

# MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

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### Members' Weeks

*Martin McCurdie*

Four course weeks this year will be set aside for members only.

You will be able to come along and fly with John and David and only pay for the flying. There will be no course fee.

The first two weeks are either side of Easter so you can also enjoy the long Bank Holiday weekend.

The weeks we have set aside are:

2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> April

10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April

8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May

29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June

Please book your place with me as we will only have eight places per week.

Private owners are also welcome to come along and banish all those winter cobwebs.

We will try to set tasks each day as well as giving briefings on the weather and soaring conditions.

<p>Please send <b>Newsletter</b> contributions to:</p> <p>John and Ann Parry Holly Cottage Wentnor Bishops Castle Shropshire SY9 5EE Telephone..01588 650379 Email.....<a href="mailto:John.Parry@Virgin.net">John.Parry@Virgin.net</a></p>	<p><b>Club</b> Details:</p> <p>The Midland Gliding Club The Long Mynd Church Stretton Shropshire SY6 6TA Office Telephone.....01588 650206 Office Fax.....01588 650532 Members Telephone..01588 650405 Email.....<a href="mailto:office@longmynd.com">office@longmynd.com</a></p>
<p>Club web site: <a href="http://www.longmynd.com">www.longmynd.com</a></p>	

## Chairman's New Year Message

*Charles Carter*

I trust that you all had a good Christmas and I wish you a healthy and prosperous New Year and hope that we all fulfil our gliding desires during the coming season. Make sure that by staying current during the winter months you are ready to take advantage of early spring thermal activity which can be very rewarding.

We are in a privileged position at the Midland Gliding Club in that during the depths of winter we can still enjoy the sort of soaring of which flatlanders can only dream but to participate you do have to be there. Make sure that next time the talk in the bar turns to wave flying you can join in with your own experiences. Apart from the weekends with a rostered crew we also fly all day on Thursdays and Fridays (weather permitting) with John Stuart running the show so if you need an annual check or want JS to show you how to get into that wave take advantage of the opportunities. Tell JS that I promised you he would get you into wave.

I am sure that by now most of you will be aware that Jan Outhwaite and her team are giving up the club catering at the end of January. Jan stepped in at a very difficult time and with her trademark efficiency has done far more than we could have asked. From the picnic which she provided at very short notice for the course members on the first day, to what has been reported to me as one of the best Christmas dinners for many years, she has consistently provided quality fare.

Well done to Jan, Lisa and Stephen and their helpers.

Happily for the club, Heidy Adams is taking on the catering and I am sure that many of you will know her from her time as one of Jan's team and will give her every encouragement as she settles into her new role. Heidy has a background in catering and also has the advantage of knowing the club and our idiosyncrasies. I think that all new caterers who have no previous knowledge of the MGC and its dining room must think that they have been invited to cook in a madhouse. Maybe they know something!

Jon Hall and the rest of the committee took advantage of my absence in Australia to purchase another K21 to replace FWQ. Despite rumours to the contrary I was delighted that they were able to move quickly and acquire S21 which is a low hours glider and one which was refurbished at the factory a few years ago. Second-hand K21s are rare and the demand for them strong as we have discovered since losing FWQ and the problems of importing one from the continent are too expensive to contemplate. The committee took the considered decision some time ago that following the two accidents we would put the fleet back to the position we were in prior to the mishaps. This we have done in a cost neutral way which is a bonus. We now need to sit down and take stock of what the needs of the club with regard to the fleet are going to be in the coming years.

Apart from fleet appraisal the committee met all day on the 6<sup>th</sup> January for a strategy session. This will be an ongoing theme and input from club members would be welcome. It is your club and I am confident that you have opinions as to its future and now is the time to make them known.

Happy soaring during 2007 and remember that to make your club more prosperous during this year we need to see more of you more often.

## **CFI's Bits**

*Neal Clements*

### **Competitions**

It's time to look forward to the cross country season while enjoying our ability to fly in the winter. I have been asked if the DG505 can enter competitions this year and give members a chance of experiencing them on a day by day basis. I am getting feedback from instructors and I would ask all flying members to let me know whether they would like to take part in a competition on such a basis. It really is a different experience to see gliding from a competition pilot's perspective and it highlights all those theoretical aspects of aviation you learnt in your Bronze. If you are interested then please drop me an email at the address below.

