

# MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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## Annual Dinner Dance and Trophy Presentation 2008 *Linda Taylor*

It is nearly time to get the posh frocks out again and this year we are trying a different venue and a bit later in the year. More information will follow but in the meantime please put the date in your diaries. The dinner dance this year will be held on Saturday 26 April at Shrewsbury Town Football Club.

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<p>Club web site: <a href="http://www.longmynd.com">www.longmynd.com</a></p>	

## Chairman's Contribution

*Charles Carter*

EASA rules and the fitting of the new cookers look set to confound us for the foreseeable future with the cookers coming a good first regarding complaints from members.

Roger Andrews and Iain Evans who are at the forefront of the campaign to turn our current BGA registered glider C of As into EASA proof C of As can testify to the massive amount of paperwork and general hassle required to complete the transfer. Some of you have started the process and the way that the rest of us can spot you is by the worried look and the great sheaf of paperwork under your arms. It is a necessary process and one which I am sure we will all look back on in years to come and laugh about. Roger and Iain will certainly laugh uproariously but that may owe more to the glue fumes that they work in than EASA regulations. Does anyone know how the new rules and regulations will make our sport (a) any safer and (b) any more fun? Answers please in sealed envelopes in my pigeonhole.

The cooker fitting in the kitchen is a saga of gas regulations of EASA proportions and of regulators which either do not work or are of the wrong type and of gas main pressures being too low and extractor hoods being too small and of the floor having a raised plinth when it should be flat and of the wall vent being inadequate etc etc etc. We started the process in June and already we have one of the cookers up and running! I dare not even mention the cost for fear of the Treasurer's blood pressure.

To pleasanter matters. Despite the awful weather the last few weekends have produced some worthwhile flying for those who have made the effort. The conditions have ranged from still sunny days which allowed flights of up to 25 minutes through to strong westerlies with wave. Do not be put off by the BBC forecast which is SE centric and frequently gets the timing of our weather completely wrong. The Enews forecast is usually fairly accurate.

The DG is entered for the Bicester Regionals on 19-27 July with Simon Adlard as P1. Shortly we will be inviting applications for P2s to fly with Simon so keep a watch on the notice board because there is bound to be a rush to fly with our own SRE against some of the country's best glider pilots.

The club will be taking part in the Birmingham Expo on the 25 and 26 of April. This is a BGA sponsored initiative along the lines of the recent Canary Wharf Expo-. The format is for half a dozen or so of the local gliding clubs to take a glider each to a city centre location and show off gliding to a potentially enormous audience. There will be at least six rigged gliders on show with representatives from each gliding club and also from the BGA. The fine detail is still being thrashed out but Chris Ellis has "volunteered" to head up the MGC effort and he will be calling for other volunteers to man and protect our glider and to sell gliding in general and our own club in particular to an uninformed public. Watch this space.

By an unintended freak of mismanagement (the culprit has yet to be identified) the club's annual dinner and trophy presentation will also be held on the evening of 26 April. The venue is Shrewsbury Town Football Club's new stadium which has excellent facilities and the organiser is once again Linda Taylor. Football boots must not be worn in the restaurant but there will be a communal bath after the dancing has ended.

If you believe that you have done a flight of such skill and daring as to merit a cup then make sure that you have entered it on Mark Sanders web site because if it is not registered there you will not win even if you did a 2000 km flight in two hours.

Finally two of my favourite bleats at this time of year. Firstly, please take care of the airfield. If you are unsure of what position the land rover gear sticks should be in ask someone who knows. It makes all the difference to the ground when you start off and when you turn. Drive wherever possible on the roads or if not on the drier parts of the airfield and not straight across the middle which is the most vulnerable part. Push gliders and walk whenever possible and learn to love your airfield.

And secondly the AGM is fast approaching and committee places need to be filled. If you think that you can make a difference please give it a go - Your Club needs YOU.

## **CFI's Bits**

*Paul Stanley*

### **Instructor Training**

This year is going to be a really busy one in terms of training new instructors. A variety of circumstances have conspired to leave the club with a large shortfall, which needs to be addressed as a matter of some urgency. Luckily we have a pool of talented potential candidates suitable to train in order to fill the gap.

I have dedicated the first two of the weekend courses which will run over the summer to instructor training, these being the first weekends of February and March. This may impact on the amount of club flying available, though I have taken steps to ameliorate the possible effects by conscripting Mick Davies and Steve Male as extra helpers on those weekends. Thank you to both of them in advance.

