

# MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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### Duo Discus Share For Sale

*Paul Stanley*

With some regret a one eighth share is for sale in Duo Discus 494. Being CFI and teaching in my Pitts S2A is taking up too much commitment to justify keeping my share in 494.

Includes parachutes, GPS etc.

I'm the last founder member of the syndicate and the glider has done me proud, three 500 km plus flights and numerous flights in excess of 300 km.

Demonstration and conversion flights available.

Price £8000.

Paul Stanley 07990 586469

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## Chairman's Column

*Jon Hall*

What a start to the summer season! It is a few years since I have done as many cross country kilometres by the end of July and enjoyed so many excellent weekend soaring days. There are lots of pointers out there that this may be one of the best summers we have had for a while. There is absolutely no excuse now for not making the most of this good weather and flying as often as possible so why am I still surprised to see so few members at the club at the weekends? It can't be the cost because you have already paid for it. It can't be the weather (except for one or two days). It can't be the availability of the fleet as you can book in advance. If anyone has thoughts on this I would be really pleased to hear them. Incidentally you can just turn up at the weekends and if there is a spare two seat glider and an instructor you can get ad hoc training. But the weekend booking system is an excellent way to guarantee the availability of both so do use it.

The new membership scheme is now fully implemented and the few remaining wrinkles ironed out. It seems to be working as we recruited 23 new members in the first two months and most of last year's members have renewed, including some who objected to the new scheme. The one category of membership that seems to have suffered is Social Membership which has taken a dive but this is probably due to the change in the way we charge for courses. It is now more advantageous to become a full member if you want to do more than one course a year. It really is too early to draw any conclusions but I am confident that we will start the next membership year at least as strong as we are now and probably stronger.

We all know that this is a big year for the club so I was disappointed at the very low turn out for our first social event of the year, the Barn Dance. Jan in particular put a lot of effort into organising it for which she deserves our thanks. But for a handful of participants it begs the question of whether it is worth the effort. The club lost money on the event which was meant to raise funds for the building programme. On this showing it is unlikely that we will organise any further social events in the future other than the big one on our anniversary weekend. This will take the form of an all day event for current and past members and guests, invited from the local business and political communities. There will be displays and competitions, vintage gliders on display, a roast carvery lunch and a formal evening dinner. Numbers are limited to the evening dinner so if you would like to come I suggest you purchase a ticket as soon as they are available from the office or Keith Mansell. The ticket price is £17 a head including a drink at the table. We will require lots of help on the day from car park stewards to hosts for our guests so put August 15<sup>th</sup> in your diary and please help make the day a special one.

We were hosts to Competition Enterprise from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> July. Although the weather was not as kind as it had been under Charles Carter's chairmanship last time we still managed to fly more than 22,500 kilometres, recovered the Camp Hill plate and witnessed the longest flight ever from the Long Mynd by Justin Wills of 837 km. I cannot recommend Enterprise too highly. It is a friendly competition that is designed to suit all pilots in any type of glider and of any ability. As the name suggests it is designed to encourage enterprising flying and often pilots get extra points for doing something unexpected, even different from the set task. Next year Enterprise goes to Lasham and having flown over the area a couple of times recently I can recommend having a go. Enterprise is now a club that organises a nomadic competition once a year and entry to a competition automatically entitles membership to the club. It looks as though Club Enterprise will settle on four regular sites and a wildcard every fifth and it is highly likely that the Mynd will be one of the regulars. This is in no small part due to the way the members got behind the event and made it work so well for our visitors. An enormous thank you to everyone who took part.

Enterprise is a great way to get into practice for Task Week which as ever will be the last week in August running up to the bank holiday. This will be run on similar lines to Enterprise which has proved such a great success over the last few years. Again you can book club gliders for no extra cost but on a strictly first come basis so speak to Martin in the office as soon as you can.

Finally I know you will all want me to send our best wishes to Chris Ellis who came back from a family visit to America with a nasty dose of Valley Fever. Extremely rare anywhere in the world except Northern Arizona he has been very unwell and though he is recovering slowly he is looking at some hospital time in the near future and will not be back to full strength for a while. Chris has decided to let his instructor rating lapse as he approaches his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. We owe him a huge debt for all the time and commitment that he has put into instructing, the club and especially the Falke syndicate which he has been managing since its inception. We all wish you a speedy recovery Chris.