### **Bungee**

On a more wintery note please be careful when you switch to bungee launching, it is becoming less frequent and you must ensure you are briefed. There is a briefing sheet attached to the hangar door, if it is not there then ask the office to print one for you and replace it. The Number One of the day will always stop the flying and re brief when we switch to bungee but if you miss it then you must ensure you have read the briefing notes.

### **Howard's Way launching**

You may have noticed that we have experimented with aerotow launching from Howard's way on short west days. This was very successful and takes a huge amount of hassle out of the running of the airfield and lets us increase the launch rate.

### **Fleet and training**

We now have a full fleet again, we are able to offer flying from wood up to high performance glass. The winter is a good time to take advantage of this and keep in practice and, if you are pre solo to get circuit practice or soar the ridge and wave.

[N\\_clements@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:N_clements@blueyonder.co.uk)

## **Big Social Event of the Year**

*Linda Taylor*

The Annual Dinner and Dance and Trophy presentation will once again take place at the Long Mynd Hotel, Church Stretton on Saturday 17 March 2007. Price will be in the region of £25.00 per person. All members, their partners and friends are welcome. Further details will follow but in the meantime if you wish to reserve your place please email Linda Taylor on [lindaktaylor@supanet.com](mailto:lindaktaylor@supanet.com).

## **Grandparents (again)!**

*Peter and Hazel Turner*

We are proud to announce the birth of our second granddaughter: Libby Louise born 10.50 pm on 5 January weighing in at 8lbs 1oz. Mother and daughter are doing very well. Ellie is excited to have a sister, and Vicky is glad it's over!

## Strategic Planning - Securing the Club's Future

*Jon Hall*

Many of you will be aware that the committee has begun a series of strategy days over the next couple of months to establish a strategic plan to see the club through the next five years, five years that will be critical to the survival of many clubs in the UK. Whilst we are in a better financial position than many we cannot afford to be complacent because we too must look at how we do things, how much we spend and how much we earn. Over the last few years our fixed costs have risen significantly with major increases in insurance and fuel as well as those inevitable regular increases in salaries and expenses that eat away at our revenue surpluses. We finished the last financial year with a small surplus but receipts from disposal of assets masks the fact that we are not earning enough to support the club structure that we all want.

There are two things that we can do to remedy the situation. We can make more from our assets and increase the revenue stream, and we can reduce our outgoings.

The committee is actively exploring the four major areas of revenue earning to see if there are ways we can earn more through changes to operational procedures, increasing take-up, and introducing new products. These four areas are the top earners for the club, namely courses, subscriptions, flying and launching, and trial lessons, in that order. Between them they bring in £160k a year.

The courses continue to be very successful, earning the club more than £50k a year, thanks to the efforts of Martin in the office, the winching team and especially John and Dave our professional instructors. We are incredibly fortunate to have one of the best and most experienced gliding instructors in the country on our staff and yet we don't sell all our course days. We need to explore ways of making the courses even more attractive to members and visiting pilots alike, to critically examine if we are giving value for money, to understand what the punters want and if we are really giving it to them and if there are ways we can introduce new products that will give increased satisfaction to the course members and to the instructors as well as marketing them more effectively. If we succeed we can add another glider and instructor to the busy weeks and significantly increase the revenue.

The way to significantly increase revenue from subscriptions is to have more members, not just by ramping up the cost. There will have to be some increases in subscriptions because we as members have to be prepared to pay for what we use but we intend to minimise these increases by getting more members. We estimate that we need 40 more members to get back to the position we were in some seven years ago. For the last couple of years we have increased the overall year end membership by about 8 each year. We need not only to attract them but to keep them. If we can continue this modest rate of increase it will take five years. We can all do our bit by introducing new members to the club, by talking enthusiastically to visitors and trial lessons, by keeping the club an attractive place for our course visitors, by turning up for duty days and especially by not being derogatory and slagging off the club or its members to anyone else, because walls have ears. Constructive criticism is always welcome, but privately please, to your committee members. We have a great club with a great future so let us make it known.

Put simply we all need to fly more, or we need more people to fly the same. We can do this in a number of ways. We can introduce new products and packages that help people to fly when they have the time to. We can make the launch system more efficient so that we don't have expensive kit sitting on the ground costing you, not earning you money. We can start launching earlier in the day so that we can fit more flying into the weekends. We can start course flying earlier in the day and finish earlier to free up the fleet for other uses, such as corporate events and trial lessons, in the evenings. We could sell some of the fleet that is underused to boost the reserves and reduce running costs. The alternative is to increase the cost of launching and flying time over and above the rate of inflation and none of us want that. The lesson is use it or lose it.