### **BI Flights**

In recent times I have had occasion to express my concerns about trial lessons taking place in unsuitable weather. This is in spite of my having already brought up the matter at two instructor meetings.

There is pressure upon me to put in place a set of weather criteria within which trial lessons may take place. I am resisting this pressure, however I need ALL instructors to use their common sense as to when conditions are suitable. If this does not happen then I will have no alternative but to impose a set of criteria likely to severely curtail the amount of days on which we can do trial lessons. Whilst such a course of action would have a negative impact, not least on club finances, such an impact would pale into insignificance compared with that of having to cease doing trial flights altogether due to an incident in which a member of the public was hurt. Added to which, if the weather is marginal, so will be the benefit and value derived by the customer.

So may I ask everyone to be mindful of the above and ensure there is no pressure for trial lessons to take place in unsuitable conditions? Thank you.

### **Goal Setting**

It is that time of year when people make resolutions, join gyms and face credit card reality. I intend that one of the weekend courses will be devoted to goal setting. To that end you might wish to firstly write down your flying goal/s for the immediate future, and secondly drop me an email if you would be interested in taking a place on such a workshop. The writing down thing is especially important: I did it a few years ago and ended up with a CPL and power flying instructor's rating as a result (along with a little bit of work)!

### **DG 505 Bicester Regionals**

The DG 505 will be going to the Bicester Regionals with Simon Adlard as P1. We will need two paying P2s to accompany him. Interested parties should either have, or expect to have, Bronze with cross-country endorsement by the time of the competition. See BGA website for dates etc.

### **Task Week**

At the end of Task Week 2007 I was invited to say a few words, my first 'speech' as CFI. The gist of what I said was that I had not only found taking part immensely enjoyable, but also that it was a shame that the event wasn't better subscribed as both the level of challenge and organisation far exceeded any Task Week of my experience, (my having had a few off to fly aeroplanes with heaters and other comps).

So please do join in this year, there is something for all levels of experience. We will also be advertising to the clubs in the hope of finding a suitable pundit to blow Orch and his Skylark into the weeds, a task in which myself and others signally failed in 2007....!

Have a good season.

Paul

[paul@firstlightaviation.co.uk](mailto:paul@firstlightaviation.co.uk)

## **PDA's in the Cockpit**

*Julian Fack*

Most competition pilots now use a PDA (pocket computer) in the cockpit to display moving maps showing tasks and airspace data, and these devices can provide all sorts of useful information; so what is involved and what does it all cost?

Any PDA needs a GPS source to provide data, suitable software, and a power supply, as well as a mount to hold it in place and to make the appropriate connections. An excellent source of information on all aspects can be found at the [www.cumulus-soaring.com website](http://www.cumulus-soaring.com). It is well worth spending some time looking at the big comparison spreadsheets on the site. The Severn Valley Sailplanes website is also a good place to look for cables and the [www.gpsforless](http://www.gpsforless) website shows (highly recommended) Brodit PDA mounts.

### **What can they do for you?**

Above all else they provide a moving map with airspace warnings and a clear view of all airfields within glide range (taking your current height and wind into account, any circuit height you have programmed in as well as the elevation of the airfield in question). They also allow you to display all sorts of information such as distance to the next turn, the current wind strength and direction, and even the height above ground. The permutations are almost endless, take a look at the features chart on the [www.winpilot.com](http://www.winpilot.com) website to get an idea.

### **Which PDA?**

There are all sorts of models available and not all are suitable, but the (long out of production) Ipaq 3950 or 3970 are ideal, having a transreflective screen which is readable in bright sunlight and can be found for about £65 on Ebay. The 5000 series are similar and can use the same cradles but the newer and more expensive iPaq hx4700 is a different shape and requires a different mount. None of these units are ideal, the screens can be tricky to read when wearing sunglasses, and they all eat power, but they seem to be the best we can find at the moment. At least used PDAs are compact and cheap.

### **Which mount?**

There are a number of excellent suitable mounts, which will cost about the same as the Ipaq itself. It is important to use a mount where the wires exit horizontally forwards from the bottom rather than vertically downwards as they use a surprising amount of vertical space in the cockpit. A good mounting system also incorporates a suitable 12 volt to 5 volt power converter, which should be much more efficient than the Ipaq's cigar lighter lead charger. The efficiency is important; see below. The Brodit mount system seems ideal and is reasonably priced at about £54 for an active mount (where the cable and connector is built into the mount rather than using a separate cable). See the [www.gpsforless](http://www.gpsforless) website.