## **Have Licence, Will Tow? Slow Down, Not so Fast!** (Trailer towing revisited, again)

*John O'Reilly*

`Tis the season of cross-countries, competitions, field landings and those adventurous glider retrieve trips. Competition Enterprise was a busy week, if for nothing else than for the trailers zipping around the country, and the relief that the glider and pilot were safe on the ground again. In the 'Old Days' it was simple; there is a car there with a 'hook' on the back, everything seems to work, my licence allows me to tow a trailer, I've got insurance cover and I'm a man so I don't need to read the instructions, so let's go! Whoa, slow down. Towing a glider trailer these days is MUCH more complex than that, and for those new to the experience, or just needing a refresher, I thought I'd write down my simplified three step approach to towing. Pay attention now, 007!

1. **Is the towing vehicle - trailer combination legal?** This is probably the most important and most likely to be wrong. At the very least you need to:
  - **Read the BGA Laws and Rules section on "Trailer laws and rules as applicable to glider trailers"**, all 11 pages of it, sober. And in case the point is missed glider trailers are exceptional loads which exceed the usual legal maximum trailer length (of 7 m) because they carry an 'indivisible load of exceptional length' and hence that glider trailer on the back of the towing vehicle is not a normal trailer!
  - **Know the MAM/GVW<sup>1</sup> weights of both the towing vehicle and trailer, and the VUW<sup>2</sup> of the towing vehicle.** See BGA Laws and Rules for definitions. The MAM weights must be marked on both the vehicles and trailers, and in most cases they will be adequate to check the legality of the combination, but if you are planning to tow an unbraked trailer (unlikely), or have just a Category B licence (possible), you'll need to know the VUW which is more difficult to identify.

The critical question is whether the towing vehicle - trailer combination is legal, depending on their weights, and if it is what sort of driving licence is needed. For example - My Nissan X-Trial has a MAM of 2050 kg and a MTW<sup>3</sup> of 4050 kg, so with Jon Hall's LS6/Cobra trailer, which has a MAM of 1300 kg, this is a legal vehicle - trailer combination, and only a Category B licence is required. One of the bigger trailers for a two-seater though, with a MAM of 2,000 kg, would still be legal on the X-Trail, but would require a B+E licence to tow (cos the total MTW > 3,500 kg, AND MAM trailer > VUW X-Trail). And there are lots of cars in the club car park with which it would be illegal to tow a trailer with an MAM of 2,000 kg, and would need to be checked towing a trailer of 1300 kg MAM.

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<sup>1</sup> MAM (Maximum Authorised Mass), GVW (Gross Vehicle Weight), effectively the same thing.

<sup>2</sup> VUW (Vehicle Unladen Weight)

<sup>3</sup> MTW (Maximum Train Weight)

2. **Can I drive the towing vehicle - trailer?** Not physically, I'm a man so of course I can, and well, women can do anything (I am reliably informed) so that shouldn't be a problem either. I mean does your licence and insurance cover you?

- **Driving licence.** If you are under 30 (or more precisely if you passed your driving test after 1/1/1997) and have not taken another test specifically to tow trailers then your licence will not include the +E endorsement which is needed to tow the X-Trail and 2,000 MAM trailer combination. But you could tow the LS6/Cobra trailer with the X-Trail, but NOT with a smaller car like a 2004 Astra 1.8 (because the trailer MAM > VUW).
- **Insurance.** Read the small print. For example, my insurance company covers my car whilst towing a trailer (including a glider trailer, but I had to double-check), and covers me third party to drive another car, but NOT towing a trailer as well. And some insurance companies consider a glider trailer to be not an ordinary trailer and will not cover the car whilst it is towing it.

Still awake? I said it was complex, but the simpler bit is all that is left.

### 3. **Pre-tow checks**

- **Trailer** (Inside - kit + secure, keys, closed and locked, weight plate)
- **Number Plate** (Size, style, secure)
- **Lights** (Brakes, indicators, rear side, number plate, reflectors, side markers [>6.0m, >1990])
- **Wheels** (tyre tread and pressures, bearings, mudguards)
- **Connection** (ball, breakaway cable, jockey wheel / stand, hand-brake)
- **Brakes** (over-run [>1983], auto-reverse [>1989])

I thought learning to use GPS gliding software, or the Skew-T diagrams, was challenging and I was surprised how complex trailer towing requirements were. I will try to get the appropriate links added to the MGC website so that the towing and licencing requirements are straight from the horse's mouth.

