

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Important

See page 5 for details of proposed changes to charges for flying club aircraft.

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Chairman's Column

Jon Hall

Christmas is over and the New Year hurtles towards me with the slow motion inevitability of a car crash. As a distraction I sit down to pen this contribution to the first Newsletter of 2009 and as I do so I am thinking what an important year it is going to be for the club. The most important year for the last, and the next, 25. It is not every day that a club has a 75th birthday or can celebrate being on the same site for all of that time. It is ironic that 2009 may prove to be one of the most difficult years the club has lived through, worse even than 2001 and Foot and Mouth. At least we were insured against that. The economic downturn is potentially much more harmful as we run a business that depends entirely on discretionary spend and that business provides the revenue to subsidise our fun and enjoyment. In times of recession it is discretionary spend that disappears first as we all are disinclined to invest hard earned funds in things we don't need or that don't bring tangible returns. Who knows how bad it will be next year, next month or even next week so better to stuff your spare cash in the mattress and not waste any of it on fripperies. Foot and Mouth was over in three months but this could go on for the next three years.

We should all remember, however, that it is exactly at such times that our club, more so than many, really comes into its own. Yes we have been providing the opportunity for people to glide from the Long Mynd for 75 years. Yes we have been training first class glider pilots for all of that time. Yes we have been running courses for more than 50 years that enable us to fly in first class gliders with a first class launch system and first class professional staff pretty much whenever we want. But we are also providing a refuge from harsh realities, therapy for the stress of modern life and a sense of community and extended family away from our weekday commitments. I joined this club 20 years ago to get away from a stressful business for a couple of days at a time. Others treat it as a holiday or weekend home. Some have even made it their life.

Your committee is working hard looking at the way we do things with a view to making our offer to members a better and more attractive one. Dominic Haughton has more to say on this in his article in this newsletter where he sets out the committee's proposed new approach to subscriptions and the cost of flying. There will be an opportunity for everyone to take part in the debate before decisions are made, at a meeting on Saturday 14th February at 18.00 hrs at the club.

For the next few years we have to work hard at making the Mynd a place to which people want to come, not just to fly but to spend time and money. There will be a lot of competition for that time and money from a lot of other sources but we have to make sure that what our club, our community, our family offers is better and more rewarding than all of them. We have to make the most of what we do well and eliminate all of the negatives and distractions that sap our energy, waste our resources and take our eyes off the ball at a time that requires 20/20 vision and pin sharp focus. When I say we I do not mean just the committee. The club is its members and its members have to take a long hard look at what they are personally doing to make the club stronger and more enjoyable for everyone and make every effort to make it a happy place, an attractive and comfortable atmosphere, a safe place for families and a place at which everyone wants to spend time. Retention is hard enough as it is without finding ways of driving people away. Consider if there is anything that you do or think that might have the opposite effect and see if you can put in place a more positive attitude, at least for this year. We only have one chance for making the most of our 75th so please, let's try and pull together.

New Year is traditionally a time for resolution. I want to suggest ten New Year resolutions for 2009 that will help to establish a base to see the Midland Gliding Club through the next 25 years.

They are:

- Support the events planned for our anniversary year. Try and attend at least one of the social events. If you can only make one make it the Anniversary Party on August 15th.
- Do Competition Enterprise this year rather than one of those predictable Regionals. There is more chance of doing more kilometres.
- Come to Task Week and get a friend from another club to bring a glider too and spread the word

about just how great a club we own.

- If you own a vintage glider come to Vintage Glider Week, the week after our anniversary party. It's a real opportunity for getting the media interested.
- If you have contacts in gliding clubs in other parts of Europe send them details of our club anniversary year and invite an expedition over, just like the Dutch.
- Resolve to do two more aerotows and five more winch launches than you did last year.
- If you don't already, spend two full weekends at the club including Saturday dinner.
- Support the caterers. It is hard enough to make the catering business successful without putting obstacles in their way. If you like what they are doing tell them and everyone else. If you have issues with anything in the kitchen tell them and me but otherwise keep it to yourself at least until they have had time to put things right.
- Keep your flying account in credit or at least pay your bills promptly.
- Leave your prejudices, stress and disagreements at home. Make the club a place we all go to escape from the irritations of real life.

My very best wishes to everyone for a safe and enjoyable gliding year in 2009. Remember that we are all members of MGC because we like gliding and like gliding at one of the best clubs in the UK. What we do this year and next may well establish the foundations to make sure that others will continue to enjoy our unique site for very many years to come.

CFI's Bits

Paul Stanley

A good start to the New Year, with Zakk Hutton going solo after his 16th birthday; well done to him.

