

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Annual General Meeting
Sunday 30th March 2008
17.00 at the club, details on page 4

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<p>Club web site: www.longmynd.com</p>	

Chairman's Contribution

Charles Carter

Recent visitors to the club have confirmed to me what the rest of us already know. Namely that we have a very friendly and inclusive membership and a clubhouse and catering which is the envy of much of the gliding world. Add to all that the challenging and exciting flying which the Mynd offers and you will clearly see why our membership numbers continue to increase in the face of declining numbers in the gliding movement as a whole.

It is extremely important for visitors in general and for prospective members in particular to receive a warm welcome and to be shown what we have to offer and I am very heartened by the time and effort many of you put into your hosting duties.

Increased membership numbers are vital to our wellbeing as a club and will keep down the unit cost of flying for us all.

The committee has been working on plans to replace the workshop and MT shed as part of a long term plan to update the club premises. Some of our buildings are definitely in the twilight of their life but our position on top of a very prominent hill in an Area of Outstanding Beauty means planning considerations create a great deal of work before we can actually start any building. However, a promising start has been made.

The DG 505 which had been taken down to Jaca on the annual expedition has returned somewhat ignominiously after an altercation with a Spanish vulture. The two pilots were able to land safely, albeit with some trepidation. One of the wingtips has been severely damaged with what at first inspection looks like further damage to the main wing section. A new tip will need to be manufactured since the 505 is no longer in production and so it would appear to be a somewhat lengthy and expensive process.

These will be my last Chairman's Notes as I do not intend to seek re-election at the AGM in March. I have spent ten years on the committee, five as vice chairman under Julian Fack's chairmanship and five years as chairman. I do not doubt that you will all agree that it is plenty for all of us. It has been a privilege to be chairman of our fine club with its long and distinguished history and I have often felt humbled by the names of my august predecessors. It is however, a team game and I have led a committee of dedicated and talented members who have given freely of their time and expertise to keep the club at the forefront of gliding.

Apart from the input of committee members there have been and continue to be great contributions from a whole host of people who work selflessly to promote our club both in the air and sometimes more importantly on the ground where the hard work may go unnoticed.

I do most sincerely thank you all.

Finally, may I wish my successor all the best for the future and can assure the next chairman and committee of my continued support and can promise them that in the long tradition of our members my advice will be freely given whether or not it is sought.

Happy and safe flying to you all and hopefully much more of it for me.

For Sale

Quarter share in Open Cirrus CEA.

Contact: Tony Cummins 01829 780409, or Mike Greenwood.

CFI's Bits

Paul Stanley

Breezy days heralded the start of the summer soaring season, with flights of 300 km now possible and flights of 500 km possible from the beginning of April. The first weekends of February and March saw the inception of the instructor training programme. Although the weather was not particularly kind, it could have been far worse, and thanks to the invaluable help of Simon Adlard some inroads have been made into the required preparation. There is still a lot to do in this regard and I appreciate this has some impact on the amount of flying available to members. I trust that you will all find this a small short-term price to pay for increased availability (and freshness!) of instructors.

In order to facilitate more effective post solo learning and checking, I am introducing a booking system for instructional/check flights at the weekends. This is in addition to the three places available on the abinitio weekend course. There will be five places available per weekend day, each slot notionally being given an hour. You will need to call Martin on the Monday prior to the weekend to book your place. Preference will be given to check flights and post solo training, one slot per pilot per day. The instructor on the day will decide on the order in which people are flown. Anyone not there for the 09:15 briefing may lose their place to someone from the normal flying list, which will run as normal. The scheme will run from 5 April to 31 October initially, and will then be reviewed. Constructive feedback is most welcome.

Finally, it is worth noting at this time of year that we are all rusty, and not as good as we remember being at the end of the last soaring season (if indeed we ever were that good!). So do take care to get checked and get back up to speed before attempting anything too ambitious.

Happy soaring.

Treasurer's Notes

Keith Mansell

The Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2007 show a loss of some £12,000 for the year which is much smaller than the 2006 loss of some £28,000 (ignoring the 2006 windfall £38,000 surplus on disposal of fixed assets). So a big step in the right direction but not big enough. The AGM is scheduled for 30 March 2008 at the club.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is a committee approved schedule of club fees and charges effective from 1 April 2008. The Retail Prices Index increased by 4.1% from January 2007 to January 2008. However the full adult subscription rate has been increased by only 2.74% and rates for younger members have not been increased at all. Increases in the hourly rates for club gliders are broadly in line with inflation. Aerotow prices have been forced upwards by the increase in the price of Avgas. Comparison of our £26 to 2000 feet with some other clubs reveals Bristol, Cambridge and London all at £27.

