aberdeen, I recently spent about an hour trying to get from nineteen to twenty thousand feet in a seventy five knot headwind, which was an interesting, if rather cold, exercise. To test whether I am short of oxygen when I am high I do mental arithmetic ("Ah, but how would you know if the answer was right?" I hear you ask). The specific problem I tried to solve was how far I could glide at 50:1 in still air from twenty thousand feet. My cold and feeble brain eventually suggested a still air range of 180 odd miles. At this point I presumed I must be hypoxic and descended into warmer and thicker climes. Later, checking this on a calculator, I found that indeed I was wrong. The answer was 189 miles! If I had turned downwind, in the three hours odd that it would have taken for the ground to get close enough to have a conversation with the cows, the tail wind could have added perhaps another 150 miles which I think is something over 500 km. Now I know that this is nonsense and there are lots of reasons why this wouldn't work, even forgetting the agony of a two day retrieve, but it could have got me as far as the Lake District and with all those big rounded hills it just gets you wondering whether I could have got home...

The downside of a long wave flight, is returning home and the unpleasant shock of descending from above the clouds with their fantastic views and out of the smooth, reliable, stress free air to below cloud base into what is usually rough, gloomy, unrewarding turbulence and a crowded ridge. And after landing the puzzlement of trying to describe to anybody on the ground, particularly to somebody who hasn't been there, just where you have been. Come to think of it, there would be no point flying back from Aberdeen. Nobody would believe you.

Are You Switched-On?

Paul Garnham

Mobile Phones + Fuel Vapour = BANG!

We've all seen those signs in filling stations telling us to switch mobile phones off but the warning is perhaps less convincing than that of the no smoking signs displayed near petrol pumps or tanks. Shell UK has recently reminded us to take the warning seriously, with some examples to win us over. A car was being refuelled. A mobile phone in the boot was on. A call was received and the car went up in flames. A man was refuelling his car with a phone in his trouser pocket switched on. A call or text message arrived... OUCH! Another bright spark (sorry) decided to make a call while refuelling his car. You can imagine the rest, the ambulance, the trip to A & E, etc etc.

The reason I particularly draw this to your attention is that these cases should also make any of us who re-fuel aircraft or, I suspect, gas up winches or Land Rovers, take particular care. Picture the scene. Hot summer day (yes!). No wind to speak of. Tug pilot with phone in shirt pocket is re-fuelling the tug. Call arrives from loved one... Maybe we need the warning signs on gas and fuel compounds too.

Take care.

70th Anniversary Dinner: 2nd October 2004

Keith Mansell

(Your editors have asked me to set down the gist of the speech that I made at the dinner, so here goes! It may read better if accompanied by a bottle of claret as it was on the night.)

Ladies and gentlemen I am pleased to see such a good attendance this evening and am especially pleased to see Chris Harris here so soon after his recent scare at Aboyne and to see Phyl here with Derek.

1934, as Frank Sinatra would say, was a very good year! I was born in June and the club was founded by Espin Hardwick, a Birmingham stockbroker. Prior to discovering the Mynd he and a few friends had been travelling to Dunstable to fly at the London Gliding club. The first flight from the Mynd was on 11 August 1934 by Fred Slingsby (of Slingsby Sailplanes) from a bungee launch. Espin had the next flight followed by Theo Testar. However flying from the Mynd was seen as upsetting the grouse and Mr Max Wenner, of Betchcott Hall, owner of the shooting rights took legal action against Hardwick and the farmer preventing launching from that part of the Mynd. Wenner later got his come-uppance and was killed after 'falling' out of an aeroplane over Belgium! Formal foundation of the club occurred in October 1934.

In 1936 the hangar was built. Those working on it included a Mr Teague whose son joined the club in the early 70s and with Bob Scarborough reconstructed the bar into its present form. Founder members Cecil Reilly and Gerry Edwards went on a sailing trip around the Scottish islands with Amy Johnson who was a pre-war member. Cecil was club manager prior to the war. Many years later, in 1958, it was Cecil who introduced me to the club - so you know whom to blame! Cecil is still alive and living on the south coast.

Then came the War with gliding activities suspended. Immediately post-War gliders were difficult to get. Charles Wingfield had hidden one for the duration and produced it for use. Charles who was reserve for the British Gliding Team in 1948 and was Chairman of the club in the late forties. In 1983 when I went into the Nuffield Hospital at Shrewsbury I spotted an illuminated address in the entrance lobby noting that the hospital had been formally opened by Mr Charles Wingfield. When the matron enquired of my welfare I joked that had I known Mr Wingfield was connected with the hospital I would not have entered it. She seemed impressed that I knew Charles. Weeks later I asked Charles how he came to be opening a hospital. He told me that he had campaigned for it to be built and he was chosen to open it by his father-in-law who was the chairman of BUPA!

