

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Contribution

Charles Carter

The unfortunate accident to the DG 505 reminds us once again of the need for constant vigilance within our sport both in the air and on the ground and in this particular instance the immediate transition between the two. Fortunately neither of the pilots were injured and the sheep was never seen again which means that it must have kept running.

Sheep have caused several accidents to gliders on the Mynd. All of those that I can think of were to landing aircraft which means one of two things or a combination of the two. Either the sheep had not been cleared from the landing area by the ground crew or the landing pilot was attempting to land too near to the sheep.

When a number of sheep are alarmed they may leap up and will invariably run in one direction. If one or two have already started running the remainder will almost inevitably follow them even if it across the path of a vehicle or aircraft. That is their nature and you can not change them but they are relatively easy to out think even by glider pilots.

Please be aware of the dangers of sheep at all times, especially at the end of the day when they encroach very rapidly. This problem was reinforced again on Sunday 3rd of July when Julian Fack and Paul Garnham were returning to the Mynd from a cross country flight after flying had finished to be confronted by a field covered in sheep. Fortunately a combination of turbo motor and help on the ground averted any problem.

Let's all try and learn from the accidents. There are enough ways to cause grief without repeating the previous formulae.

The Clubhouse radio will be back on line by the time that you read these notes and a call to base when you are five or ten minutes out may cause a lot less embarrassment than arriving with nowhere to land except the valley.

The news of the DG is that it looks likely that it will be having a new fuselage and canopies and that together with the associated work the repair bill will be in excess of £40,000. We do not anticipate that it will be back on line for some months. I thank David Rance for the work he has put in on both the paperwork side and also for taking the wreckage up to Yorkshire to McLeans.

The run up to competition Enterprise has been very busy and a big thank you to all who have done so much to get things up and running and ready for the 9th July. Keep your fingers crossed for some good weather and I know that we will have a great week.

K21 ELE has been sold and has left the site today (July 3rd) and will be continuing its flying career in Saudi Arabia where a new gliding club is being founded under the guidance of John Bally with whom many of you will be familiar from his long association with flying.

ELE came to the Mynd as a brand new glider in the early eighties with the designation of 797 and was for many years John Stuart's "office". It has flown close to 13000 hours and goodness knows how many launches at the Mynd and in this coarse pilot's view was the nicest of our K21s to fly. It was, incidentally, the first ever glider in which I flew on 3rd November 1984 with Phil King as P1, a day which has gone down in infamy within the gliding movement and not necessarily because of Phil's involvement. At that time Keith Mansell was Chairman and Chris Alldis CFI, both blond headed young adonises and I hope that I have not been solely responsible for the subsequent serious deterioration in their condition.

No wonder I was sorry to see ELE go.

A reminder for those who may have forgotten is that driving of any vehicle on Club grounds is restricted to those who hold a full, current driving licence. The reason is because of liability to those who have rights to use the footpaths and bridleways which cross Club land.

Safe soaring and if you have a problem with which you think I may be able to help, please get in touch.

CFI's Bits

Neal Clements

We have had an incident and accident filled time recently. We have hit sheep with the DG505, had a dehydrated instructor and we have taken off to the West with cyclists in the vicinity. Let me deal with these individually:

Sheep

The DG struck sheep and is now substantially damaged, previously a K21 hit sheep and was also substantially damaged. K13s have been hit and the club K6 tailplane was written off. All of these have happened during my brief membership with the club. These sheep incidents keep on happening and we must address them. I am eliciting opinions on how we can prevent or deal with this in the future, we do need to change and I welcome your positive suggestions then we can introduce permanent operational changes. In the meantime we must ensure that the field is clear of sheep at all times. This is part of the launch director training but of course in the evenings we frequently operate without a launch director. If you as a pilot, see sheep then land well away from them, do not concern yourself with holding up launches or hangar landing, ensure that the safety of the aircraft takes precedence at all times. There should always be a means of signalling to the ground by radio that sheep are present and to this end we are replacing the base station in the clubhouse.

Dehydrated Instructor

We have recently had a case of an instructor flying, as they do, for a long period of time without a break and suffering the effects of dehydration (see Diana's article on page 5). It is important for all pilots to ensure that you are comfortable, you must be alert, hydrated and not in agony because of poor seating or anything else which could distract you or even prevent you flying. Don't forget, in hot weather always wear a hat, have sunglasses available and plenty of water.