I repeat the often voiced comment that always taking good care of the club's buildings and equipment helps to reduce maintenance costs and of course flying without crashery helps to keep our insurance premiums in check.

Details of all prices on page 8.

MGC Annual General Meeting 2008

Jon Hall

The 2008 Annual General Meeting of Midland Gliding Club will take place on Sunday 30th March 2008 at 17:00 in the club house. At this meeting the officers and members of the committee are elected for the coming year. All places are up for election. The committee comprises:

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- and six Ordinary Members.

Nominations are invited for all the above positions and must be with the office in writing with the signatures of the nominee, proposer and seconder by Saturday 29th March. Elections are by a show of hands at the AGM unless there are more nominations than places in which case there will be a sealed ballot with two counters chosen to officiate.

Being on the committee is not necessarily an onerous task but it does require some commitment to attending monthly meetings and attempting to get things done in the time between. But it is an important task as the club does not run itself. We have been fortunate in having very effective committees over a number of years and I hope that next year will be no exception. We face some important challenges with EASA, pilot licensing, maintaining a growing membership, refurbishing or replacing the buildings, looking after the airfield and utilising the fleet, not to mention making enough revenue to keep member costs down and pay for development. If you have something to offer please consider standing.

Annual Dinner Dance and Trophy Presentation

Linda Taylor

As if you didn't know (and how could you not after all the posters and mailings) the Annual Dinner Dance this year will be held on Saturday 26 April at Shrewsbury Town Football Club. This year the turnout already looks as though it will exceed last year's several fold and I do not want to have to face your wrath if I have to turn you down because we are full. This year we have a superb venue (no massive pillars to peer around or hide behind), a "proper" speaker in the form of Peter Cope who as you may or may not know was at the stick of a real WW2 aircraft and no doubt can reveal insights which we can't imagine. I have it on good authority that the food will be superb and, your President and current Chairman will vouch for the venue (please ask them, there's a story there as well). So fill in the form, polish the dancing shoes, book the taxi and let your hair down!

To book just send your menu choices to me by email or snail mail, don't mind which and you can either enclose a cheque or pay direct to the club. All details on the invitation and booking form which everyone should have by now. It may seem a long way off but I really do need an idea of numbers by 31 March - and although bookings are doing well at present they are not enough and this is the cancellation deadline without incurring a charge. Please, please don't leave it until the last minute.

Linda Taylor

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From the Flying Field

Mark Sanders

The weekend of 25/26/27 January produced good westerly flows and even some sunshine - gadzooks - with bungee rides the order of the day and 9000 feet for John Parry on Saturday and twelve gliders in the air on Sunday with 5500 feet for Dave Crowson and Mike Greenwood in 494 and 4500 feet for Dave Cole in the Jantar. A good time was had by all.

It was also great to see Tony Danbury back solo in 288 after his enforced lay-off. Long may it continue Tony.

February 1 and 2 was an instructor training weekend. Our CFI has a whole raft of new instructors in the pipeline, who should be coming on-stream throughout the year. Simon Adlard delivered some very interesting and informative briefings on (a sunny, soarable - doh) Saturday morning. But someone needs to have word with the weather gods because things went downhill from there with the hangar packed by 3.00pm and never opening at all on Sunday - so our potential new team were able to practice little of what had been preached. "C'est la vie".

From a slightly more foreign flying field, the club's annual expedition to Jaca is underway; the first week produced some typical English summer weather for Liz Adlard, Mike Dodwell, Jim List and Mark Sanders (plus Dave Crowson, Mike Greenwood and Rod Hawley in 494); little wind; daytime temperatures in the region 15-17°C; 4000 foot QFE cloud bases; five out of six soarable days (well OK, the last one is perhaps not typical of dear old Blighty!). Good benign conditions to explore the foothills of the Pyrenees, but those more experienced in mountain flying are hoping for a wilder ride over the next two weeks - let's hope they get it. The only downside was a bird strike involving the DG. The end of an unfortunate vulture, I'm afraid, but JS brought the DG down safely. The damage sustained to the right wing tip, however, has rendered KAW unserviceable and as I write it is on its way back to the workshop. Not too big a repair hopefully, so fingers crossed, not too long before it is back in service.

The weekend of March 2 and 3 was another instructor training affair, this time blessed with good ridge conditions, perhaps a little strong on Saturday, but all excellent experience. The private owners are starting to wake from their winter hibernation, with DZM (Chris Harris - Vega), 288 (Tony and Mark - LS4), 405 (Fran Aitken - DG300), PZ (Jon Hall's LS4 trying out his whacky new solid state artificial horizon, and competing for airtime with new syndicate partner Jonny Roberts), FVP (JP in the Pegasus), IV (Walter Baumann - LS4) all blowing the dust off their wings. Congratulations to Peter Higgs on completing a two hour duration flight towards his cross-country endorsement in the K23.