In the spirit of starting afresh, I will expand on my key objective for 2009 as CFI. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes with a view to making membership of the club more enjoyable and more effective for all. In 2008 I instigated a working group to look at the organisation of weekend training, with the remit of increasing both the effectiveness of training and the 'fun factor' for trainees and instructors alike. Broadly the proposals are as follows:

1. Do away with the flying list for two seater training. Flying will be bookable, in much the same way that happens in the week. The result will be simpler (or no) paperwork.
2. A change of emphasis from checking to recurrent training. This will enable pilots of all levels (however good we might like to think we are) to benefit from instructional input.
3. All weekend members flying will be either booked recurrent training or short courses.
4. Focussed weekend training. Instructors and trainees would know the day before at the latest who they were flying with and what the objectives are.
5. A fully functioning mentoring system becomes possible with instructors and trainees able to synchronise more readily.
6. A lower 'critical mass' of members needed to operate. Three keen trainees are worth ten launch point 'tricotours' with their hands in their pockets!
7. Greater continuity of training. Trainees would more easily be able to synchronise with those instructors with whom they learn most readily.
8. More efficient use of instructing resources. There are currently a number of instructors off rota who would be available for this kind of training. Courses would also be biased to the summer soaring season, for obvious reasons.

The latter point is a serious one. In spite of having trained a record number of new assistant category instructors, we are still short of our requirement. These proposals should go some way towards ameliorating this. The main objective (a more effective training and checking operation at weekends) will engender more focussed activity, better progress for both trainees and instructors, lower drop out rate, less hassle and ultimately more flying and more fun for all. In order for these changes to work they will need to be embraced by you, the membership. These proposals will be presented in more detail at

the members' meeting on 14th February at 6 pm to discuss 2009-10 flying fees.

Time for Change

One charge, unlimited flying

For the committee, by Dominic Haughton

Times are uncertain. The long-term future of gliding is by no means secure. Membership throughout the movement is falling and the number of MGC members is still far below pre-foot-and-mouth outbreak numbers. Add to this the uncertainty about our own members' spending patterns in the next one, two or three years and we are faced with the real possibility that the club will have to change what it offers to its members.

We can continue as we are if we increase our membership, as planned, by 25 in five years *and* our members choose to spend as much as they have in the past. If not, the lag in trimming costs means we will quickly eat into the small capital balance we have in hand. We are also vulnerable to unexpected and uninsured costs, for example we have only just enough to replace the tug engine should it suffer a major failure.

If, for these or any other reason, costs exceed revenues we will have no choice but to sell assets and reduce what is offered by the club. At that point we can expect to find ourselves on the brink of a potentially self-perpetuating downsizing. It goes without saying that, after 75 years of enabling generations of glider pilots to fulfil their potential, and having built the unique club that is the MGC, this is not an option!

So, in the context of uncertain membership numbers and even more uncertain revenues the committee has been looking at ways to keep the club healthy and make it less vulnerable to "events". This article sets out details of a scheme that does just this and, at the same time, offers members much more flying for their money. It is the committee's intention to implement this scheme.

All flying members will be affected by the change so you are urged to read what follows and to provide feedback, positive or negative, without delay to the committee.

A meeting will be held in the clubhouse at 18:00 on 14th February to share members' input, discuss and agree changes to the proposals set out here, and to finalise the scheme. If the scheme meets with the approval of that meeting it will be adopted from 1st April 2009.

The club is its members

The number of active members is the single most important factor to the health of the club. In the current climate we must provide what our members (and potential members) want *and* give good value for money if we are to increase our numbers.

We must do everything we can to attract new members but we have only a limited ability to make people want to glide. A reasonable recruiting goal is therefore to make the MGC more attractive than other clubs in our catchment area, so we sign-up as many as possible of those who *have* decided to take up gliding. Our instructors, fleet, membership, staff and facilities match or better any rival club, if we can offer these at an attractive price we should be in a very strong position to recruit.

We must also retain our current members. Initiatives are in place to make newcomers quickly feel a part of the club, and to help them get the best from it and the CFI is currently finalising a scheme for delivering all training and checks in pre-booked 1½ hour sessions, a system which should provide much better value for the time invested and better ongoing development outcomes.

