

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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MGC Wins Rockpolishers -Again!

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Chairman's Bits

Charles Carter

Having just returned from the Mynd after attending the Sunday briefing of the Rock Polishing weekend, it is good to report our overall victory in the RP league and I congratulate Mike Witton and his team on yet another Mynd triumph. The RP weekends have not been blessed with the best of weather this year but the Mynd organising team managed to get the maximum out of yesterday with all involved having some decent flying even though the tasks were not easily tackled. Today being a washout from the word go and St Swithin's to boot, it may not bode too well for the rest of July so far as gliding is concerned. It's not that brilliant for haymaking either which is what this farmer would like to do ASAP.

We will as winners of the Rock Polishing league now be competing in the Inter League final and hopefully hosting the event and I wish Mike all the best and look forward to seeing the trophy back in our cabinet.

As you get older and the memory begins to fade it gets harder to keep a grip of events of previous years but it appears to this old brain that this must rank as one of the worst gliding Summers for many years. Pilots landing yesterday after soaring for several hours in the rain and actually saying that they had had a good time must tell you how desperate we all are to get airborne. Some even soared a non-existent ridge until they landed at the bottom to get the most out of the day. Those that followed Julian Fack below ridge height thinking that his local knowledge would prove to be their salvation must have been somewhat disconcerted when he fired up his engine and flew back to the top of the hill. Maybe we shall have an Indian summer and a great wave season to compensate.

We will shortly be having a new window fitted in the kitchen and two new gas ranges to replace the condemned cooker which is presently in situ. This will bring the kitchen up to the standard required by both our insurers and more importantly by Heidi.

We also have problems with water leaking into the MT and Workshop and this is proving somewhat difficult to solve but Mike Witton is on the case and we hope for a speedy solution.

Most of you will by now be aware that Simon Adlard is stepping down as CFI and I know that you will be as disappointed as am I that we are to lose his services in that capacity but we will retain his expertise and ability as a very important cog in the instructing team and he has offered his full support to his successor. To that end the committee is actively considering its options and a new appointment will be made shortly.

The Committee is always on the lookout for any expertise of which it is not yet aware. If you think that you can help your club by offering some of your time and talent whether it be as a painter, a cabinet maker or someone who could head up a lottery application to buy a new glider or construct a new hangar, please don't feel shy; we shall be delighted to hear from you and we will not necessarily need you to join the committee.

Remember Task Week starts on 18 August and runs through to 27 August. You can compete, act as retrieve crew, or just come along and coax one of the many instructors who will be on site to take you for a training flight or even persuade them to take you on the task. If you don't fancy any of the above you can come and relax and enjoy the company of like minded people. It is always fun and you never know, the sun might even shine.

CFI's Bits

Simon Adlard

Recently I have noticed some pilots are having problems controlling the speed on the winch launch and then getting into difficulty. In this article I will attempt to explain the common reasons for the speed to become excessive but more importantly what we should do if it is.

First I need to describe what we are trying to achieve.

During the ground run we are attempting to balance the glider on its main wheel with the elevator (normally kept in the neutral position for this) trying to prevent any yaw and keep the glider running straight with the rudder, and keep the wings level with the ailerons. We need our left hand ON the release so if for any reason the wings cannot be kept level we can release immediately.

Once the glider lifts off we use the controls in a coordinated manner in order to hold the glider in a shallow climb to allow the speed to build. During this part of the launch the winch driver is providing plenty of power in order to accelerate the glider. Eventually we will reach a safe speed (normally 50 knots and building) that will enable us to allow the glider to smoothly rotate into the full climb. The transition to the full climb normally takes 3 to 4 seconds and we should be in the full climb of about 40 degrees by 250 to 300 feet.

Once the full climb is achieved we need to look to the side to check the climb angle and then continue to monitor the speed.