Another famous person who was a member in the late 40s/early 50s was Prince Bira of Siam. Bira was well known for his motor racing exploits in an ERA. Bira would sometimes fly a single-seater glider with his small dog on board! In cross-country flying Bira was somewhat of a latter day Pete Orchard in that he did not arrange for a retrieve crew. Bira's solution to the problem of getting back was to hire a removal van to convey his glider back to the Mynd. The splendid silver trophy of an eagle was presented to the club by Bira for the greatest distance in soaring flight from the Mynd.

By 1954 the lean-to clubhouse in the western end of the hangar was inadequate and was replaced by the clubhouse as we know it today being a westwards extension of the hangar. The original specification for the floor of the new clubhouse was for plain boarding which Espin thought would be dusty and instead personally paid for the oak block floor that was installed. Sadly Espin died in 1954 before the new clubhouse was finished.

In 1957 the club employed Jack Minshall as its first ever professional instructor to run the courses. Jack most ably filled that role for twenty-seven years until his retirement.

I had proposed him for a Royal Aero club bronze medal and some members of the awards committee demurred saying Jack had only been doing his job. But the hang-gliding man on the committee said that anyone who had done 80,000 launches and 15,000 hours deserved a medal. HM The Queen awarded

Jack his medal (see photo in the quiet room). Ron Hawkes succeeded Jack and in due course Ron was succeeded by John Stuart who is currently assisted by Dave Crowson.

In 1958 when I joined the club there were eight club gliders and only two privately-owned gliders. There was an ever-present land dispute with the then owner of most of the airfield. In 1960 the club bought an Auster Tugmaster for aerotowing and also in that year began using a retrieve winch imported from Germany. In 1963 the present bunkhouse accommodation was built to replace the old ones that were in the northern end of what are now the workshops. The old bunkhouse roof would lift in a westerly gale, there would be sheep in there on a Friday evening and the building was so damp that bedding was kept in the blanket store (where the bar now is) and carried out to the bunkhouse at the weekend as required. The suppliers of the new building advised that the design would withstand an 80 mph wind. We required 120 mph to which the suppliers readily agreed without apparently modifying the design!

In 1963 Teddy Proll, our Polish Ground Engineer died. Teddy had been in the Polish Air Force and had been employed by the club since shortly after the end of the War.

I well remember Teddy taking charge of hangar packing, rather as Denise often does now. Teddy used to admonish us with phrases like, "Gentlemen, gentlemen please!" in sharp contrast to Denise's more colourful but equally effective urgings.

In 1964 the land dispute was settled but resulted in a restraint on aerotowing. The landowner wanted a barbed wire fence on our boundary two hundred and fifty yards east of the Portway. He was the Coroner in Shrewsbury and agreed to a shallow ditch filled with white quartz-free granite chippings when reminded that a go-karter at Condover had been de-capitated when he had driven through a fence. The chippings were actually several loads of broken crockery traces of which can still be seen.

I took over, from 'Uncle' Bob Neill, as Chairman in September 1967 shortly after which the club's one remaining Capstan two-seater was written off in an accident.

In November the 67/68 Foot & Mouth disease outbreak began and the club was closed for four months until March 1968. When the club re-opened we had two brand new K13s ready and waiting to fly. Having been both Chairman and CFI during the 67/68 winter in May 1968 I handed over the CFI's reins to Ernie Ainscough who went on to do the job for nearly ten years.

The land saga revived again in 1973 when the land-owning Major died and his land on the Mynd was for sale at auction in March 1974. The club bought 180 acres at the auction. Subsequently we bought a further 12 acres and finally in 1988 we bought about 60 acres from the Forestry Commission. So we own it all!

A few more notable events. In 1974 the kitchen (which was where the TV room is now) was moved to its present location which was built by a certain tall Hungarian. 1976 saw the last of the 'Fairies' and the first catering franchisee - Tony Spicer. Whilst waiting for delivery of a Vega from Slingsby Tony campaigned for a smoother airfield surface for the new generation of glass gliders. Hence a strip was ploughed and levelled and inevitably known as the Vega strip. Since Tony there have been several catering franchisees including Liz Platt and Roger Andrews whose flaming 'nanas' (bananas) were quite something. We are sorry, later this year, to be losing Jo and Simon who have certainly done us proud this evening.

1981 saw the arrival of our first K21 797 eventually to be refurbished and known as ELE. Subsequently a second K21, two K23s and a third K21. In 1991 needing a new and more powerful winch we commissioned former winchdriver, Mike Groves, to build one, which became known as the Skylaunch. Ours was the prototype and dozens have been made since.