Taking off to the West

We must be able to ensure that anything taking off to the West, over the road, cannot be obstructed. There must always be a ridge watch with working radio for any powered aircraft and they must be able to see the entrance to the road as well as ridge traffic.

The Incident Process

I have mentioned incidents before, in essence an incident is something that has happened that shouldn't have or something that hasn't happened that should have. We need to be aware of incidents and there are several ways of reporting them, if the problem is with the operation on the field then please inform the launch director. They have a form on the back of the flying sheet which is to record how well the day went and any problems or incidents that may have occurred. If there is any other problem then please tell the office that we have had an incident and they will record it in our incident book. If the office is closed then push a piece of paper through the letter box detailing the incident, the date and who you are. Please also send me any incidents or note an incident via email or leave a note in my pigeon hole.

n_clements@blueyonder.co.uk

Task Week

John Parry

Task Week is rapidly approaching, look out for details and entry list which will shortly be appearing in the clubhouse. We will have had a little practice in Competition Enterprise so it should all be even better than usual.

New Retrieve Winch

Colin Knox

Well we made it, it's official, we now have two retrieve winches. The Knox 05CCJ is now in service and working well. I can now uncross my fingers and say I told you so!

At the time of writing we still have no airband radio working as I am waiting for a circuit diagram. There is also a small oil leak that didn't show up on the donor car. Still it's all work for the working man...

People keep asking me about the name, well... Knox is the designer, 05 the year and CCJ? No, it's not County court Judgement because it was over budget (actually it was under budget). No, simply Colin and Clive Jones the builders, so now you know.

Did I enjoy the build? Yes, it was really enjoyable to be creating again and great to work with Clive Jones. So much so that I almost felt guilty collecting my meagre pittance. But before Charles gets any ideas I have already spent it on dissolute living!

In my last article there was mention of John Parry flashing near the new winch, or maybe it was lurking. Anyway, this has developed into a new form of bondage using multi-coloured wires and cables. The foreplay for this activity required sitting on a chair in the workshop for hours on end. Hum!

More strange behaviour witnessed lately when Paul Garnham was spotted atop a pair of steps on the airfield flapping his arms. It looked a bit quixotic. I suppose that's what happens when you go continental. It turned out he was photographing the only three working retrieve winches in the world. Mike Groves from Skylaunch had his new retrieve winch here for testing. It looked good and worked well. But you have to save harder if you want a Skylaunch instead of a Knox!

Well there are still a few things to do. A weather shelter is on the books. The oil leak and airband radio are waiting. But I think now is the time to thank all those who contributed to the new winch.

- The committee members who said yes.
- Clive Jones who did hours of unpaid work at his workplace and many more in our workshop.
- John Parry who provided miles of wire and trunking, and turned it into a very professional wiring system.
- John Stuart for painting the chassis. (John the bottom is still to do.)
- Roger Andrews who put up with me scrounging his lathe tools etc and made tea in the mornings.
- Jon Hall for the transfers. (Jon you might have noticed the implications of the letters CCJ which only became clear to me after I applied them.)
- And everyone else for their support, which I will wear when the pain is bad!

Are you SAFE?

Diana King

At 4.45 in the afternoon of 7th July 1984 I nearly killed myself.

I was on a short 75 km task when I got low near the second TP. I found a good field in plenty of time. I tried to find lift in the local area, but found nothing. I started a circuit, still in good time. At 600 feet on the downwind leg I found a little lift, turned - and spun. I recovered, then the glider tried to spin the other way. The Oly 460 spins well and I was at perhaps 200 feet when I was back under control. By then I was too low to reach the chosen field safely and I crashed in the hedge. I was lucky. I escaped with a few scratches, a badly broken glider and severe, long-lasting, damage to my confidence.

Why did this happen?

When our sad retrieve crew arrived back at the airfield, a friend said, "I thought this morning that you looked very tired." My first thought was "Well, why didn't you say so before I took off?" But I quickly realised that it was not his responsibility to tell me if I was not fit to fly. That was up to me and I had failed to ask myself that day "Am I Safe?"