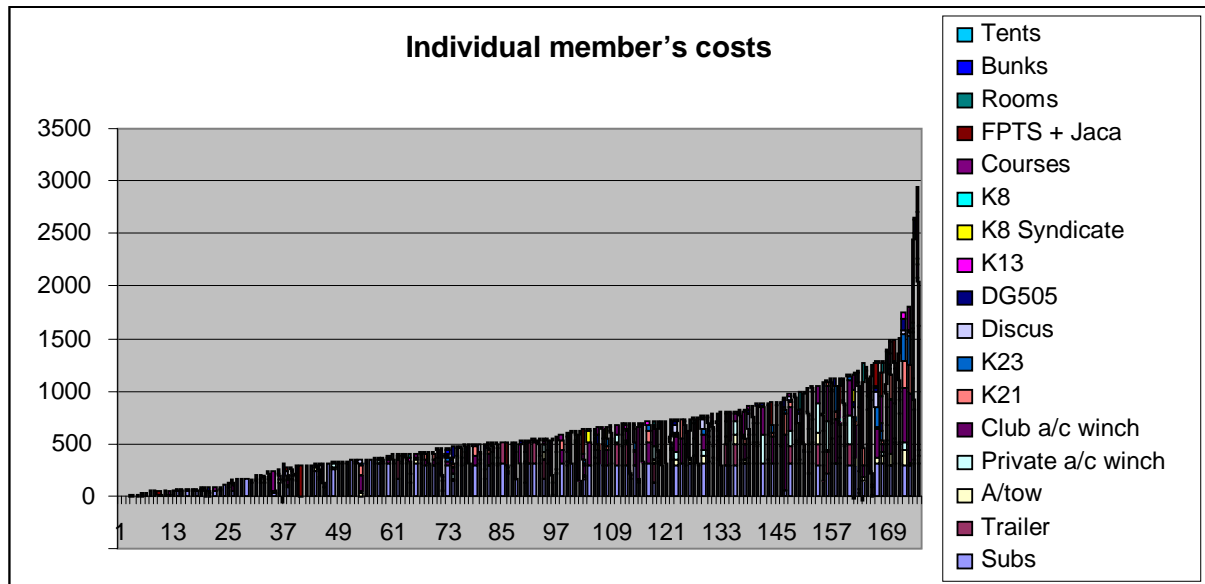
Looking back, moving forward

So the task is to recruit new members, to retain current members, to deliver what the membership wants at the right price and to secure the revenue needed to cover costs while offering the same or better service. Simple!

To come up with a way achieving all these objectives, a detailed analysis has been made of how members currently utilise the club's resources. The analysis looked at who paid the most and the least, what stage they were in their development as pilots, and what they spent their money on. It looked at

whether members paid for their flying by the minute or in blocks (fixed price to solo and courses). And it looked at the relationship between the costs incurred providing our members with the various services and what they paid for those services. This was done by looking at every payment made by every member, item-by-item (more than 4000 per year) over the last three years.

Raw data for one of these years (in this case 2005-06) is shown below. The vertical scale is cost; there is one “stacked bar” (divided into the amount spent on each of 17 items) for each of 176 members. Sadly the graph loses something when reproduced in black and white.



In particular the analysis looked at trends in members’ flying activity and compared that to what each might expect to be doing at their stage. The results of this have led to a completely new way of charging for flying being developed. The committee strongly believes this will have a positive impact on all the issues identified above; recruiting, retention and furthering members’ flying ambitions.

So what’s the big idea?

Current charges for members’ use of club aircraft and private aircraft charges will be replaced by an annual “flying fee”.

1. *For a fixed flying fee all members will be entitled to unlimited flying (excluding courses) in any club glider¹.*
2. *Charges for flying time in club aircraft will be abolished.*
3. *The trailer hitch fee for private aircraft will be abolished.*

The flying fee will cover all flying in club aircraft that is currently charged by “log-book time”. It includes flying at weekends, Bank Holidays, Task Week and any other weekday flying that is not booked in advance and does not impinge on course flying. No changes are proposed to the way other charges are levied².

For 2009-10 the flying fee will be £288 payable by monthly direct debit of £24 per month or as a one off annual payment in advance. Overseas members, private owners, instructors and juniors will receive discounts of between 25% and 75% (see below).

¹ The flying fee does not cover flying in the motorglider!

² Subscriptions, winch and aerotow launches, courses, caravans or accommodation.

| | Discount | To pay | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Per Month | Per Year |
| <i>Full flying fee</i> | - | £24 | £288 |
| Overseas members' discount | 50% | £12 | £144 |
| Instructors' discount | 50% | £12 | £144 |
| Private owners' discount | 50% | £12 | £144 |
| Junior (18,19 &20) discount | 25% | £18 | £216 |
| Junior (16 & 17) discount | 50% | £12 | £144 |
| Junior (14 & 15) discount | 75% | £6 | £72 |

Table 1: Proposed flying fees for 2009-10 membership year

No comparison!