During this process the winch driver is giving us plenty of power in order to make sure the safe minimum speed is achieved and exceeded. This is where the problem lies as until the full climb is achieved it is impossible to judge the glider's speed, so if the glider fails to rotate into the climb then the winch driver can only assume the safe speed has not been achieved and will apply more power. If you are in the glider and you are unwilling to rotate because you believe the speed is excessive then you will end up going faster.

Once you are in the full climb the winch driver will often reduce power especially if he thinks you are going too fast.

What is too fast?

The definition of the maximum winch launch speed is the speed that must not be exceeded if the glider is in the top 1/3 of the launch with full control deflection (stick on the backstop) and in strong gusty conditions.

This means the max winch launch speed can safely be exceeded in the early stages of the launch up to max rough air in turbulent conditions or max manoeuvre in still air.

What do I do if the launch is too fast initially?

Check that you are in the full climb, if not then smoothly allow the glider to adopt the full climb.

I am in the full climb and the speed is still a bit fast, should I go even steeper?

No, just wait and see if the winch driver reduces power, now you are in the full climb he should be able to judge your speed better.

The launch is still too fast!

You can signal to the winch that the speed is excessive by positively yawing the glider from one side and then to the other, then wait and see. If you have not tried this then get an instructor to show you on your next check flight, (If you ask they will show you but you do need to ask, they are not mind readers)

No, I mean it's really really fast and I think the wings might fall off!

Don't panic, they probably won't just yet. Continue the launch to a safe height (circuit height) and then release in the full climb attitude. However remember VNE must never be exceeded, so the launch should be abandoned immediately if there is a danger of this.

Don't I need to lower the nose to take the tension out of the cable or something?

No! Release in the full climb. The winch driver can sort it out.

The speed is increasing up to max winch speed at the top of the launch. Can I get an extra 50 feet by hanging on?

Don't do it, the loading on the airframe is starting to get quite high now and the max winch speed needs to be observed, just release.

I have talked about max speeds however the real danger lies with slow launches. If after take off 50 knots is achieved in the initial climb but not accelerating then don't allow the glider to rotate, wait a few seconds to see if the situation improves, if not release and land ahead.

If during the launch the speed starts to reduce towards your minimum safe speed (in most gliders this is about 50 knots, the T21 will be less, a Ventus at max weight might be as high as 60 knots) then reduce the climb angle and see what happens. This is a signal to the winch driver for more power. If the situation does not improve then abandon the launch and then lower the nose and treat as a launch failure.

I know this article is a bit long winded however it is an important and complicated subject. If you are still confused or still have unanswered questions then please don't hesitate to bend my or any other instructor's ear.

Cosy Trailers

Denise Hughes

Problem with your trailer? Such as condensation and leaks in the winter? Why not have it sealed with Roofbond™?

This is an insulation-cum-sealer that helps keep trailers at a constant temperature through-out the year. With your glider costing thousands, why not sort this out for about £500?

If you are interested put your name on the list in the club house, or contact me.

Rockpolishers 2007 - The Mynd Wins This Year's Championship

Mark Sanders

Rockpolishers, for those that aren't aware, is a friendly low-key interclub cross-country competition between six local clubs; Nympsfield, Aston Down, Usk, Talgarth, Shobdon and the Mynd. The winning club of the four round series goes through to the National finals in September, to compete for the Inter-Club League Trophy, a piece of silverware that currently resides in our trophy cabinet.

Thus, with a certain amount of honour at stake, it is pleasing to report that under the new captaincy of Mike Witton MGC has won the Rockpolishers league, despite a strong challenge from Nympsfield.

Round 1 - Aston Down

Friday night and the bar at Aston Down was overrun with Myndites. Although some clubs seem to struggle to get a complement for the competition (each club enters one novice, one intermediate and one pundit), Mike actually had a reserve in each class with Steve Foster and Mark Sanders in novice, Dave d'Arcy and Dave Crowson as intermediates, and Iain Evans and Mike himself as our pundits. Also there and flying hors concours, were John Roberts and Denise Hughes in our DG505 (KAW), Clive Jones with his ASW19 (882) and Walter Baumann with the LS4 (IV). Dave Crowson took Steve Gunn-Russell round for the ride in 494, and Helen, Lynette and Jade were there as crew. A mention in dispatches here; Aston Down has a great kitchen, but no catering staff, so Jade stepped in magnificently to cook breakfasts for all on Sunday and Monday!