More recently, some of you will have heard that Tony Danbury became ill at the end of a day's instructing. In Tony's own words: "I instructed during the afternoon including 80 minutes soaring. Came back to the Clubhouse and checked to see if my own glider had been put away. Saw Neal Clements in the car park who asked if I felt OK. Went out towards my glider and don't know anything until I was sitting in office being offered a mug of tea. I had no recollection of the previous few minutes!"

What happened to Tony? Should he have been asking himself "Am I Safe?"

I'M SAFE

Using this simple aviation mnemonic could have saved me a lot of cost, trouble and grief and Tony and his friends several days' anxiety.

I = *Illness* – if you are not fully well, you may not be fit to fly. Even quite minor ailments such as colds or a slight tummy bug can be very incapacitating.

M = *Medication* – prescription or over-the-counter medicines may make your cold or other ailment feel better, but can adversely affect your ability to fly safely.

Before my accident, I had taken a hay fever remedy, which was stated to be non-drowsy, but was it really advisable? On Tony's duty day, he had a bit of a queasy tum so he took a Motilium tablet before leaving home. Still feeling a bit 'off' after lunch, he took another. This may have simply masked the real problem of a tummy bug, and probably created other problems; Tony discovered later that Motilium causes dehydration.

Before starting to take medication, always tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are a pilot. Consider whether you really need to continue to take the medication. If necessary, refrain from flying (or at least flying solo) when taking any medication.

Many drugs have unexpected side-effects, included drowsiness, reduced awareness of danger, over-confidence, disorientation – the list goes on! Check the box and get qualified advice.

S = Stress – if you are under mental stress it can be tempting to go flying as a constructive way of relaxing and coping with stress and to get away from your problems. This may be okay, provided that you are well enough to cope with emergencies – you may want to restrict yourself to non-stressful flying. (In 1984, my father-in-law died a few weeks before my flight, I was handling his affairs and was under pressure in several other ways.)

Another form of stress is physical, or environmental, such as excessive heat or cold. Make sure that you are comfortable, with suitable clothing, particularly headwear, for the conditions. Being very hot or cold, or too much sun, dulls the brain and makes it difficult to concentrate.

A = Alcohol (and other drugs) – ‘8 hours bottle to throttle’ used to be the rough guide in the UK; other countries are stricter. The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 has introduced a legal blood/alcohol limit for pilots and people doing other key tasks (e.g. rigging, running the airfield or driving a winch), at 20 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. This is one-quarter of the UK limit for driving, and the police have the power to breathalyse pilots. The limit is so low that it effectively means that you cannot drink at all before flying. Caffeine, peppermints, water and other homespun remedies may make you smell sweeter or feel better, but the alcohol still only leaves your body at a constant rate. If you have had a long heavy night in the bar, you may still be over the limit to fly at midday the next day and of course you may be suffering from a hangover.

F = Fatigue – Have you had enough rest and sleep, both short term and long term? (Before my flight, I had had several late nights and was definitely tired.)

E = Eating – Are you adequately fed and watered? Contrary to popular belief, gliding takes physical energy and you need to cater for that. Low blood sugar is a particular danger for diabetics, but can affect anyone who has not eaten for several hours. Know your own metabolism! Ideally you should eat a moderate amount of high-energy food before flying. For a long flight, or even if you are working hard on the ground, you should have something with you to maintain energy and your blood sugar level. Dried fruit and biscuits (especially muesli bars) are particularly suitable in most cases. Pay attention to hydration. Keep drinking both before you fly (plain water is ideal) and during the flight. For in-flight, an energy drink is useful. You can buy them ready made or make them up yourself much more cheaply (weak fruit squash or juice + 5 dessertspoonfuls of glucose powder + 1 flat teaspoon salt per litre is a good mix.)

Drinking enough of course creates another problem – how to get rid of it! Find a system that works for you in your usual glider, so that you are not discouraged from drinking.

On a check-up by the doctor, Tony’s problem was tracked down to dehydration. He had filled a bottle of water in the morning but forgot to take it with him in the glider, had a thick soup for lunch and nothing to drink during the afternoon. Although he had only been flying for part of the day, he was still at risk and his experience highlights the potential for dehydration or exhaustion if you are active on the ground, even if you have not had a long flight.