Current flying fees reflect a service industry business model, the more you fly the more you pay. The new system is based on a different principle: its main objective is to enable members to fly as much as their time and fleet availability allows, while covering the club's costs. The amount of the fee will reflect the budgeted cost of providing flying³ to the anticipated number of members in the coming year. It will be reassessed annually and adjusted up or down based on forecasts of costs and membership numbers.

The scheme reflects the club's strategic plan, to provide an environment where members can realise their potential and ambitions⁴, not a desire to make a profit from greater use of the aircraft. Direct comparisons between the new system and the old cannot, therefore, be made.

Each member should instead consider how much flying they can expect to do under the new scheme, with only the launch to pay for on each flight. Private and club-aircraft pilots alike should include mandatory checks and discretionary training (cross-county, wave, ridge, aerotow, cloud-flying...) to refresh or improve skills or just for the fun of it. Private owners should add to this the flights they will do in club aircraft on marginal days or other occasions when they would not rig their own aircraft. Then see whether you will get better value, enjoy your membership more and become a better pilot under the new scheme.

Recurrent training and stage renewal

For "club pilots"⁵ the new fee structure can be thought of as paying for an appropriate combination of booked training sessions and solo time as a "block". The big difference compared to the current system is that *all* flying in addition to this block will be free. As described, this means that a comparison with how much flying could be achieved on the old system for the same money is not like-for-like. Nevertheless it is straightforward to work out and this has been done to illustrate how the new scheme is clearly better for almost all club pilots and the majority of private members.

The table below shows some representative combinations of booked sessions and solo hours that would cost the same under the current system as the new flying fee⁶. Five examples are included, which reflect a typical mix of training and solo flying flown by pilots in each of the stages. These are *not* annual estimates; some members may be able to achieve this amount of flying each quarter, others in a year. However, for pilots at Stage 3 and above, a certain amount of flying is required each year to retain stage privileges and it is the CFI's intention to enforce these requirements. The minimum flying hours required for currency and annual stage renewal are also shown in the table.

³ The fee will cover costs that can be increased or decreased in line with the amount of flying done by members. It includes 50% of sailplane and maintenance costs, 50% of aircraft insurance and 50% of winch and workshop costs; the other 50% of each being covered by course and trial lesson income.

⁴ Midland Gliding Club Ltd Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012

⁵ Here "club pilot" means a member who is not a private owner and flies only club aircraft.

⁶ Notional 2009 flying charges under the current scheme have been computed using 2008 charges +4.8%, which is the increase proposed by the treasurer had the current system been retained.

| | | 1½ hour booked training sessions | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| | | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 |
| Annual checks (2 x 10 min cct + 40 min soaring) | | n/a | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Training (3 x 10 min cct dual) | | 2 | | | | |
| Training (2 x 10 min cct + 40 min soaring) | | 6 | 3 | 3 | 1 | |
| Training (1 x 60 min soaring dual) | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | |
| Check (1 x 10 min cct) | | | 6 | | | |
| Total number of bookable sessions | | 11 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Plus solo soaring (hours) | | | 3 hours | 3 hours | 5 hours | 9 hours |
| | | Currency | | Annual for stage renewal | | |
| <i>Either</i> | Min solo hours | n/a | Check prior to solo flight | 3 hours | 5 hours | 10 hours |
| | Plus launches | none | | 24 | 12 | 24 |
| <i>Or</i> | Solo hours plus | n/a | | 5 hours | 5 hours | 20 hours |
| | Min launches | none | | 12 | 12 | 12 |

Table 2: Typical mix of training and flying by members in different stages

Under the new scheme, Stage 3, 4 or 5 club pilots who do their annual checks, a modest amount of training (7, 3 and 1 booked sessions respectively) and satisfy the minimum stage renewal requirements will pay no more than they would under the current scheme. For pilots at Stage 1 and 2 there are no annual minimum requirements for stage renewal. For these ab-initio and early-solo pilot pilots the new flying fee would pay for just about enough training to make satisfactory progress. In the examples above this amounts to 11 booked training sessions in a year for the pre-solo stage 1 pilot and 6 for the stage 2 post-solo pilot.

For private owners, the current “aircraft-based” private owner levy is replaced with a “per-capita” fee. This achieves two unrelated outcomes; it reflects the use, to a greater or lesser degree, of club aircraft by private owners and it eliminates the anomaly that is the private owner levy⁷. All private owners, including instructors, use club aircraft to some degree even if only for annual or three- or five-year instructor checks, giving them a stake in the club fleet.