Saturday was more than a bit on the low and blue side, but that didn't stop Doug Gardner setting 176 km for the pundits, 114 km for the intermediates and 70 km for the novices. Only one got round, (Nympsfield's intermediate) and he did that, it seems, by completely ignoring the view through the canopy and relying on blind faith in the instrumentation (...computer says "Yes"...). So there was plenty of fun for the crews getting everyone back. Mark struggled round about half of the novice task, before alighting in a beautifully manicured field, with a windsock in the corner. It turned out to be a real "Outer Limits" moment; an Aladdin's Cave of classic aircraft and the home of the Guinot aerobatic team complete with five Stearman biplanes, together with their pilots and wing-walkers, all polishing their machines, getting ready to entertain James Dyson at his sixtieth birthday party. Dave d'Arcy turned up for the retrieve in time to wave them off, but was cursing as he realised he had missed the chance to leer at the latex-clad wing-walking lovelies as they each toiled over a shiny Stearman!

At the excellent evening barbecue, we discovered that with Iain Evans' win in pundit, and seconds in the other two classes, we had done enough to win the day. Enough to win the weekend as it turned out, for Sunday and Monday were scrubbed, so the final result was a win by one point for the Mynd, from Nympsfield in second. We came back to the Mynd to find that their day had been scrubbed too, but at about 3pm it all cleared, the wind blew and enough ground crew were press-ganged into service, including Heidy, Marcus and Jade, to enable eight of us to enjoy an excellent late afternoon's bungee launching session.

Aston Down Results (5/6/7 May 2007)

Pundit AST-Yate-Edgehill-AST 176.4 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|---|----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------|--------|-----------|
| 1 | Iain Evans | Mynd | ASW19 (RZ) | (98.0km) | | 459 | 4 |
| 2 | Ray Payne | Nympsfield | Discus BT (200) | (82.5km) | | 387 | 3 |
| 3 | Tim Barnes | Aston Down | Mosquito (594) | (53.1km) | | 249 | 2 |
| 4 | Richard Slater | Usk | Aero 103 (609) | (20.1km) | | 94 | 1 |

Intermediate AST-Bishops Cleeve N-Chipping Norton-AST 113.8 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|----------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | David Zarb | Nympsfield | Ventus CXT (TCZ) | 2:18:42 | 44.0kmh | 423 | 6 |
| 2 | Dave Crowson | Mynd | Duo Discus (494) | (86.0km) | | 318 | 5 |
| 3 | Mike Dodd | Shobdon | Ka6CR (904) | (83.6km) | | 310 | 4 |
| 4 | Helena Brogden | Aston Down | DG300 (356) | (68.0km) | | 252 | 3 |
| 5 | Maureen Weaver | Usk | Discus (860) | (25.8km) | | 96 | 2 |
| 6 | Geoff King | Talgarth | Std Jantar (HBS) | (15.8km) | | 59 | 1 |

Novice AST-Malmesbury Northleach-AST 69.9 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|----------|---------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | Mark Thomas | Usk | Dart 17R (BVJ) | (63.1km) | | 237 | 5 |
| 2 | Mark Sanders | Mynd | LS4 (288) | (39.2km) | | 147 | 4 |
| 3 | Martin Talbot | Nympsfield | Discus BT (OD1) | (20.2km) | | 76 | 3 |
| 4 | Mike Codd | Talgarth | Ventus B (KDV) | Launch | | 0 | 1 |
| 5 | Barry Key | Aston Down | Squale (262) | Launch | | 0 | 1 |