Other points to bear in mind include

- Too much **Caffeine** is not good for you and can cause dehydration.
- You should not fly shortly after an **Anaesthetic**. 24 hours after a local (including dental surgery) and 48 hours after a general are the minimum periods advised.
- Do not fly for 24 hours after **Donating Blood**. Don’t go above 5000 feet for 5 days.
- **Smoking** reduces the ability of oxygen to reach the lungs. Smokers should start to use oxygen at lower levels (e.g. 8,000 – 10,000 feet instead of the more usual 12,000 feet) to reduce the risk of hypoxia.
- **Heart disease and obesity** may both lead to short or long term incapacity to fly.
- **Eyesight** – have your eyes checked regularly and wear glasses/lenses if needed. You can fly with monocular or colour vision defects, but need to adapt and learn to cope with the limitations.

If you are in doubt about your fitness to fly you should discuss the situation in confidence with the CFI and with your doctor. Take their advice. They may suggest that you stop flying for a while or perhaps that you restrict your flying to avoid situations that you may not cope with. If you have some illness or medical problem, you are required to bring it to the attention of club officials (normally the CFI) and abide by their advice or restrictions.

For further information, including the details of the current BGA Medical Declaration requirements, see

- *Laws and Rules for Glider Pilots (15th Edition)*
- *BGA Guidance notes on the medical fitness required for Glider Pilots*
- *PPL Course book on Human Factors*
- *Aeromedicine for aviators* by Keith Read

From the Flying Field

David D'Arcy

Congratulations go to Rose “Funky Chicken” Johnson, JonnyBoy Roberts and Iain Evans for their excellent results in the Overseas Nationals competition held at Ocana – Spain; results can be found from the web page www.soaringclub.com. Rose and Iain then entered the Bidford ‘Turbo’ regionals competition and Rose won that too, Ian getting 3rd! Who’s been feeding who? And WHAT?! Results can be found at www.bas.uk.net/bidford.htm.

Welcome to our new members: Victoria Lukins, Andrew Taylor and Glenn Scott, also Tom Jurdison and Henry Wood who have rejoined.

Sunday 8th May Andrew Robinson soloed. CONGRATULATIONS. Tuesday 10th May the terrible two of Rance and Haughton had another attempt at a 750km flight, but fell back to 370 and 420 due to poor conditions in the south west. Wednesday 11th was another good day with the BGA ladder (www.aircross.co.uk/bgaladder/) registering many 750 flights! Don’t think any of those ventured into Wales though. However, Jon Hall did for a 300k of BID-VER-MYN. NB: the Nimbus 2B patiently sat it out once more. Sunday 15th May William Brewis utilised the day by doing 220km and flying over his house on the way home, while most Myndies were nursing hangovers from Helen’s 50th birthday party (and what a bash it was, thank you Helen.) Ian Mac on the other hand was visiting Pocklington and flew 170k while still slightly gutted at all the earlier 750’s done mid week. Steve Male soared in a sea breeze front over the club late on Saturday 28th May after touring local TPs and then many club members enjoyed excellent conditions on the Sunday. Bank holiday Monday 30th May saw Michael Rogers and Sarah Butler re-solo, well done. And the new Knox2000 retrieve winch went into service Tuesday 31st.

CONGRATULATIONS to Jim List who soloed during the week then polished it off with a number of K23 circuits on Saturday 11th June. During this period there was another Mynd visit to Ontur in Spain where Clare Couzens had her first solo aerotow then climbed to some dizzy height. Others averaged over 5 hours and did several 300s plus a couple of 400km flights. More news I’m sure can be found in the MGC bar.

The late news is that your MGC Rockpolishers team are still in first place, 3 points (may be 4) in front of Nympsfield after the third Inter Club League weekend (25/26th June) held at Nympsfield. Talgarth had a very good weekend ending up with a first and two second place positions, while our super Novice Dave Jones again won his class. Just one weekend left to clinch a place in the final. Come on team Mynd.

Its not easy to capture everyone’s flying achievements, especially since I live up in Preston, so if I have missed yours many apologies. Stories can be emailed to me at david.darcyl@baesystems.com

Goodbye to ELE (a grand old lady)

Les Potton

I was there at the Mynd on the 17th May, the day you were sold, a nostalgic day for me to see the reliable grand old lady of the fleet pass into history.