That is your mission, should you decide to accept it. Time for that drink, I think!

## **Task Week**

*John Parry*

Date for your diary, Task Week is at the usual time of year, 22 - 31 August (that is the week leading up to the Bank Holiday).

Once again we will be running it on Competition Enterprise rules which gives everybody - novices and pundits, wood and the latest glass fibre - a good chance to achieve useful things and have a great time.

It's your friendly flying competition at your home club: a great way to get some cross-country flying, with weather forecasts, briefings with flexible tasks, NOTAMs, someone in control to take your land-out calls and man the radio. It's flying with friends, at a time of year when landing fields are plentiful should you need them, even a trophy to compete for if you're so minded. There is something for everyone from first cross-country onwards. We hope to see you there!

## CFI's Bits

*Paul Stanley*

What a different year we seem to be having this year to last, with many long flights by both members and visitors. Most notably during Competition Enterprise when one J. Wills did 1500 km in two flights. Which just goes to show what might be achieved with a little application and practice! Another notable feature of Enterprise was the weather briefing delivered by Simon Keeling. It was both wonderfully informative and accessible. I gather Simon is something to do with the telly, but as I don't have one I wouldn't know. In spite of that potential shortcoming he does seem to know what he's talking about, so the telly thing may well be a rumour. It's only the second time in my 20 year gliding career I've seen competition weather briefing raise spontaneous applause. Funnily enough on both occasions the briefings announced a completely un-flyable day... what is it about glider pilots?

On a more serious note, the good start to the season was marred by the tragic accident at the end of May in which Mark Smallwood lost his life. For some of you this will be the first experience of such an event. Many of us have not been so lucky, and such events serve to further raise the need for vigilance on the safety front. That said, at a subsequent instructors meeting it was decided that 'business as usual' is the way forward. There are no plans to make any substantive changes in our operation as a result of this event, although a minor change to supervision of pilots has been adopted. Anyone wishing to know more should speak to me.

Whilst on the subject of supervision, it has recently come to my attention that Number Ones have on a number of occasions either been, or been made to feel, undermined whilst in charge of operations. This is completely unacceptable, it compromises safety and operational efficiency and demoralises the duty team. Having pointed this out, I am sure that all duty teams can look forward to the co-operation and respect of those not on duty. Weekend duty teams - especially Number Ones - do a sterling job, usually at a cost to their personal flying, and are assured of my support. The support of all of you helps the teams to accomplish the objective of maximising benefit from training, and engenders effective airfield operations. I would therefore also remind you of the etiquette of seeking permission, and confirming your check status with the Number One, or deputy, before flying.

This 'permission to fly' has an aspect of briefing for those who missed the morning one, and failure to gain a proper briefing has been a contributory factor in at least two recent incidents. Morning briefings are there for a good reason - please take care to attend them. Also note that if you have a pre-booked two-seater flight and are absent at the briefing then you will be bumped off the flying schedule, as the commitment is a whole day one.

One of the above incidents led to over £3000 of your money being spent on a new rudder for the DG505. This incident could also have led to serious injury. From now on the practice of towing gliders into line towards other gliders must cease. John Stuart is drawing up a guide to towing and ground handling to be adopted by all members.

Aspects of supervision and instructional techniques formed the basis of an informative and challenging instructor development weekend, which was run by Mick Davies with me helping. Three instructors managed to do the theory/briefing aspect of the completion course, and another three trainees were exposed to what lay in store. In addition I completed the briefing part of my refresher check, Mike Greenwood the briefing part of his full cat test, whilst John Collins was persuaded to undertake assistant instructor training and rejoin the instructor cadre after a long absence. Thanks Mick, and welcome back John.

As the season marches on, Neal Clements will be running another of his excellent weekend courses in September, and popular Thursday evenings also help members to progress due to regular input from the same instructors, thanks to the regular attention of Simon and Bob. Please keep an eye on the e-news for details of Neal's course.

For myself I will be undertaking to fly the soaring week at Shobdon before reluctantly relinquishing my Duo share - please see separate advert. All we need now is weather for the remainder of the summer soaring season which matches the early part. Here's hoping.