And the winners are...

Any pilot doing more than 10 or 11 hours in club aircraft (depending on the aircraft) will find the new fee is less expensive than the current system. As already noted, this amount of flying is no more than the expected minimum for club pilots at any stage. For those doing less than this, that is Stage 1 and 2 pilots who are not doing much training and Stage 3, 4 and 5 pilots doing less than required minimum for their respective stage, the new scheme is more expensive than the current system.

Members of 1 and 2 man syndicates, who currently pay all/half the private member levy, will pay less than at present regardless of whether they use club aircraft.

Members of 3 man syndicates who fly more than 2½ hours in club aircraft will pay less under the new scheme. Given that annual checks will be conducted in booked sessions with 1 to 1½ hours’ flying, this means any 3 man syndicate member completing annual checks and one reasonable soaring flight or booked session during the year will be better off.

Would-be instructors currently pay several hundred pounds in flying fees during training, hardly an incentive to embark on this demanding career. In future there will be no additional cost for flying club

⁷ The reason for having the current private owner levy, which includes a trailer hitch fee, is somewhat unclear; some say it makes up for a “loss” of revenue as these members don’t flying club aircraft, others are more straightforward and say that private owners can afford to be “taxed” to raise revenue for the club as a whole. Whatever the reason the cost incurred by having private aircraft on the field is negligible.

aircraft during instructor training, which should contribute to building the body of instructors needed to maintain our current high standard of training. However, it is clear that this does not help current instructors in larger syndicates; they have already paid for their own training, need only very occasional use of club two-seaters for checks and currently pay a small part of the private member levy for their syndicate aircraft. The instructors' discount will limit the potential increase in cost to these instructors.

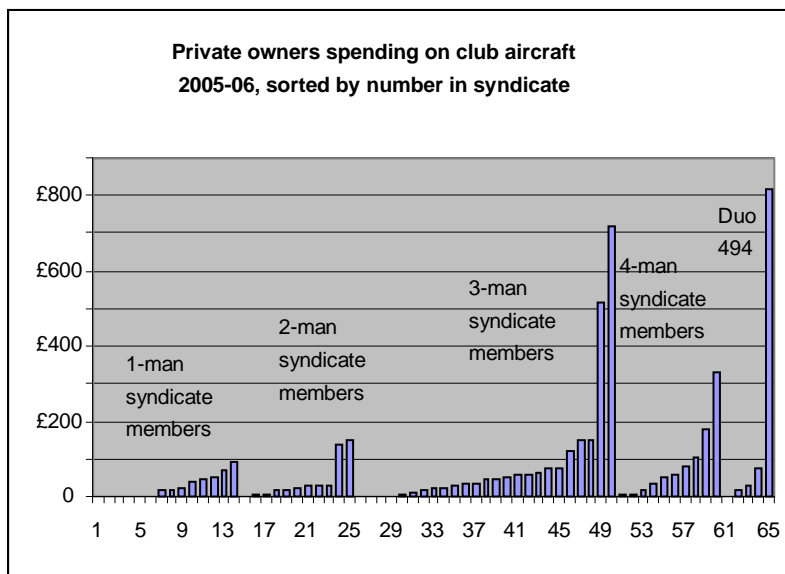
New members will benefit from knowing exactly how much their flying will cost in their first year (winch launch costs can be estimated from how much time they can spend at the club with, say, an average of 2 launches per visit for pre-solo).

A zero sum game

In its first year (2009-10) the new scheme will raise the same revenue as we might expect to collect if we retained the current system with a nominal year-on-year increase from this year's flying fees. With overall revenues effectively unaltered and most members benefiting from the change to flying fees, it is inevitable that some members will lose out.

Club pilots who don't fly much will make up by far the greatest number of the members who pay more. As noted above, these members are failing to maintain their currency; however, to do so on the old system would mean paying at least the same as under the new scheme.

Some members of 4 man or larger syndicates who do not to fly club aircraft very much, will pay more than they do at present. However, the analysis of members' flying showed clearly, and unsurprisingly, that members of larger syndicates fly club aircraft more than members of small syndicates (below). With more competition for a seat in their own aircraft these syndicate members are inclined to climb into a club aircraft to get their fix.



Even at 2005-06 prices more than half of 3 man, 4 man and the even larger DuoDiscus 494 syndicate paid more than £50 for flying in club aircraft. Factoring in price increases between 2005-06 and 2009-10 all these members would be better off under the new scheme. Free flying is almost certain to increase the amount that private owners fly club aircraft, leaving somewhat fewer than half the members of larger-syndicate members with an increase.