Round 2 - Usk

The forecast for this weekend was dire beforehand, so it was quite a surprise to find that Saturday turned out to be taskable. A short soaring window was anticipated and tasks were set accordingly. With just one tug (37 aerotows that day) and no winch, our soaring window could easily have disappeared with us stuck on the ground, so Team Mynd (well John Roberts, flying with Paul Waller as P2) took the decision to take an early launch and hang about in the air for the weather. Mark Sanders was elevated up a class for this round as all our proper intermediates had rather inconsiderately decided to go flying in Europe that weekend! He took a launch soon after, and Alan Reynolds, our novice was also soon airborne. We were towed out to the west, where conditions looked quite good albeit with only a 2000 foot cloud base - all the tasks however lay in the blue to the east! (Heard on the RT: "Can you drop me at 3000 feet over the field"; "I thought you were in the competition"; "I am"; "Well that's 2000 feet over the drop zone"; "Er, OK".) Given the met prediction, some pilots decided to go for it. Johnny and Mark eventually started about an hour and three-quarters after launch, with Johnny rapidly disappearing into the distance while Mark got spooked about crossing the Forest of Dean. Johnny was soon passing news of big climbs and "proper cumulus". Mark was getting a bit concerned that he was flying in the wrong direction, because he remembered "proper cumulus" as being white and clearly visible at quite a distance, whilst the sky ahead looked remarkably blue, but he fell for it and was persuaded to press on anyway. It was one of those days that actually drove a bit better than it looked, and what looked like another day of mass land-outs at the outset, finally had the feeling of being achievable. Six pilots completed the tasks, and three of those were from the Mynd. In retrospect, our decision to launch early and start late had been the right one. Most of the land-outs were the early starters. The weather had confounded the forecast and the convection kept going much later than expected, with Mike having a flight in his Libelle long after we had all landed. Steve Foster also took an HC launch - but ask him to tell you about that! It had certainly been a very sunny day, and Lynette, Caroline and Jade were all looking as if they had caught a fair bit of it; Richard, also there crewing looked as if he had been more sensible! Adam Harper entertained us with some discus-launch RC gliding with a Zagi look-alike, and then we had a superb barbecue on a very pleasant evening to be outdoors. It had been another day win for the Mynd, and it was celebrated into the early hours - ask Caroline and Lenny to give you a rendition of their "Dingle-dangle scarecrow" song sometime!

Sunday was an early scrub, which left some thinking about a visit to the Game Fair next door and others, making their way home, reflecting on another weekend win for the Mynd and a five point lead at the mid-point in the series.

Usk Results (2/3 June 2007)

Pundit Usk-Cheltenham-Ledbury-Usk 133 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|---|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | John Roberts | Mynd | DG505 (KAW) | 2:04:48 | 66.2 | 1000 | 4 |
| 2 | Paul Gentil | Aston Down | SHK (422) | 2:35:00 | 57.8 | 937 | 3 |
| 3 | Rob Hanks | Nympsfield | Duo Discus (802) | (51.4km) | | 143 | 2 |
| 4 | Simon France | Usk | Twin Acro (609) | Launch | | 0 | 1 |

Intermediate Usk-Gloucesther-Ross-Usk 95 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|---|---------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | Rod Weaver | Usk | Discus (860) | 1:31:00 | 63.27 | 564 | 5 |
| 2 | Mark Sanders | Mynd | LS4 (288) | 2:09:00 | 46.03 | 518 | 4 |
| 3 | Mike Dodd | Shobdon | Ka6CR (904) | (41.4km) | | 172 | 3 |
| 4 | N Greenwood | Aston Down | Astir77 (FSZ) | (21.2km) | | 19 | 2 |
| 5 | P Bagnall | Nympsfield | Discus (158) | (10.3km) | | 0 | 1 |

Novice Usk-Ross-Usk 55.6 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|---|----------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | A Morecroft | Nympsfield | Discus (722) | 1:11:00 | 47.80 | 592 | 3 |
| 2 | Alan Reynolds | Mynd | ASW28 (KGV) | 1:20:00 | 42.00 | 538 | 2 |
| 3 | Geo Robertson | Usk | Pirat (DBV) | Launch | | 0 | 1 |

Round 3 - Nympsfield

The forecast for this weekend was so dire that the round was cancelled on the Friday morning to save everyone a wasted trip - and a very wise decision too!!