## From the Flying Field

*Mark Sanders*

**2/3/4 May** - Yet another weekend of fair westerlies. On Saturday Jon Hall and Dominic Haughton flew Hay - Shrewsbury (150 km), and Talgarth - Shrewsbury (175 km) respectively. On Sunday, Jon flew to Edgehill, had lunch, then flew back; Dave d'Arcy meanwhile flew a meandering 190 km in 288 via Telford SW, Shelton, Leominster, Presteigne and Halfway House. Monday's forecast frightened everyone off, but it cleared rather nicely in the afternoon to give the valiant few (John Collins, Denise Hughes, Steve Gunn-Russell and Felicity Sanders) lots of fun on the ridge with a hint of wave thrown in.

**24/25 May** - The start of ten days of predominantly blue weather. The skies over the Mynd were busy, and on these sorts of days, as soon as you turn, you can expect to be joined by lots of friends, and so it was. Jon Hall was once again on his travels, with a trip to Hay and Shelton (150 km). He had wanted to over-fly the Rock-Polishers event at Talgarth, but the gradually lowering inversion (2500 feet QNH) and rising ground made the view a bit too realistic!

**30 May** - Jon Hall completed the Mynd's first 300 km of the year with a declared Nympsfield-Bidford-Oswestry triangle (308 km) at a handicapped 77 kph.

**31 May** - Today was completely overshadowed by the tragic death of Mark Smallwood in a winch launching accident at the Mynd. His memory has been honoured elsewhere; an atmosphere of great shock and sadness has prevailed at the club; our thoughts are with his family and his many friends both at the club and abroad.

**13/14 June** - Did the clouds cry for Mark, well I don't know, but it all went very wet for a couple of weeks, then... the weekend of the year so far (and it has to be said it has been a very good year to date weather-wise, certainly compared to the last two summers, anyway). Some folk were away for Rock-Polishers at Nympsfield and others were manning our stand at the annual Cosford bash, but all the same the field was eerily quiet considering just what a wonderful weekend it was. Those that were there had loads of fun, but it breaks your heart to see gliders on the ground when the weather is that good. So to business..., on Saturday, Mark Sanders struggled round 200 km (Vyrnwy-Craven Arms-Hay); James Fisher popped in a cheeky little Tim's at 93 kph in the club Discus; Dominic ventured just a little too far into Welshest Wales and landed out at Bala (Richard Bennett and Tony Adams went to fetch him); the rest were thermalling locally with the brakes out to try and stay below cloudbase, it was that good! Sunday was possibly even better; Simon Adlard, Keith Laidler and Mark Sanders all flew Talgarth-Great Malvern (185 km) and realised they had under-set; Dave Crowson and Helen flew 494 to Bidford, having spent the previous day in frustration looking at the sky from the ground in Somerset. More rock polishing miles were done this weekend than probably in the last two years put together. So, WHERE WERE YOU?

**16 June** - Had been built up to "day-of-days" status. Simon Adlard (Nimbus), James Fisher (Ventus), Rod Hawley/Clive Crocker (Duo); Julian Fack (Duo) - (a proper Schempp-Hirth benefit, when you think about it) all turned Seighford, but the day fizzled out for them on the way to Talgarth and they cut short and returned home; well all except James who followed the weather for a commendable 245 km trip.

**20/21 June** - Neal Clements'/Rod Hawley's weekend long course saw Ray Staines, John O'Reilly, Spencer de'Friend and John Charlesworth all thundering around blindly in the DG with Neal - I say blindly quite advisedly - they each took it in turns to sit in the shrouded rear seat of the glider to practise their cloud-flying skills. John O. was later able to put those skills to use in some genuine cloud. They all made successful simulated field selection/landing trips with Rod in the motor glider, and then did it for real with Neal with unfamiliar approaches and landings onto Howard's Way. John C successfully converted to the Discus. All in all, an epic weekend for them. If you are at that "nearly cross-country" stage in your flying, make sure you get yourself booked onto the next one! If that wasn't enough, Mark and Jake Knight and Felicity, all had fun learning how to fly!

**27/28 June** - The third round of Rock-polishers was held at Usk and the team, comprising Jim List (novice), Mark Sanders (intermediate) and Paul Shuttleworth (pundit) all finished second in their respective classes to give us a weekend win and to close the gap to 8 points behind leaders Nympsfield - all to play for in the final round at the Mynd in three weeks time. Meanwhile at the Mynd, more instructors were being trained by Paul and Mick for our collective benefit.