Finally, welcome to new members Peter Higgs, John Lane, Nia Pierce-Jones and David Joseph.

Task Week

John Parry

While planning your diary for the year, remember Task Week is as usual the week leading up to the August Bank Holiday, that is 16-24 August.

For anyone who does not know, Task Week is a friendly competition which is a great way to do some cross-country flying; weather forecasts, briefings with flexible tasks, the certainty that there will be someone in control if you need to phone in having landed out, surrounded by other pilots doing the same thing. You don't have to be aspiring to 300 km flights to join in, there is something for everyone from first cross-country onwards.

A Long Journey to a Magic Moment

Jeannette Griffin

My journey to this very magic moment started when my children gave me a 'Tiger Moth' flight for my 60th birthday. A year later I had been unable to arrange the flight so I used the refund to pay for a day on a gliding course at Long Mynd. I had no idea of what to expect. A fine day in October 2005 found me at the club house being briefed, by Dave, on how to use a parachute, not an auspicious start and certainly no way to fill me with confidence about the wisdom of my choice of birthday treat. However it was a sunny day and the setting was wonderful for my first encounter with a glider, a now deceased K21. In all I had 3 flights with Dave and we looped-the-loop on the final one. I was hooked! Spring 2006 found me attending regularly at the club, taking basic instruction and as soon as it started I joined the Thursday evening course and flew all summer with Sarah Platt. Progress was slow. It took many months before I could stop shaking when we reached the top of the launch and mastering co-ordinated turns took even longer. However I persevered and flew whenever possible during the winter and in spring 2007 I again joined the evening group and flew with Bob Williams. I was now flying the launches and the landings and feeling more comfortable when I was introduced to cable breaks and spin recovery. The afternoon when Dave introduced me to spinning in the K13 was a nightmare. Each time I gained some height in a thermal he would demonstrate yet another method of loosing it all very quickly. How I envied the youngsters who took this all in their stride and even said they enjoyed spinning. I can never say I enjoyed the sensation of spinning but finally I was able to recover from a spin and another tick went in my log book. During the wet summer of 2007 I was on the brink of going solo several times but I worried endlessly about coping with cable breaks. Too much imagination I think.

October saw the end of the courses so I resolved to fly with John on Fridays when ever possible. We did more simulated cable breaks and I became less fearful.

Friday 16th November was a quiet day with a gentle south wind and during the morning we practised more cable break recoveries. After lunch I flew a circuit with John during which he said not a word and when I landed he just got out and casually said 'Do you want to have a go on your own?' I heard myself say 'Yes'. This was it! I went through my checks, launched and found myself at 1400 feet. I trimmed the glider and settled at 50 knots and turned out into the valley. I looked around, the sun was beginning to set and world was spread out before me. I could hardly believe I was there, on my own in this beautiful magic moment, a moment that will live with me forever. I had plenty of height so I flew a nice wide circle prolonging the moment for as long as possible. Reality kicked in and I resisted the temptation to fly off into the sunset, I thought a field landing was one step too far. I started on my down wind leg, completed my circuit and landed. I know when I opened the canopy I had a big grin on my face but my hands would not stop shaking. A long journey but worth every agonising step. My thanks to all who have helped me along the way with their patience and encouragement.

I Hate My LS4

Mark Sanders

Well, it's an aging and pretty conservative design, of let's face it modest performance, really quite uncomfortable until I modified the seating position, with a wheel-brake, whatever anyone tells you, which is absolutely pathetic. I know one shouldn't rely on the wheel-brake for a whole variety of reasons, in the same way I suppose as the instruments and parachute are fairly superfluous for all normal flight purposes. It's just that come the time when there presents a genuine reason to use one of these devices, it is perhaps a comfort to think there is maybe a glimmer of a chance that it might actually work.

Anyhow, the point is that despite all of these shortcomings no-one will ever let you let you say a bad word about an LS4.

Contrast this if you will with a high performance, remarkably beautiful to fly, world championship-winning and sexy, let's not deny it, design from the drawing board of the late great Herr Holighaus.

Like some truculent teenager confronted with a new green leaf vegetable the Midland Gliding Club has been infected with a "Don't like the Discus, it's rubbish" mentality, and it has got to STOP!

Sunday 27 January was a beautiful ridge day with wave about if you could find it. We had twelve gliders airborne; everything that was rigged was in the air, except of course for poor old 493 languishing at the launch point. I was on duty:

"Where's the K23?"