Round 4 - Long Mynd (14/15 July 2007)

The final round saw the Mynd nervously defending their five point lead to try and hang on for the series win. The cloud broke nicely on Saturday at around 10:00am and Paul Shuttleworth briefed at noon and hoped he hadn't under-set, with what sounded like some achievable tasks. The word was things would only get better, so leisurely lunches were taken and everyone scoffed at how easy it would all be! Oh dear! The reality was somewhat different. A slick ground operation saw most pilots take winch launches and the whole field was airborne by 2:30. The conditions looked good to the West and good towards Shobdon too - well if you looked beyond the showers, anyway. Many pilots took several forays into the showers in an attempt to find a way through. Faced with some rather inhospitable land-out conditions, some never got further than this and landed back at the Mynd. Others got through and were treated to some entertaining flying. Congratulations to John Clark of Talgarth who not only managed to get back but even dropped his water on us as he finished, just to really rub our noses in it! The pundit class was to be congratulated for presenting gliding as a spectator sport. The preferred route seemed to be Shobdon out-and-return, followed by an out-and-return to Welshpool. Well at least that was the theory. Julian Fack, flying with Roger Skelhorn, came back to the ridge, got a climb, set off for Welshpool; found nothing; came back to the hill which had now stopped working. After clinging on for a few beats he gave it up as a bad job and headed out into the valley to fire up the old aluminium thermal. Ray Payne of Nympsfield also struggled with the softening ridge and landed at the bottom of the hill, and not to be left out Paul Gentil (Aston Down) also plonked it into the same field just to keep the crowd entertained.

Those that did land out were all safely accounted for, and so we adjourned to the bar to enjoy our wonderful selection of real ales, all in perfect condition (thanks Helen) and a superb selection of curries and apple crumble (thanks Heidi and Co). With a poor day in prospect for Sunday, the party seemed to really get going at about midnight and finished at 5:30am (apparently).

And so to Sunday - with a 20 knot easterly, heavy rain and a cloud-base you could reach up and touch, there weren't too many objections when the day was scrubbed.

Long Mynd Results (14/15 July 2007)

Pundit Mynd-Shobdon-Welshpool-Mynd 100 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|---|--------------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | Paul Gentil | Aston Down | SHK (422) | (64.6km) | | 223 | 5 |
| 2 | Julian Fack | Mynd | Duo Discus (JF) | (63.0km) | | 215 | 4 |
| 3 | Ray Payne | Nympsfield | Discus BT (200) | (58.9km) | | 194 | 3 |

Intermediate Mynd-Shobdon-Montgomery-Mynd 88 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|---|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | John Clark | Talgarth | Nimbus 2C (2CK) | 1:16:00 | 65.5 | 487 | 5 |
| 2 | Robin Birch | Aston Down | Kestrel 19 (34Z) | (54.1km) | | 271 | 4 |
| 3 | Stuart Renfrew | Usk | M100S (EQM) | (8.33km) | | 42 | 3 |
| 4 | James Fisher | Mynd | Open Cirrus (18) | (8.3km) | | 41 | 2 |
| 5 | Jim Wilson | Nympsfield | ASW20 (AV) | (7.1km) | | 36 | 1 |

Novice Mynd-Shobdon-Knighton-Mynd 69 km

| # | Pilot | Club | Glider | Time(Dist) | Speed | Points | RP Points |
|----|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | Dave Hallsworth | Nympsfield | Pegase (FWX) | (59.3km) | | 296 | 5 |
| 2 | Tom Good | Aston Down | DG300 (356) | (9.2km) | | 46 | 4 |
| 3= | Steve Foster | Mynd | K6 (DHT) | Launch | | 0 | 1 |
| 3= | Geo Robertson | Usk | Pirat (DBV) | Launch | | 0 | 1 |

So, what a year! Only three flyable days out of a possible nine, but the Mynd took best advantage of them to take the series. The final will take place here at the Mynd, probably at the end of August or the beginning of September.