Trial lessons bring in about £26k of revenue to the club each year so, like them or not, learn to live with it because they are here to stay. Having said that, the committee recognises that they do put pressure on the operation at weekends so, while intending to increase overall the number of trial lessons we do, we

are looking at ways of doing them at other times in the week, early morning and late afternoon and in the evenings, so as to keep the core weekend flying times clear for the members. I want to be in a position in five years time to have to buy another glider for trial lessons because we cannot service the demand.

Alongside all this we need to reduce our outgoings and we can all help with this. We can start by having fewer accidents with the fleet. Every time we have a claim on the insurance we lose the excess and the no claim bonus the following year and effectively increase the premium every year thereafter. It is only after several claim free years that we can expect the premium to reduce again. At the same time we all need to look after our assets better: the buildings, the airfield, the fleet and the equipment. Lets start with the buildings.

I have noticed increasingly the club house looks unkempt and unloved. In spite of Jan's valiant efforts it often looks untidy and dishevelled. If we all accept responsibility for putting things back where they came from, clearing the mess from the floor, tidying up the bar before going to bed, rearranging the furniture and especially closing doors and turning out lights it would always look more inviting and save on energy costs. This extends to the outside too. Put old wing tape in the skip. Put rubbish in the skip. Put bottles and jars in the skip. Remove old and rotting cars from the car park. Get rid of broken caravans. If the club has to do this it costs you money.

Our principal asset is the airfield. There are a lot of things we can all do to keep it in good shape. At this time of the year only drive on wet grass in a Land Rover and even then only if it is absolutely necessary. If you do have to, drive slowly, engage low ratio gears and don't spin the wheels. Always take very wide turns. Don't drive over the same ground twice. Stick to the road and hard path wherever possible. Misuse will create ruts that harden like concrete in the dry weather and will break gliders. This costs you money every time we have to level parts of the airfield or repair a club glider or you have to repair your own. Drive slowly up the track to the south end as speed kicks the stones off the path into the heather. We have to pay to have them replaced and levelled so it is costing you money. If you don't know how to drive the Land Rovers properly ask someone to explain how the low ratio gear box works. There is no shame in admitting that you have never used one before. Repairs to broken Land Rovers costs you money.

Without the fleet we are hit with a double whammy. Not only does it cost you money to repair broken gliders but we lose revenue while they are out of action. Most of the care of the fleet is common sense. Think twice before you do anything and don't do it if you don't know how. Ask for advice. Look after canopies because they cost you a couple of thousand pounds to replace. Look after parachutes because they cost you a grand apiece to replace and they don't like getting damp by being put on the ground. What's more it might not work when you need it and that will cost you a lot more than a grand. Wash each of the gliders every day before they are put away. If you are not doing anything, and neither is the glider, clean and polish the canopy, better still polish the glider. They belong to you and are a diminishing asset if you don't look after them. Especially look after the radios and learn how to use them properly. Good communications is essential on our airfield and radios that don't work might cost you a whole lot more than the £300 they cost to replace. Oh and don't forget to put them on charge every night. If you see anyone mishandling or abusing a glider or any other piece of kit, even an instructor, gently suggest that they might do it better, safer or more carefully because their misuse is costing you money.

Finally there is all the other kit that we use all the time. The winches, the tug, the Land Rovers, the hangar, the trailers, the buckets, the chamois leathers, the car park, the caravan park, the camping area, canopy polish, dusters, computers etc. etc. The list is endless but every time one of them needs repairing or replacing it costs you money. Just a 5% reduction in our fixed costs will save you £10k every year.

The committee wants your input to this strategic planning process. If you have any thoughts about increasing revenue income or reducing costs or about the direction the club should take over the next five years please contact me by email at [jon@heritageresource.co.uk](mailto:jon@heritageresource.co.uk) or call me on 07801 184668. I will circulate your thoughts to the committee and feed them into the consultation process.

## **New Year's Day**

*Mike Greenwood*

I turned up at the club on first of January as it looked like the only flyable day of the Christmas break, and I thought it would be good to start the year with a flight in the log book. The day wasn't as forecast, although there was a good westerly, it was rather showery.