### **What GPS?**

Any GPS will do, you can use the one you have already have and know how to use, or a logger with an integral GPS (Colibri, Volkslogger, Cambridge GPS-Nav or the new type EW Logger) is ideal. If you do not have a GPS or a logger it may be worth looking at a GPS "mouse", a small GPS incorporating a 5 volt power supply for the PDA, about £95, see the Severn Valley sailplanes site. Cheaper wired or Bluetooth GPS mice are widely available on eBay.

### **Which software?**

See You Mobile (200 euros) is getting very popular and has a fairly flexible licensing arrangement; Winpilot is excellent (250 dollars), and well supported by Paul Crabb, who provides updated airspace and turnpoint files each year free of charge, but has a fairly draconian licensing policy; XC Soar is free and works well but takes a bit of time to sort out the necessary files. Nigel Holmes and Paul Garnham can advise on this aspect. Glide Nav is a bit cheaper at 149 dollars, is very easy to use and to read, but is basically black and white and does not display airspace as nicely as the others, but it is used by several World and European champions. You can try out evaluation versions of See You, Winpilot or Glide Nav II free of charge, see their websites.

### **What about power?**

PDAs use a lot of power, and their internal batteries are completely inadequate for gliding use. Much bigger external batteries are available which will provide a day's use but I have not had experience of them. The cigar lighter adapters supplied with Ipaqs for use in cars are very inefficient (about 50%) so you need to use specialised ones which are about 90% efficient. When you first connect a PDA to a glider battery it will charge the internal battery, and I have measured loads in excess of one amp at this stage. So it is a very good idea to keep the PDA on its charging cradle prior to use, so as to relieve the glider battery of this duty. In my Duo I have two PDAs, and I find a standard glider battery only lasts about 3 to 4 hours in flight, so power management is important.

### **What about the position in the cockpit?**

The ergonomics are important, you need to be able to adjust the position to suit, and also to make sure that it never interferes with full control deflection. In addition, will you be able to get in and out without hindrance, especially in an emergency? Think about the canopy emergency release, will the installation interfere with its operation? Remember one pilot may have died recently due to the GPS interfering with his emergency canopy release. There are three basic systems of mounting the PDA mount, rigidly on the panel (which may be too far away for easy operation, depending on the glider), on a flexible stalk or on a ball jointed arm. All three have their adherents, you pay your money and make your choice. Whatever you are considering you must think about the safety aspects, and you should ask the opinion of an inspector to discuss your ideas.

### **Conclusion**

PDAs have all sorts of uses in the cockpit, but you should try out the free evaluation versions of the software at home before committing. To do this you only need a PDA, which is readily saleable if you change your mind. Remember that you do not want to learn to use these sophisticated units in the air, so get familiar with your system over the winter in front of the telly.

Contact me at [j.fack@virgin.net](mailto:j.fack@virgin.net) if you want to discuss any aspects of this article.

## **From the Flying Field**

*Ann Parry*

Many thanks to David d'Arcy for writing these reports for the newsletter, and also looking after the club's entry in *S&G*. I am now on the look-out for someone to write the flying reports. Please contact me if you are interested. Steve Gunn-Russell has taken on the *S&G* slot (thank-you!), so this is just for the newsletter. I say just, but given that the reason for the club's existence is to fly at and from the Mynd, I like the newsletter to reflect this, with news of flying activities here. The newsletter is a place of record, and contains a lot of the club's history for those who are interested. It's tempting to set a quiz. Who knows when Derek Platt joined the club? Or Simon Adlard?

Congratulations to Jeanette Griffin on going solo recently, and also to Helen Johnson on achieving her Bronze badge. There was lots of flying yesterday, Saturday 12 January, taking advantage of a lull in all the rain we've had recently. Wave and ridge was enjoyed, and the hill looked wintry with snow (and ice). I watched a K21 thermalling earlier in the week, in between the showers. Today we're back to the strong winds and rain.

We have heard of the deaths of these members and ex-members of the club: Bill Dean, Paul Whitt, Dave Sprake, John Harnden, John Simpson and Natalie Hodgson. Keith Mansell tells me Natalie joined in 1952, and flew at the club most recently last year in a two-seater. I also record the death of my uncle, John Edwards, who used to fly at the Mynd with the Cambridge University Gliding Club's camps.