Final Series Points

| # | Club | R1-Aston Down | R2-Usk | R3-Nympsfield | R4-Mynd | Total |
|----|------------|---------------|--------|---------------|---------|-------|
| 1 | Long Mynd | 13 | 10 | - | 7 | 30 |
| 2 | Nympsfield | 12 | 6 | - | 9 | 27 |
| 3 | Aston Down | 6 | 5 | - | 13 | 24 |
| 4 | Usk | 8 | 7 | - | 4 | 19 |
| 5= | Shobdon | 4 | 3 | - | - | 7 |
| 5= | Talgarth | 2 | 0 | - | 5 | 7 |

Fire Extinguishers

Martin McCurdie

Can people please refrain from removing the fire extinguishers from the wall mountings. They are put there to fight fires not to prop open doors.

We have had one fire extinguisher go off because someone had removed it from its mounting and the safety pin had also been removed.

Please leave the fire extinguishers alone.

The On-line Club Ladder Takes Off

Mark Sanders

Despite the run of fairly inclement weather recently, entries on the On-line Club Ladder continue to come in. Here is the latest table:

BGA NATIONAL LADDER 2007

Open Ladder - Midland GC

www.bgaladder.co.uk Printed 25 June 2007

| Pilot | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Total |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 1 Dominic Haughton | 2299 | 1398 | 727 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4424 |
| 2 James Fisher | 1013 | 587 | 361 | 272 | 0 | 0 | 2233 |
| 3 Mark Sanders | 1011 | 545 | 427 | 188 | 0 | 0 | 2171 |
| 4 Jon Hall | 726 | 535 | 158 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1419 |
| 5 Rod Hawley | 1067 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1067 |
| 6 Allan Reynolds | 505 | 306 | 229 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1040 |
| 7 Julian Fack | 979 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 979 |
| 8 David dArcy | 581 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 581 |
| 9 Mike Greenwood | 568 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 568 |
| 10 Clive Jones | 514 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 514 |
| 11 listy jim list | 490 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 490 |
| 12 RichardJ Bennett | 379 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 379 |
| 13 John Stuart | 313 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 313 |

Created and maintained by Aircross Ltd (www.aircross.co.uk)

If you go to www.bgaladder.co.uk, click ladders, pick "Midland GC" as Club and click "Display Ladder", then you can click on any of the scores to see the story behind the flight.

The computer in the TV lounge now has a desktop folder called "Weather, Notams and XC" which contains all the links you need to plan, upload, view and record your flight on the ladder - all you have to do is fly it!

If you would like help or advice on recording your flight, please ask me, (ladder steward) mark@proconsystems.co.uk, or indeed anyone whose name is on the list.

All we need now is the weather to play ball!

FLARMIing in the Alps

Julian Fack

At the end of May, Richard Bennett and I took both the Mynd Duos, 494 and JF, to Austria for some Alpine soaring, and we equipped them both with FLARM since Richard advised that this was expected by our hosts. Richard flew with John Stuart, I shared with Paul Garnham, and after over 20 hours flight each we were all totally convinced that FLARM can be a major benefit to safety.

So what is FLARM? It is a collision avoidance system which relies on other aircraft also carrying the equipment. It consists of a small unit, about the size of a 20 pack of cigarettes, containing a low power transmitter, a receiver, a GPS and some clever computing power. The GPS gives position, height, track and speed, and the radio broadcasts this information at very low power (about 5 km range in the air) for other FLARMs to receive. At the same time the FLARM in your glider listens out for other units in range. When it detects a transmission it shows an LED on its display, and makes a soft sound. If the other aircraft is seen as a low level threat it displays the position on a circular “clock face” ring of green LEDs, and also an indication of “above” or “below” on a separate display within the circle. If the threat level rises it makes louder sounds, up to an unmistakable warning that danger is imminent, as well as flashing the appropriate LEDs, now bright red.