Once again, when evaluating the new system these private owners are encouraged to consider not how much they have flown club aircraft in the past, but how much they will fly them under the new system. Only then can they decide whether the new system will be a more or less attractive package.

The bottom line

So how does the proposal shape up? Remember the underlying objective is to make the club less vulnerable to uncertainty and to realise the club's overarching vision of giving members opportunities to further their flying. The new scheme:

1. Reflects the status of the club as a mutual society. It means that all members, who after all collectively own the aircraft, have access to them on equal terms. This last point is significant. The new scheme changes the club from being a business that sells services to its members, with utilisation of the club fleet governed by the members' willingness and ability to pay for flying hour by hour, to a cooperative of like-minded pilots. It simultaneously removes the commercial driver

“the more you fly the more you should pay” and makes the finances of the club more robust by producing known revenue to cover known costs.

2. Embodies the fundamental values of the club and its vision “to provide an environment where excellent glider pilots are trained to the highest standards and where they can realise their potential and ambitions as cross country and competition pilots”. It does this by providing better access to club aircraft for club pilots and private owners alike and cheaper flying for all active club pilots and most private owners.
3. Removes the majority of the costs associated with non-mandatory training. This is closely aligned with the CFI’s vision that all our members should undertake meaningful recurrent training rather than satisfy only the minimum requirements through check flights.
4. Greatly simplifies the offer presented to new members. For a fixed fee we will offer as much training as the new member wants, constrained only by the availability of aircraft and the amount of time they can commit. If they visit the club 12 times a year, just about enough to make satisfactory progress, they will be better off than their predecessors.
5. Maximises the use of the club fleet by club pilots and private owners will get more flying in a variety of types, including extended flights in the Discus and DG505.
6. Decouples revenues from activity. Income will be less sensitive to the membership profile (number of pilots in training) and will be better aligned with the predominantly fixed costs of providing flying.
7. Removes the link between the log book records and flying revenue. The log book must still be kept; it is a legal requirement and is needed for maintenance scheduling. However, providing all flights are logged, poor recording of take off or landing times will not now be detrimental to revenue.
8. Offers something that is easily seen to be different, and hopefully more attractive, than the clubs we compete with for members improving our chance of attracting new recruits.

Your opinions are needed

The proposed flying fee structure is a major departure from the past. As this will result in some members paying more, the committee would like input from members on the proposal before it is finalised.

Members are encouraged to send feedback to the Chairman, Jon Hall (jon@heritageresource.co.uk) or by post to the office for Jon’s attention marked “Flying fee”. In addition there will be a members’ meeting at 18:00 on Saturday 14th February in the club house to discuss and finalise the scheme. All members are encouraged to attend. If the scheme meets with the approval of that meeting it will be implemented on 1st April 2009.

The sky’s the limit

In summary, the change is expected to contribute in a number of ways to realising the increase in membership and revenue stream that is needed to retain the current fleet, staff and facilities.

- New members will know how much their flying is going to cost.
- Members under training will no longer face a disproportionately expensive phase in their career.
- Established club pilots will have an incentive to maximise their flying time.
- The majority of private owners will benefit from reduced costs.
- Members of large syndicates will have ready access to club aircraft.

We will know that the scheme is working when we see year-on-year increases in the number of members accompanied by more hours being flown in club aircraft. A situation may even arise in which we can reduce the amount of the flying fee as more members share the costs of the fleet. Conversely if aircraft remain unused, even when it costs nothing to fly them, there is clearly over-capacity in the fleet and any decision to sell an aircraft can be made knowing it will have little impact.

The committee is confident that the scheme will have a positive impact on the club and is keen to implement it as soon as possible. We will strive to reconcile any issues put forward by the members in time to do this starting 1st April 2009 and look forward to members’ support in achieving this.

Once the change is made how much will you fly in 2009?

With a fixed charge for flying, the sky's the limit!

Your Gliding Club Needs You!

Pete Turner

Having been a member of the Midland Gliding Club for over thirty years you can be assured that it is something very important to get me to write my first article for the club.

Now I am sure that even the most reclusive members of the MGC cannot have failed to notice, what the Prime Minister might refer to as a 'blip' in the economic well-being of the country and that this is forecast to last until after the next general election and beyond. As you will realise this is going to have a significant impact on our gliding club and the planned 75th anniversary celebrations for 2009. In fact if anyone has a time machine it might be a good idea to go back 75 years and ask the early members to delay the first flight by 12 months or so but as that is not going to happen we are going to as my dear mum would say "make the best of it".