My most memorable flight with you, ELE was when you helped me achieve my five-hour endurance, last July. Despite my best endeavours to bring us down by dropping the nose, stalling, or losing the thermal, like a trusted old plough horse you kept plodding along keeping us both in the air. Even when I became temporarily unsure of my position, like a faithful homing pigeon you knew the way back home.

I am sorry I was not there to see you taken apart for the last time. I hear you are off to warmer climes. I would like to feel you were off to an honourable retirement where you could rest your weary frame in the sun. I fear however, that you will have to carry on working, perhaps not quite so hard as you have at the Mynd.

I hope you enjoy the sun and the sand. It will certainly be a change from the wet and windy weather you have endured here.

Good luck old girl,

Bon Voyage.

Tuesday 10th May

Nick Heriz-Smith

I needed to fly, it had been far too long and suddenly the week ahead was full of possibilities. Fronts had gone through and there was a building high. The week was forecast to start with cold northerlies going round to the east, freezing at night with possible highs of 14° to 16°, so I reckoned that Tuesday would be a good bet before the high got established with easterlies once more.

An early start from south Wales got me to the Mynd just before 9 o'clock in time for a flurry of rigging, everything from Ollys to hot ships! Lots of rushing around, water gurgling into wings, Dominic with a sheaf of printouts including a massive task that took in Cornwall. Dave Rance seemed to be going with him, but wasn't sure where to and Dave d'Arcy wanted to know what I thought of his declared 300k.

Well, this was all a bit intense for me, I hadn't flown nearly enough recently and just wanted to get off the ground. The prevailing conditions were perfect for Wales, north easterlies would keep the sea air at bay and the mountains should boost the thermals, so I stuck with my original plan of getting to Snowdon and coming home via a run down the coast.

John and Dave did their usual at the launch point getting us away as smoothly as ever. The first thermal was a good one, so, climbing well I settled into the joy of being airborne again, listening to everybody setting off on their various journeys to the south while considering mine to the north west.

I got to Welshpool almost before I knew it. Cloud base was barely 3500 feet and ahead of me the Berwyns, the first range I had to cross, looked awfully high. It was streeting well, so turning north I flew on in lift eventually getting another 500 feet. Cloud base looked higher beyond the Berwyns now, so with the extra height I turned again for Bala and made the crossing. The visibility was fantastic and I don't think I have ever seen the Welsh mountains looking so green. Cloud base climbed steadily as I approached the lake and ahead of me in the distance was a sunlit Snowdon and the glittering sea.

This was more like it, 4500 feet and good clouds on track. Ahead and to the left lay lake Trawsfynydd with its decommissioned nuclear power station looking very grey and neglected and beyond was Ffestiniog where I got my next climb, averaging 8 knots. It took me to 5500 feet and I now had a choice, turn north for the better cloud track and then run along the Glyders to Snowdon, or straight across the gap ahead to really good looking climbs right over the peak.

I chose the latter - wrong!

I knew I was in the lee of Snowdon but thought I had plenty of height for the jump. The sink was horrendous and for the first time that day clouds weren't working. Down almost to the top of Snowdon in a matter of minutes, and in that terrain, I turned and ran!

As I climbed again, (in 8 knots!), it was clear that there was a wave effect behind the range, so this time at the top, I did the sensible thing and used the clouds. Easy now, and after reaching Snowdon I eventually climbed away from the climbers on the peak in a massive thermal that took me to 6500 feet, and what a view, it seemed the whole of Wales was visible with the coast I was to follow next, disappearing into the distance.

There was a well pronounced line of heavy cloud running off-shore away from me, so I headed for the coast where Porthmadog sat on the edge of multi coloured ribbons of sand in the low water. It wasn't working over the water so turned southeast passing Llanbedr with all its runways marked with white crosses. The high ground here between Harlech and Cadair Idris is the most inhospitable in Wales, makes me think of the moon, it is covered in jagged peaks and ravines but the coast has plenty of safe ground to run to if needed. Approaching Cadair I'm plenty high enough to fly straight over the top only to find the cloud level ahead of me about 1500 feet lower and no sunlight at all on Plynlimon at the northern end of the Cambrian Mountains. The Dyfi estuary is in bright sunshine still, so I turn east for home along it heading for hills all around covered in wind farms.