The two first hurdles to overcome were that everyone was a bit slow getting going after the festivities of the previous evening, and there was no winch driver. The wind was blowing over 30 knots, which the tuggie quite rightly thought was too strong for taxiing, but the wind was forecast to reduce through the day, so we unpacked the hangar and I rigged the Cirrus.

By this time the wind had dropped to 25 knots so we started flying with the DG505 aero towing off Howard's Way and the K21 bungeeing. There were a number of visitors who were willing to run down the hill, but on the first bungee the wind dropped suddenly, leaving the K21 to trundle down the hill. It took off eventually, but it seemed like a long ground run.

After about an hour the rain out to the west came in and we all retired for tea. After the front had gone through the wind went south westerly and dropped, so we changed to aerotowing to the west. There was still rain out to the west, but it didn't seem to be coming any closer, so I took a 1,000 foot aerotow in the Cirrus. The vario was off the clock all the way up the tow, the tuggie later told me he completed the tow in 2 minutes.

There was plenty of lift around, some broken wave. I cruised the ridge for an hour keeping an eye out for the next line of showers out to the west, which were approaching slowly. After an hour I decided that the rain looked imminent, and was just about to land when I hit strong, smooth lift in front of the approaching front.

I had a few minutes of smooth 4 knot lift skimming along the cloud to almost 3,000 feet looking down at the club house and the two seaters on the ridge before a radio call informed me that it was starting to snow on the ground (thanks Simon). Full airbrake with side slip got me onto the ground just in time, as I came to a stop it started belting down with rain. I am grateful to the kind souls who braved the weather to fetch me back to the hangar, just in time for lunch.

That proved to be the end of flying for the day, but we made the best of the day, and I had a lovely flight, and a first entry in my log book for 2007.

## **Allan's First Landout**

*Allan Reynolds*

I thought you might like to share a story with me. I made my first solo landout during Mynd task week 2005 (breaking new ground hey what?) near Clun. Towards the end of last year, I received a 'thank-you' card. I copy it here so you can read it too.

xxxx  
Clun  
Craven Arms  
Shropshire  
SYx xAA

*Dear Allan,*

*You landed a glider on my dad's field on 23 August 2005 and sent us a letter, photo and a complimentary glider flight ticket. I used the glider flight ticket yesterday. It was an excellent experience. I found everyone very informative and friendly. I would certainly recommend it to others and we would be happy to see you land a glider on my dad's field in the future.*

*Thanks*

*Sue*

Ok, it cost me a trial lesson, but it paid for itself in goodwill to at least one landowner !

## How Much Can You Drink?

(and still be legal at the launch point)

*John Parker*

The regulations have recently changed, reducing the legal limit for flying from 50mg% (that is one litre of blood contains half a gram of alcohol) to 20mg% which is effectively zero as the body normally contains about that level. As almost any level of raised blood alcohol can be shown to have an effect on performance this is probably not a bad thing. Additionally, the younger you are and the more recently you have learned to fly, the more severely you will be handicapped for a given level. It has been suggested that young drivers should have a limit of 50mg% and not the usual 80mg% for this reason.

So how much are you actually drinking? One 'unit' of alcohol is 10 grams and the strength of a drink is measured in weight/volume. So 100 ml of wine of 10% strength will contain 10 grams or one unit. A double whisky (50 ml) at 40% will contain 2 units. The average wine glass contains 125 ml so if the wine was 12.5% it would contain 1.56 units. Woods 'Parish' beer (available at the bar) is 4% so 1 pint (568 ml) will contain 2.27 units. If you are not too numerically challenged, you can now calculate how much you have drunk. Incidentally, if you are trying to diet, one unit provides 70 calories - hence the beer belly. Current guidelines suggest that men should not exceed 28 units a week, increased last year from 21 against the advice of the medical profession, and women 7 units less.

Once you have swallowed your encouraging brew, you may be interested to know what actually happens to it. In your stomach, a percentage is broken down by enzymes in the stomach wall, so if you have eaten, this will increase this amount as the alcohol will spend longer there although men have higher levels of the necessary enzyme than women. What is left goes into the intestine where it is absorbed and then filtered through the liver before entering the general circulation. Heavy drinkers have more efficient livers and it will cost them very roughly four times as much as a non drinker to achieve the same effect. More dilute drinks (beer) will raise the blood alcohol more quickly than spirits as will carbonation (champagne) as this speeds the passage into the small intestine. So Bollinger at the reception is more effective than Cockburn's after the meal.