Let's look at what we have got planned and see how we can each help to make this celebration the best ever because there won't be another similar one for another 25 years and some of the older members like me may be lucky to make that one but we live in hope!

| Date | Activity | What can I do? |
|--|------------------------|---|
| 28 th March | MGC Dinner and Dance | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend - only 25-35% of the members attend. 2. Bring your spouse, partner, a friend. 3. Sign up early, it's a pain for the organiser when people leave it until the last minute and not really necessary. |
| 30 th May | Hangar Dance | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend - the last time we did this was brilliant, ask Auntie Den. 2. Bring your spouse, partner, a friend. 3. Do you know an ex Mynd member - phone, text or write and personally invite them. 4. Do you know a glider pilot who likes a good party - they all do! So - phone, text or write and personally invite them. |
| 4 th - 11 th July | Competition Enterprise | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compete - all you need is a Silver 'C' 2. No Silver, then come and crew and learn from the likes of Justin Wills and other pilots. |
| 15 th August | Big Anniversary Party | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend - it's the only one for the next 25 years! 2. Bring your spouse, partner, a friend. 3. Do you know an ex Mynd member - phone, text or write and personally invite them. 4. Do you know a glider pilot who likes a good party - they all do! So - phone, text or write and personally invite them. |
| 15 th - 22 nd August | Vintage Gliding Club | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Own a Mynd based wooden Glider - then you should come and fly. 2. Know some one with a wooden glider - phone, text or write and personally invite them. |
| 22 nd - 30 th August | Task Week | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Own a wooden glider - stay and fly it in task week. 2. Own a glider based at the Mynd then for this year compete in <u>your club's</u> task week. 3. Know someone who could benefit from some more friendly cross country competition - they all could! So - phone, text or write and personally invite them. 4. Know someone who's flown in our task weeks before but not recently, then you know what to do - phone, text or |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | write and personally invite them. |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|

This year is a special year for the Midland Gliding Club, **our** gliding club, we have the opportunity to bring a lot of new people to our site and hopefully we can get some to stay and join, in these hard time we need to market our club more than ever and we can all do a little. A phone call here and an email there could make all the difference and the more people we have come the more likely they are to return. So when you get to New Year as well as the resolution to 'lose the weight gained at Xmas' (especially relevant to K6e owners) let your resolution be to fly in one of the flying weeks and to get one or two extra visitors to come as well. Your club will never be 75 again so let's make the most of it.

Rockpolishers 2009

David d'Arcy

Dear team, (yes that's you),

In 2005 MGC were NATIONAL inter-club CHAMPIONS, beating the likes of Lasham, Hus Bos, Oxford (who took the title back off of us in 2007 after we were leading from Day 1!) and Bristol & Glos GC who we destroyed in the preliminaries. After the recent retirement by Mike it has become my illustrious job to lead you all in this year's championship fight. First of all though we have to eliminate Nympsfield, Aston Down and Talgarth, hopefully Usk and Shobdon won't give us too much trouble, where all these clubs form OUR local 'Rockpolishers' inter-club league. And to do this we need to amass more points than the others by taking part and having fun. For each mini competition weekend usually four in total, but more likely 2-3 due to weather considerations, we need to enter a 'Pundit', an 'Intermediate' and a 'Novice' pilot, so I'd like all of you to consider what category you fall into and your availability this summer. In recent years KAW has made excellent showing, so if you are short of a glider or your Silver gliding badge then hiring it and talking to a nice cross country instructor like JS, DC, Simon, Johnny, Mike or any of our other excellent instructors will see you get some fabulous first hand experience at racing round our beloved country side. It's also not boring like staying at home. So come on team Mynd ra ra...

P.S. Mike Witton has organised some excellent winter lectures, of which a number will be of particular interest to 'budding' cross country pilots (and us all) so please don't miss them. There are also usually a couple of training or refresher weekends for 'Field Landing' practice, where the motor glider can be hired for such purpose and I will see to organise these.

Diary Dates

The MoD will be hosting another Military/Civil Air Safety Day (MCASD) at RAF Shawbury on 20th May 2009. All pilots and others involved in General Aviation are invited to attend. Details and application form are at:

<http://mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/AirSafetyandAviationPublications/FlightSafety/Mcasd20091.htm>

7th February 8 pm: 'The icing on the cake' by Phil and Diana King.

14th February 6 pm: Members meeting to discuss Flying Fee proposals (see *Time for Change*).

21st February 8 pm: 'Gliding as it used to be' by Mike Randle.