Then in the winter of 2001/02 Foot & Mouth struck again. A few years after the 67/68 outbreak insurance was arranged which covered our 2001/02 losses but the insurers would not renew the policy.

Today we have a wonderful club in a marvellous location. The success of the club relies heavily on volunteers both on and off the field. I told you a few minutes ago that when I joined the club in 1958 the club had eight gliders and two privately owned gliders. Now there are still eight club gliders but

there are some 45 privately owned gliders. This is a trend through which the whole gliding movement has gone. A very welcome and relatively recent plus has been the competitions successes of our Junior members.

On the horizon are black clouds from EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency). Brussels seeks to tell us how we should licence our pilots, maintain our gliders and maybe pay for using the airspace. The BGA is striving to get some sense into the regulations but there is a danger that some of our exemption from red tape may be eroded.

Finally I would draw your attention to the 'infestation' on table 9 (see seating plan on page 11). There is the CFI and no less than four of his predecessors. There's another on table 7 and yet another on table 2. Seriously I ask them to stand so that you can see them. We owe much to them and to the Chairman and his three predecessors here present.

I wish you another seventy years soaring.

Thank you.

Chris Harris

Nicky Harris

As you may, or may not, know, Chris's trip "North of the Border" (which was supposed to be a fantastic gliding week at Aboyne) was not a happy one as he sustained a mild stroke which has affected his peripheral vision.

Chris's progress is coming on in leaps and bounds - he has put "Postman Pat" aside now (a book which his youngest grandson left whilst visiting the other day!) and is on to more stimulating literary publications such as - *Sailplane & Gliding, Pilot* and the *Midland Gliding Club Newsletter!* Seriously, he is on the mend.

I would like to thank Martin McCurdie, Meg Marrion, Dave Rance, Paul Garnham and Julian Fack for all the help and kindness shown to both Chris and me. Without their help dealing with Chris so far away from home would have been a lonely business. My thanks to all of you who have sent cards, flowers etc. and for all the telephone calls, good wishes and kind thoughts and encouraging words from so many of his friends.

Also I'd like to say how much Chris and I enjoyed the 70th Anniversary Dinner. I thought the dining area looked fantastic and the meal was excellent. Although Chris wasn't too well that weekend his visit to the Mynd, and being amongst so many of his good friends, did him more good than any Doctor's medication could have done!!

With best wishes and continued "happy flying".

Who Stole Snowdon's Summit?

Ann Parry

It's been pointed out that Snowdon's height was mis-reported in the last newsletter. Snowdon is 3560 feet (not 3130 feet) and Arenig Fawr is 2800 (not 2660 feet). However the conclusion still stands, that Snowdon is not visible from the bungee point.

70th ANNIVERSARY DINNER 2 October 2004

SEATING PLAN

Table

1	Julian Fack Meg Marrion Paul Garnham Jon Hall Lorraine Hall Louis Rotter
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2	Keith Mansell Helen Evans Charles Carter Ann Carter Nick Wall Christine Mansell
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3	David Rance Maggie Dean James Moore Vicky Rance Chris Ellis Alma Ellis
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4	Wendy Horan Mike Randle Jane Randle Tony Danbury Tony Adams Mike Horan Jacky Horridge John Harris Sue Danbury
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5	Mike Witton Anthony Gluyas Claire Couzens Chellie Turner Vicki Manning Iain MacArthur
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Table

6	Clive Jones Jon Lewis Lynette Causer Warwick Nuttall Charissa Poynton Mr Poynton
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7	Bob Rice Peter Turner Hazel Turner Derek Platt Phyl Basford Nigel Holmes Sue Holmes Glyn MacArthur Chris Aldis
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8	Eddie Humphries Sarah Platt Richard Platt Clive Crocker Ellen Orchard Clare Price
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9	Chris Harris Nicky Harris Phil King Diana King Nick Heriz-Smith Keith Laidler Denise Hughes Howard Bradley Roy Witton Steve Allsop Pam Allsop Neal Clements Jan Outhwaite Peter Cope Paul Stanley Sarah Butler
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Table