When the alcohol gets into the general circulation (which also supplies your brain) then 2-10% is lost via sweat, urine and lungs and the rest is slowly broken down by the liver which also has its own artery from the heart. The rate of removal by these systems is variable so given the variable amount absorbed and different rates of elimination, quite apart from the effect of body mass and gender, no hard and fast figures can be given to link intake and sobriety.

There are web-sites that claim to help but this caveat must be remembered. Unsurprisingly, they give widely different figures. Key 'alcohol and blood levels' into Google. Assuming I am 160 pounds and male, aged 64 and consuming 5 units in 2 hours, I will have a blood alcohol level of:

(2) Police Notebook	20mg%
(3) Cool Nurse	48mg%
(4) Med Direct	15.8mg%
(7) RUPissed	10.4mg%
(9) Discovery Health	21.3mg%

The numbers relate to the order in which the site appears on the search. As I've said, it is an imprecise art. Your body will reduce blood alcohol at a rate between 10 and 30mg% per hour.

By way of encouragement, a certain amount of alcohol actually makes you live longer. For people between 50 and 80, the survival rate plotting alcohol against years is J shaped, so if you want to benefit from this men should drink between 7.7 and 12.9 units a week; more or less than this reduces your life expectancy. Sadly if you are a woman the figure is 2.9 units a week and if you are younger it appears to be a curved line with no nadir. Needless to say, the author denies all accusations of sexism or ageism.

So enjoy your next session in the bar. The bible has over 160 references to the subject but you could find Psalm 104 verse 15 an inducement.

## **Farewell 642**

*Mark Wakem*

*(I read in the a recent newsletter that our Astir 642 syndicate had “all but retired” so I thought I had better set the record straight as the one quarter who was still there as the “all but”.)*

Feeling a bit like the cat who gets left behind when its family moves house, I thought I should write a memorial piece to my lost glider. Firstly, my simple statistics: I first flew the Astir over 20 years ago as a club glider in 1986 soon after I came to the Mynd, and I bought in to the syndicate in 1990. I bought my share from Howard Bradley. That was the second share I purchased from him, the first one being in the Oly 2; I have a lot to thank him for.

The syndicate was quite, um, *careful* in those days so I probably fitted in a treat. However I think some people were a bit over the top; I remember being told “We each have our own roll of wing tape” by a fellow member at that time! I have enjoyed the company of all syndicate partners who have moved through from then till now. I always say that in a syndicate the machine is almost secondary (within reason); pick the people first. We have tolerated each other's funny little ways and got on well, I think.

The Astir herself is coming up for 30 years old and wearing very well, especially considering she had a hard former life as a club glider. Don't believe the stories about the rigging; the wings are similar in weight to most 15m gliders and with practised professionals like Messrs Warren and Tolley in charge we didn't have problems often (I admit when they weren't around I occasionally had alignment “issues”!). Most of the people who call them Concrete Swans have probably never flown one for any serious amount of time. She took me to Gold height twice: once over the Mynd and then again (this time with the barograph replaced by a working one) to 14,000 feet at Aboyne. She took Mr Warren on many cross-countries and to landings in a wide variety of fields (OK, so my ratio of proper cross country attempts to field landings in her was about 1:1, I grant you).

But returning to the “careful” theme it was all done at very reasonable cost, and therefore it was very disappointing to me that as my final partners gradually fell by the wayside (temporarily or permanently) no-one else seemed to be interested in buying in to one of the best “bangs per buck” (in terms of performance versus financial outlay) around.

Common-sense prevailed when the thought occurred of keeping her to myself. It has been pointed out that I am not yet down to my last flying machine. However the Astir fulfilled an important requirement, for me, of an all-year-round good performer with the solidity to be fun in the 40 knot winter westerlies and the penetration to keep up with winter wave and jump between summer thermals. So I am now like the inmate of the Cats Protection refuge, looking hopefully out at the potential adopters (other syndicates) who might be willing to take me on. Like the heart-rending stories which appear in the “CVs” on the cats' pens, I can produce sworn affidavits from the other three ex-members, to say it wasn't me they were trying to get away from!

## **On Site First Aid**

*Jon Hall*

We would like to compile a club register of members who are qualified to administer first aid, from basic first aiders to brain surgeons. With our site being some way from the nearest paramedic help, in the event of an accident having someone on site able to apply immediate first aid may save someone's life. If you have any qualifications at all and are willing to be on the register please let Martin know in the office.