75 km to run and 2500 feet below glide, (thanks Alasdair!), but no problem - hardly any turning necessary as the weather improves again and I slowly leave Wales behind me.

We may be small compared to Spain, but there really is good flying to be had here and that was three hours I won't forget.

Rockpolishers 2005 – Talgarth

David D'Arcy

The Mynd team for round two of Rockpolishers 2005 was: Dominic Haughton (Pundit), David d'Arcy (Intermediate) and Dave Jones (Novice). The venue was Talgarth over the Bank Holiday and Hay festival weekend of 28th – 29th May 2005.

On arrival shortly before 10:00 wave holes were evident, and at briefing there was encouraging met that allowed for wave tasks to be set in an east-west fashion for an expected southerly wind of at least 25 knots. However, the earlier wave holes didn't re-materialise so pilots swanned about for most of the day. Late in the afternoon the wind seemed to shift a little more west and Dominic decided to rig and tells us to do likewise. The flying was a little hairy, especially the aerotow, but there was good lift on the hills, which allowed for an hour and half's worth of trying to seek out that elusive wave entry point. Nobody really fared any better, so we all land, de-rig and prepare for the evenings BBQ. Weather was now clearing and wind dying back to almost still. No hangar band, but another good do as usual. (NB: Must remember to bring beer in the future!)

Sunday: Much better weather, however, not all the sky looked good as there was a thick band of cover almost on the very edge of the Black Mountain north-west ridge disappearing east. The suggestion was that it was a warm front going west! Drat, as the weather to the west looked very good indeed. Task set was Cray reservoir – Leominster (145k) for the pundits and Intermediates and Brecon – Leominster (100k ish) for novices. Dominic reminds us we have all day to do the task, I remind Dominic that the front is encroaching west and LEO is probably cut off already! So am surprised to get emergency call from him at 11:00 that he's launching ASAP and I should also! By the time I sort myself out and inquire of the launch queue list 15 minutes later am told that virtually the rest of the comp is in front of me! 12:00 passes then 12:30 and no sign of the second tug. Fortunately for me the second tug arrives by 12:45 and then almost does two tows for Talgarth's one! Not surprising really since my aerotow was almost as if I was in a thermalling! Here I found myself in a little dilemma, how do I pull off when the tug is turning and climbing in front of me? Nevertheless, I escaped and soon climbed to cloudbase in a 3+knots average. Sky south to the first TP looked really good, so started. Progress seemed really good,

till I was near Sarnsfield on way into Leominster, where I couldn't find a good climb and had to make do with a scrappy climb. Analysing my flight afterwards I found I was only half a nautical mile away from a 3 knotter! Ahrrr. Thankfully a good climb was waiting for me just past the turn and soon I was on a final glide in. Like the Mynd, it's not a pleasant view from 35k away as the ground starts to rise as you start to fall, but it all worked out fine. A little later was surprised to be handed a bottle of red wine and told I'd won the day for Intermediate. In the meantime both our Pundit and Novice went round their respective tasks again to win their classes too, although this was confirmed at a later date since the novice hadn't turned his logger on and therefore was relying on GPS tracklog evidence, and the pundit had a strange logger he had to download and email in himself!

On the way home we all stopped for a celebratory meal. Boy did the beer did taste good!

The points so far,

Club	Class	Glider Type	Tail ID	H'cap	Speed Kph	Dist. Km	H'cap Speed	H'cap Dist.	Points	Pos	Rock Points	Tal Points	Mynd Points	Total to Date
Aston Down	Pundit	SHK	422	89	72.45		81.40		998	2nd	3			
	Inter	Mosquito	594	98	60.81		62.05		796	4th	1	7	4	11
	Novice	Std Cirrus	FZK	90	67.83		75.37		925	2nd	3			
Long Mynd	Pundit	LS8 - 18	Z19	106	86.43		81.54		1000	1st	4			
	Inter	LS4	288	96	74.82		77.94		1000	1st	4	12	6	18
	Novice	Discus	493	98	79.83		81.46		1000	1st	4			
Nymps-field	Pundit	LS4	854	96	76.58		79.77		978	3rd	2			
	Inter	MinNimbus	270	98	69.51		70.93		910	2nd	3	6	8	14
	Novice	LS4 *	446	96	57.60		60.00		737	4th	1			
Shobdon	Pundit													
	Inter													
	Novice													
Talgarth	Pundit	Dart	816	83	60.02		72.31		887	4th	1			
	Inter	Std Jantar	HBS	92	61.44		66.78		857	3rd	2	5	5	10
	Novice	Junior	FHF	83		78		93.98	763	3rd	2			
Usk	Pundit													
	Inter													
	Novice													