10	Martin McCurdie Paul Waller Helen Johnson Nicki Jackson Dave Crowson Paul Price Tracy Price
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11	Rod Hawley Shelia Anthony John Stuart Tim Mason Pam Mason Mike Stuart Pete Salisbury
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12	Mike Greenwood Alisdair Lewis Karen Lewis Allan Reynolds Colin Calderhead Tim Orchard Charles Page Karen Dawn Mrs Page Roland Bailey Colin Knox Pete Orchard Ann Parry John Parry Mark Wakem Joan Wakem
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100 diners

krm011004 Seating Plan

Almost Gold: 296 km on 14th July 2002

Ann Parry

I was at 4,400 feet QNH so off we went, on a declared attempt at Gold distance, to Thame and back. Finding climbs, gliding to the next cloud, I am in beginner's mode. Reaching those distant clouds easily. Sky uniformly good, so keep on track. Working out landmarks, a while since I've been here. My first aim, to get to Worcester. Please don't let me land at Ludlow on the way out. Forget to specify 'and not on the way back'. Ah yes, Droitwich has that big pool. Next aim, Bidford. There's Bredon Hill. Beginning to feel uncertain identifying features. Don't just want to follow the arrow on the GPS, anyway trying to ignore that it is 84 nautical miles to Thame. Weather glorious, but even so surprised by the limits to visibility, reminded of how things suddenly appear. Evesham, remember it has lots of glass to the north, all those greenhouses. Bidford must be around here somewhere, oh there it is.

And so I progressed, between 5,500 feet and 4,500 feet. Noticed landing fields were a problem. Could hardly see the Cotswold edge. At least twice met gliders coming at me, fortunately not my height, but appalled how late I saw them. Improve my lookout. To Enstone, and now it really was new territory. Busy sky round the clubs, and once such a crowded thermal that I fled. Trying to find better climbs, not impressed by my averages, at least trying to be decisive on leaving thermals. Once looked up and saw a glider above and to the side just when I was thinking 'where is the climb?' Joined him and there it was, thanks. Was now weaving slowly through lift, not circling unless it was stupendous. Confused at Enstone, looking for Upper Heyford, my marker to avoid parachute zones at Hinton in the Hedges and Weston on the Green. GPS on map page but I couldn't see it well enough. And which is Banbury and which is Bicester? Could not see Oxford at all. Ah there's a long straight feature, must be the runway at Upper Heyford. Seems to have two lakes, I didn't know they've been landscaping it. Then I realised I was looking at the avenue up to Blenheim Palace, not a runway at all. Which is south of Enstone, and near Brize Norton airspace. My sense of bearing was 90° out. Odd, the whole way I wanted to head further south than compass and GPS said.

Cruising nice and high, no problems, just as well because the fields are all crop. Now within reach of Thame. Never saw the Chiltern edge, too small I suppose. Checking features on the map again, yes, this is Thame. Take TP pictures, and turn for home. Still looking good, and time's not bad either. This thermal's busy, oh that's Iain Evans in PZ. He whizzes off, and of course gets home. Hang on grimly to my climb despite whirling gliders. Trying to press on, aware of distance and time. Home via Barford St John and Stratford. Confused again, where is Worcester? Ah, there. Set off, why does the compass say north? Because that's Redditch. Oops. 90° out again. Pay more attention to the sun. Hmm, sky ahead is different, high patchy cover, impossibly distant clouds across the gap. Can't face going round to the south. Try tiptoeing across the gap. Find lift in it, hopeful as blue again above the clouds beyond Worcester. Just past Worcester suddenly all of Wales becomes clear, unveiled, stunning. Begin having fantasies about getting home ("FVP, five minutes!"). Even have a plan to the Clee Hill thermal, climb onto final glide and yeehaa! But now, under a fine-looking cloud, I can't find the lift. Where is it? Try the next cloud. Same problem. Oh please, not now, when I am so close. OK, if I were local soaring, what would I try? Move up-wind and up-sun. Ah, better. This is going to take ages. At 5,000 feet I lose the climb. So I set off for the Clee Hill thermal. Which is off. No sun on the ground anywhere. Fly over the quarry. Nothing. I'm now at 3,000 feet. Can see the cloud street just to the north, running to the Mynd. Visibility superb, maybe because I am lower? If only I could climb to that cloud street. I believe the wind is gentle westerly, so move round the Clee a bit. Ah, a bubble. Hang on while thinking. Notice a touch of sun on the quarry. Back there. Still nothing. All feels calm and still, no liveliness to the air. I don't try for long, losing hope. Contemplate my options. Tell the Mynd I doubt I'll get back. So, fly as far as I can, maybe to Simon's field, or Ian Mac's? But I can't see over Wenlock Edge, and would I recognise the fields? Not sensible. So I leave the Clee and glide towards low ground. Hmm, it's all crop. Silky smooth air. What am I going to do? Just then a beacon: two cut silage fields, east of the Ludlow race-course. I am soon in the bigger one. I hear church bells ringing. It's five past six. By sunset I am sitting outside the club with a

beer, watching the sun drop behind the mountains.