Jon Hall gave an excellent presentation of the club's strategy plan in early December. The poor weather reduced attendance (50 knot wind gusting to 60 knots that day) which was a shame, as it was an interesting meeting, reflecting achievements as well as the plans. Clearly a lot of work has gone into this on our behalf. The strategy document is available on the club's website. and is a good read.

## **John Simpson 1915-2007**

*CUGC's first Silver 'C' and the first pilot to fly in wave in the UK, both in 1937*

*Anthony Edwards*

John Simpson, probably the last surviving original member of Cambridge University Gliding Club and its first Silver 'C', died in Cambridge on 27 September aged 92. For nearly twenty-five years he was an inspirational schoolmaster at Leighton Park School in Reading, but here we particularly celebrate his Cambridge connections.

John came up to Emmanuel College in October 1934 to read mathematics, which he did with modest distinction, taking a second in Part I of the Tripos in 1935 and a third in Part II in 1937. But this was a common route for school teaching where other activities counted for so much, and John was soon heavily involved in the gliding club, founded in the February of his first year. After a few ground slides and low hops at Dunstable, he flew with CUGC at Caxton Gibbet in the Michaelmas Term 1935, on 22 October, progressing to his 'A' certificate on 3 December. Next May finds him one of a party launching from near Haslingfield, in a forlorn hope that Barrington Hill might be soarable.

In his second undergraduate year John joined the club committee, and by his third year was on the flying committee as an instructor. He stayed on at Emmanuel for a year after his BA degree as a Student Teacher Exhibitioner, preparing to become a schoolmaster, after which he started his chosen career at a school in Dorset.

During these three prewar years with the club John made many memorable flights both from Cambridge and at National Competitions, one from Camphill on 2 September 1937 completing his Silver 'C' (international number 562). A week later, at a camp at the Long Mynd, John made a truly historic discovery - wave. On 8 September 1937 he was bungied in the CUGC Kirby Kite to make the very first wave flight in the UK, rising to 8,500 feet. Also catching the wave was Capt. R.S.Ratray in his Cambridge II sailplane, reaching 7,900 feet. John's account does not say who launched first!

During the war John, a conscientious objector, joined the Friends Ambulance Unit and was sent to China. The deciding letter which convinced the Tribunal of his sincerity was written by Ralph Slazenger (Sergeant, RAF!). When the club was revived after the war, in November 1945, one of the first actions of the committee was to approach him, still in China, with an invitation to become the club's full-time instructor. His acceptance was reported to the committee in January 1946, and a letter soon arrived from him saying that he was leaving China on 23 January and should be in Cambridge by the end of February. His log-book shows him flying at Caxton Gibbet in April and Bourn Airfield in May. Alas, the arrangement did not prosper and by May the committee was asking the President, John Pringle, to write to him to explain 'the feeling of the committee'. On 18 July the committee held an Extraordinary Meeting to consider the situation - John had resigned. But school teaching was his real talent, and after a period at the Friends School at Great Ayton he moved to Leighton Park School in 1947.

Perhaps too gentle a soul to be a firm CFI, he nevertheless excelled as an instructor, teaching at Dunstable, Derby & Lancs, Bristol, Oxford and Surrey, and finally the Long Mynd and Lasham. At Lasham he is particularly remembered for the construction of 'Min', a T21, which he undertook with a team of fifteen boys at Leighton Park School. Starting with the rudder, they progressed with increasing confidence to the tailplane and elevator and finally to the fuselage, Slingsby's supplying the parts in kit form. Happily, they were then presented with the wings all ready for covering and painting, so that after just a year and a half John could make the first flight. The story is told in his book *Tackle Gliding This Way*, published in 1961.

Illness prevented John from flying solo after 1964, so when he started his second Cambridge career in 1976 it was not with CUGC but as a Research Associate in the University's Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics. He had retired from Leighton Park in 1970 and had spent the intervening years in Reading University's Department of Meteorology. Back in Cambridge he devoted his energies to research in gravity currents and sea-breeze fronts which resulted in numerous papers and a book on each topic (*Sea Breeze Fronts and Local Wind* was reissued in paperback in 2006 by

Cambridge University Press - when the author was 91!). Cambridge has an arrangement whereby its graduates can enter their published work for a Ph.D., and John was admitted to the degree in 1981.