"C of A. What about the Discus?"

"Don't like the Discus. It's rubbish"

"I'll put you down for the K23 for next week then, shall I Sir?"

What's not to like? In my (alright, fairly limited) experience, it's been a brilliant piece of kit. It's fast; it got me round my first Rock-polishers at 80 kph. I've yet to achieve that speed in the LS4 so I'm guessing it was down to the glider rather than me. On another memorable flight in Task Week 2006, I got round 160 km having rescued it four times from below ridge height; so it scratches. With a GPS attached to the lovely L-NAV final glides are just like - well cheating, really. When I side-slip a glider, it has for me all the manoeuvrability of a hot air balloon, except for the Discus, which I can actually steer. Oh, and it's seen me safely into a couple of fields - what more can you ask for?

Admittedly the Discus deserves to be flown with a purpose, rather than just floating about. Assuming that the target group is somewhere between Bronze and Silver, my advice would be that if you are wanting to do that Silver or 100 km diploma perhaps in May or to get your name in the frame for Rock-polishers in 2008, then now is the time to be loading up the GPS and logger into 493 and learning how to use them. Set yourself a "task" of perhaps just 20 or 30 km around some local turn-points and fly it - float about with a purpose!

You need to know how to:

- Plot your route on a map and check it for airspace issues.
- Check NOTAMS.
- Make sure the turn-points are in the logger, or add them if they are not.
- Create a task and put a declaration into the logger.
- Install the kit in the glider and make sure it works. Turning it on is always good!
- Understand how to use the LNAV.
- Launch and start the task correctly.
- Select the turn-points in sequence and round them correctly.
- Finish the task correctly.
- Remove the logger and download your trace. Remember to have an OO present if it is a "real" badge claim.

I promise the first time you do all this, it will take you ages and you'll screw something up. I talk from experience - I've lost a 100 km and a 300 km badge flight through poor preparation. Messing up a drab day in February is one thing, but you'll really kick yourself if it's "The" day in May and you are stuck on the ground fiddling with the electrics, or perhaps worse you get back and find your trace is blank!

Andy Holmes (of 750 km fame - nice one Andy) was a great help to me when I was learning about all these devices, and I'm more than happy to pass on that knowledge on any drab day you care to mention, but if you wait until "The" day in May, then I'm afraid you're on your own!

So, come on you (gender non-specific) guys, be NICE about YOUR Discus. It's actually looking quite good since its EASA spruce up, so let's take a pride and keep it looking that way. But more to the point let's fly it the way it deserves to be flown - trust me, it's guaranteed to bring a smile to your face!

Club Fees as from 1 April 2008

Keith Mansell

Subscriptions		Membership Period	Fee	Notes
Full Members (age at 1 April 2008)				12 direct debits of
Aged 21 and over	} + Spouse	Annual	£375	£33
Country **	} at 50%	Annual	£205	£18
Overseas	} of the	Annual	£150	
Aged 18, 19 or 20	} relevant	Annual	£100	
Aged 16 or 17	} fee for	Annual	£75	
Non-flying (only for former flying members)	} age	Annual	£75	
Junior Flying Aged 14 or 15		Annual	£55	
Social		Annual	£75	
Temporary Members				
Winter (1 November -31 March)				
Aged 21 and over		5 months	£130	
Country **		5 months	£75	
Aged 18, 19 or 20		5 months	£35	
Aged 16 or 17		5 months	£25	
Aged 14 or 15		5 months	£20	
Trial Lesson	Mile High	3 months	£135	member's friend £65
	Standard	3 months	£95	member's friend £45
Daily Flying (whether flown or not)		per day/week	£7/£35	
Daily Social		per day	£1	
** For flying members of other BGA clubs and anyone resident 100 air miles from the Mynd				
Flying Fees		per hour	per 5 minutes	Unlimited
	DG505	£28.80	£2.40	
	K21	£27.00	£2.25	
	Discus	£26.40	£2.20	
	K13	£25.80	£2.15	
	K23	£25.20	£2.10	
	K8	£13.80	£1.15	£135
Wimch/Bungee Launch		£7.75		Block of 20 £135
(the above flying and launching fees are reduced by 50% for those aged under 21)				
Aerotow		Tug minute £3.25		Minimum fee £26.00
Accommodation		Dormitory	Private Room	Half en suite
Per person per night		£6.50	£6.50	£6.50
Room surcharge per night		Nil	£6.00	£12.00
		Year	Week	Day
Caravan parking		£360	£25	£5
Trailer parking		£215	£15	£3
Hangarage			£50	£10