* Logger verification unavailable

Almost 300k

David D'Arcy

I did something strange Tuesday 10th May, I went gliding. Normally I would be flying the office desk around my imaginary task, but having missed a good weekend 7/8th May and what seemed like even better weather Monday decided I could have an impromptu holiday from work and go cross country. This would be my first premeditated attempt at a 300 km cross country.

Drove down in the middle of the night to arrive at 12:30am. Was not that surprised to meet Simon Adlard at breakfast, as had spotted his Nimbus 2b already rigged the night before. However, the news was not good. The crappy weather I had driven through on the way down was still on the Satellite picture, which was a dense lump of wet medium air, and visible inland from the window. But Simon says "it might burn off, so plan and prep away." After unpacking the hanger, noticed the usual haunts of Dominic and Dave Rance about, with a few extras such as Nick Heriz-Smith, Ian Walton, Richard Bennett, Clive Jones and Ann Parry. So my hopes were cheered some that if they were all here to go fly cross country it can't be all that bad. And low and behold by 11:00 the ominous looking wet medium cloud layer seemed to have all but burnt off.

After talking tasks with Simon, it was nice to hear him single out Usk as I had also been thinking it as a destination, but he steered me away from going inland and suggested going north instead to somewhere like Stone. Unfortunately this only gave me 292 km, so used Pontypool reservoir instead to give 306 km. Not much of an FAI triangle but a nice route, as passed over Shobdon, Usk, back past Mynd, Cosford and Seighford.

I was hopelessly bad with my preparation mainly because I wanted to help out on the field a little before flying. So much so that I was hunting for TP trigraphs with my Garmin3 while at the front of the launch queue. However, I had had time to read the Notams and map up (just).

The task. Launched virtually straight into a thermal, climbed up to cloud base and 'started.' Going south first. Wind was about 10 knots NNE and the sky looked wonderful, and soon I was approaching the back of the Black Mountains with steady 3-4 knots average climbs, next Abergavenny with the Brecon Beacons in the distance, but the cu was starting to spread out a little now and it gave me something to think about. Was lucky to get a climb over Pontypool reservoir, sometimes there is sometimes there isn't one at the turn point, and headed back up country into wind for Stone railway station just north of Stafford. Eventually, I found myself at the Clee Hills time now about 15:00 progress hampered a little by the cycling sky. However, here I boo boomed and for some reason turned for home where I fell out of the sky and found myself in the embarrassing position of not being able to get back on the hill. Thankfully I managed to work a bubble thermal to cloud base and got a grip of myself and set off again in pursuit of Stone, the sky having cycled again and looking much better. This was short lived though and past Newport the sky looked dead and uninviting. Nevertheless rounded Stone TP and headed back to Seighford envisaging my land out at the gliding club. Another small climb saw me to Cosford, well it will lessen the retrieve I thought and after 5 hours finally threw in the towel and landed. Having flown from RAF Cosford in the Inter-Service regionals last summer it seemed natural to me to land at the base, I could have been lucky I don't know. Think the key to my good fortune was the fact that the grass hanger at the end of runway 45 was open, thus indicating members of the gliding club were home and so didn't get 'banged up' as many seemed to think should have happened. Even more good fortune meant 10 minutes later I was on aerotow to Ironbridge from where I could glide in.

So not my 300 day, but a great flight all the same where more lessons were learnt.

- 1) Don't attempt a long flight without a zip in your fly, pee-wise that is, as it becomes even more difficult than normal to complete the job.
- 2) Wear thick warm socks, as by definition it is cold at cloud base! Oh, and by the way, Dominic did 500 km and Dave 450, although not their original task of down to Cornwall and back. And Simon went back to bed to rest for 750 on Wednesday.