In June 1981 CUGC offered John Simpson Honorary Membership 'in recognition of your long association with the Club, your assistance as an officer before and after the war, and your distinction as the first holder of the Silver "C" badge in the Club'. He accepted with pleasure, and not so very long ago gave us an evening discourse on his memories. In accordance with his wishes, his ashes were scattered on the Mynd's bungey point by his children.

## **Natalie Hodgson**

*Keith Mansell*

Natalie, a member since 1952, died on 6 January aged 95.

Born in Coventry in 1912 Natalie was educated at Sherborne and at the Sorbonne and worked at the Foreign office. Married Henry in 1938 and after the War moved to her home ever since - a large country house at Astley Abbots near Bridgnorth.

Natalie took an active part in politics and was an Independent member of Shropshire County Council. She was well known as a bee-keeper who publicised the benefits of Royal Jelly and of honey. In the early 1990s she started a lavender farm that she opened to the public.

When 93 she published *Fateful Beauty* - the true story of Frances Coke daughter of Sir Edward Coke who introduced the Petition of Rights into Parliament. More recently Natalie celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday at the House of Lords at a party organised by her elder son Lord Robin Hodgson.

In the 1960s, when an active pilot owning an Olympia 2, Natalie set off on a Silver distance attempt and landed near Hereford (sadly without a barograph). Her landing certificate declared that *Mrs Hodgson landed the red glider in the 340 acre field* (more than half a square mile!). A big enough field you might think except that it was littered with concrete blocks intended to discourage the Luftwaffe from landing and Natalie missed them all!

A longstanding friend of the club and a wonderful lady who will be sadly missed by her many friends.

## **Thank You**

*Derek Platt*

Dear Members and Friends,

Very many thanks for making my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday such a special occasion, I was quite overwhelmed by your generosity and good wishes. It was great to see so many enjoying themselves at the club.

I'm really looking forward to my flight in the Jet Provost, what an amazing experience that's going to be!

Thanks again for a truly memorable evening.

Best wishes and good flying for 2008.

Derek ('Water In' Man.....any offers?!?)

## Rockpolishers Interclub League 2008

*Michael Witton*

Rockpolishers is a gliding competition held over summer weekends between the nearest five gliding clubs. There are four weekend events and each club takes a turn to organise an event and play host to visiting pilots. Each event usually consists of two flying days over a weekend with a party on the Saturday night. The overall idea is to introduce club pilots to cross country flying in a mildly competitive but unpressured and friendly atmosphere. It is also a good chance to visit other airfields, fly from different sites and meet members from other clubs. Everybody is welcome to come along whether it is to fly, crew or even just for the party!

Provisional dates for 2008 are below. I will be putting a list up in the clubhouse for names of anybody interested in flying any of the events. In the same way as last year, we should be sending the DG505 to each event with an experienced cross country instructor. This is an ideal opportunity for existing cross country pilots to improve their experience and technique and is also an excellent opportunity for pre-bronze (or even pre-solo) pilots to have their first experience of leaving the local soaring area on a cross country flight.

We will be looking to send a full team of a novice, intermediate and pundit pilots to each event.

- **Novice:** Requires Bronze with cross country endorsement and must not have flown a 300 km flight or competed in a Regionals prior to January 2008. Silver badge is not a requirement!
- **Intermediate:** Must not have flown a 500 km flight or competed in a Nationals prior to January 2008.
- **Pundit:** Everybody else!

### Provisional Dates

Talgarth: 24th-25th May

Nympsfield: 14th-15th June

Usk: 5th-6th July

Aston Down: 26th-27th July

MGC is not hosting an event this year.

### Rockpolishers Captaincy

Having captained the team last year I intend to step down from this role in 2008 to concentrate my efforts on the cross country coaching scheme and on my own cross country flying. If anyone is interested in taking this on, please get in touch with me at [mikewitton@hotmail.com](mailto:mikewitton@hotmail.com).

## Scheduled Instructor Meeting Dates 2008

*Paul Stanley*

Saturday 8 March 16:30

Saturday 10 May 17:30

July - middle of the soaring season, go flying!

Saturday 13 September 17:30

Saturday 8 November 16:30

In addition to instructors, I am opening instructor meetings to committee members to come and see what goes on. Those members who I have approached about becoming instructors are also welcome.