14th March 8 pm: 'Cross country psychology' by Simon Adlard.

28th March: Dinner Dance at Long Mynd Hotel (2008 trophies presentation).

30th May: Hangar Barn Dance.

4th - 12th July: Competition Enterprise. Party on 12th July.

15th August: 75th Anniversary Party.

15th - 22nd August: Vintage Glider Club Week.

22nd - 31st August: Task Week.

10th October: Autumn Dinner Dance and Prize Giving.

31st October: Halloween Party.

7th November: Bonfire Night and Birthday Party (Martin's and Eddy's 50th birthdays.)

19th December: Christmas Dinner.

From the Flying Field

Mark Sanders and David d'Arcy

8 November - An interesting evening talk from Rod Buck - the man who maintains our "Wendy Windblows" weather station. Perhaps like me you thought it was a stand-alone system we had purchased some years ago - well it isn't! It is a part of a network of such stations around the country aimed chiefly at hang/para-glider pilots, but clearly applicable to us as well. Did you know you can dial 0900 900 7000 (50p per minute), then key in 26 once the line answers, to get all the weather information from our station; current wind speed and direction, reading from 30, 60 and 90 minutes previously; max/min temperatures; anticipated cloud-base; amount of insolation - well you can, I've tried it! You can get more information at www.wendywindblows.com - it's an interesting read - there is useful information on how you can use the variation in wind speed as a useful clue to thermal strength. (Yes, I know you can call Martin, but "it's great, why don't you come and fly?" doesn't have quite the same amount of detail).

20 November - Another very acceptable wave day with a wind speed of 25 knots WNW on the ground (40-60 knots at height). Simon Adlard (ASW24), Alan Reynolds (ASW28), Dave Crowson (494 with Nigel Lasseter on board) all got to around 10,000 feet above site somewhere over Marshbrook, and JS too probably on one of his launches. Simon actually pushed forward to Borth on the west Wales coast during his flight, no mean feat in that kind of headwind.

6/7 December - was a classic cold, clear winter floating-about type weekend. All the club gliders were kept busy as members took the opportunity to keep themselves current. Luke Sanders got himself checked out for aero-towing and then had a ride in 854 and came back beaming!

14/15 December - Fran Aitken's 21st birthday party - a good time had by all, methinks - it was certainly a bit subdued on Sunday morning. Was it another Mynd record? On Sunday, there were nine people on the field and EIGHT of them were instructors - the ninth was the tug pilot! Walter Baumann completed his acceptance checks with Simon Adlard to become the sixth Assistant Category Instructor that the club has produced this year. So the message is clear; there has never been a better time to learn to fly!

The K13 is in for some scheduled maintenance at the moment; the fuselage is being re-covered, a tail-wheel (from CRL) is being added and it is getting a nose-hook as there is on the K8 so it can be hoisted onto its trolley without having to have the canopy removed - all good stuff!

3/4 January - The new year starts as the old year ended - very cold, but that didn't stop Mike Greenwood from checking out Zakk Hutton for a first solo on his 16th birthday. Congratulations Zakk - a couple of flights in JGJ, with plenty more to come! (*Mark*)

I had been watching the weather a bit and identified a chance that the weekend of 17-18 Jan could be good, then last minute (Friday) checking on the latest forecasts suggested the winds would be too strong up on top of the Mynd during the weekend due to the intense low pressure off NW Scotland. So being in two minds (some say more) I decided to attend as the weather fronts seemed to be passing through at night (big bonus) thus giving the best chance of some sort of gliding window during the day. Sure enough Saturday morning it was the most perfect of conditions WSW 25 knots wall to wall blue sky and I was still on the A49 - doh! A trough line cut short the afternoon swinging the wind SSW and bringing in increasing low cloud - but everybody flew, some more than others, and I caught that old line "You should have been here earlier..." Anyway, woke Sunday to find a strange white substance lying all around outside. A quick dart outside confirmed it was 'snow.' Members started dripping in including a Number One so it was doors open and go go go. Oh and the conditions were again perfect - WSW 20-25 knots and blue sky.

Four members rigged and the K21, DG and Discus were all in constant use. The scene from the air of the snow laden Mynd and surrounding hills is always a spectacular sight (second time for me now :-)) and I can highly recommend it to all. Day honours go to Mike Witton in 466 for 7500 feet (QNH) in wave and cold feet! And for working out what the wave was up to, leaving the rest of us scrabbling about in the lower echelons. A snow shower threatened to come in but in the end fizzled out. So another great winter's day of soaring, and I owe Johnny a pint for making me rig! (*David*)