How well does it work? Rather uncomfortably well, actually. In spite of having two pairs of eyes in the cockpit, FLARM often picks up gliders not yet seen, some that are quite close. It is not distracting, but is a welcome help to providing a safe lookout. It uses very little battery power, left to its own devices a standard battery would run the unit alone for about 100 hours, is very easy to install, merely requiring a power supply, and takes up very little space, the display end is only 60mm x 25 mm, and the unit is light enough to be mounted securely using Velcro.

In addition to its main purpose, FLARM also provides IGC compatible logs your of your flights on a small (mobile phone type) memory card. I imagine the logs could be used in a competition, and certainly as a backup, but possibly not for badge claims. This is a useful function thrown in as a free “extra”, and the memory cards are available for £6 or so for 1GB, which would probably record a lifetime’s flying!

What are the snags? It costs £450 and naturally it only works with other gliders that are also FLARM equipped, so getting a “critical mass” is important. In Austria we went to Zell am See by road on a rainy day to see the Austrian Nationals competition pilots and their gliders. We asked the organiser how many of the 49 in the comp had transponders (0) and how many had FLARM (49). Later on we flew to Zell on two occasions in good weather, and without FLARM it would have been frightening. Zell lies in the Salzach valley, which is used as a racetrack by gliders, paragliders, and hang gliders. The numbers are unbelievable, especially when there is a big competition on. Sadly the paras and hang gliders have not yet taken to FLARM, but by far the majority of gliders have done so.

As for the flying in general we had poor weather most of the time, but we did fly for 8 of the 14 days, and had 3 superb days, of which the last, Saturday the 9th June, was spectacular, and showed what Alpine soaring is about. It was possible to cruise more or less continuously along the ridges at 70 to 80 knots, without losing height. There was little or no wind at height, and sometime you had to speed up to stay out of cloud at 9500 feet QNH. I will not forget the experience of flying towards a group of resting climbers on a peak at 7,500 feet QNH and swinging into a thermal which averaged 10.4 knots, right in front of them, close enough to see what they were wearing.

After our experiences in Austria we all felt that FLARM has a place in UK gliding and would be a useful aid to safety.

If you have any questions or comments on FLARM you can contact me at j.fack@virgin.net, or you can download the latest operating manual at <http://www.flarm.com/support/manual/index.html>, which has diagrams showing the operation of the unit. You should note that the movies of FLARM in action on the website only show the early model which has a horizontal bar graph LED display, and is not nearly as user friendly as the current model which displays a “clock” face of LEDs, giving a much better idea of where the threat is coming from.

Task Week

Ann Parry

This runs the usual week up to the August Bank Holiday, 18 - 27 August. It will be run along Competition Enterprise lines, as last year, and provides a week of cross-country flying to suit both experienced pilots, and those new (or returning) to cross-country flying, in a friendly competition. The time of year means there should be plenty of fields available for any land-outs.

We hope that John Roberts will be available to fly the DG500 with various P2s. If interested please put your name down. There should be a list in the club house for signing up for the week, or contact the office, or us. John Parry will be Task Director as usual, and look after the scoring, with help from others for task setting, met and control. Club gliders should be available for hire. In past years both K21s have competed in Task Week, and a K13. What about the T21?

Task Week started at the Mynd in 1974, and has run each year since then. Numbers partaking have been down in recent years, partly we think because so many pilots have moved on to flying at regional, national and international competitions, some of which clash with Task Week. At various times we have had visitors from other clubs, who are always welcome. Despite resolutions last year to promote Task Week more, this hasn't really happened. It would be highly suitable for anyone on the cross-country coaching programme, for example, or anyone in the Rockpolishers community. Even if you can't come for the week, there are the weekends, or the occasional day during the week. And even if you can't come you can wish us well with the weather...