**4/12 July** - Competition Enterprise returned to the Mynd, with some very enterprising flying in some fairly windy conditions, including a trip to the Isle of Wight, Justin Wills' 830 km in a day and James Fisher's circumnavigation of Birmingham, which won him the John Cadman trophy. You can read loads more about it elsewhere in this issue.

**18/19 July** - The final round of Rock-Polishers, held at the Mynd. Saturday was 20 knots on the ridge, so everyone had a lot of local fun, but it was deemed a bit too strong for cross-country flying, and so it proved with two visiting pilots landing out despite the fact that no task had been set! If we had any chance of making up the 8 point deficit, that evaporated with a totally wet and unflyable Sunday, (and Nympsfield with Andy Davis and his JS1 on hand if the weather had cleared up!). So we finished very creditable runners-up in this year's championship, and we wish Nympsfield luck in the finals (as yet no date and no venue - when will the BGA take this competition more (or even just slightly) seriously?).

A quick reminder to you all to go to [www.MGCRota.com](http://www.MGCRota.com) to see what events and training courses are on at the Mynd in the coming weeks - having looked at the site, you can make bookings for two-seater bookings via the office on the usual number, 01588 650206 - the feedback from the ever-growing number that have used it is that it all works rather well!

Truckloads of new members this time round - Jason Hutton, Peter Saunders, Rob Shepherd, Ainsley, Benedict and Felicity Smith, Derek Bailey, John Lancaster, Felicity Sanders, Mark and Jake Knight, William and Lawrence Cuss, Jan Booth, Dennis Christie; Helen Eckert and Philip Bidy (social members); Roger Reeves (a tug pilot to boot!), John Collins (well, I say new, but John was a founder member of the 288 syndicate at the Mynd, so he has "form"!), John Blackhurst (another former member and Mynd regular until he moved to Canada). Finally, four new junior members: Tom Hedgecock, Martin Jones, Michael Baker and Aurelie Verriest. Bienvenue, one and all!

## Secretarial Stuff

*Clive Crocker*

Since the AGM the club committee is now as follows:

Jon Hall	Chairman, website, publications.
Chris Ellis	Deputy Chairman, marketing and promotion.
Peter Clare	Treasurer.
Clive Crocker	Secretary.
Mike Witton	Buildings.
Steve Gunn-Russell	Airfield and grounds.
Keith Mansell	Funding and grants.
Richard Bennett	Weekday courses.
Clive Jones	Winches, club vehicles and trailers.
Dominic Haughton	Membership.

If a club member has an issue with some aspect of the club then please approach the relevant committee member. If you cannot find them or it is not clear who is responsible then please talk to Jon Hall or any other committee member.

*Editor's Note: Sadly Mike Witton has resigned from the committee due to pressure of time. We thank him for all the work he has done; probably everyone knows about the far-sighted plans for the workshops, but it is easy to forget the constant stream of buildings jobs that nobody notices if they are done, but everybody notices if they are not.*

## Competition Enterprise

*James Fisher*

I have been asked to write an account of this year's Competition Enterprise held at the Mynd in early July. Fear not I'm not going to give you a blow by blow account, I'll leave this to someone with better literary skills, but more a reflection of my experiences of competing in the competition.

For those of you who don't know about 'Enterprise' it is a relatively informal non BGA rated competition set up by the late Philip Wills in 1974.

Philip sensed that competition flying was becoming too mechanical and rule-bound and wanted to reintroduce the freedom of cross-country gliding as experienced by the early pioneers and also to make it possible for a variety of different performance gliders to fly against each other. This year's 35<sup>th</sup> competition was no exception.

There were 32 competitors this year including many Mynd members. As seems to be traditional, former British team member and son of founder Philip Wills, Justin was in attendance with his state of the art 'Antares' sailplane.

Justin was to set the standard and show us all what was possible. Each day started at 10:00 am in the quiet room where weather and task details were presented but most people were up much earlier than this readying their ships for the day ahead. On the first day there was a real feeling of excited expectation for the week ahead and looking around the airfield it was impressive to see the army of aircraft emerging from their trailers.

I didn't do too well on day one as it was already raining by the time I got launched but consoled myself in the knowledge that day two (Sunday) was looking better.

Weather for Sunday was basically a post frontal gap with another front due into the Mynd area in the late afternoon. The task as it was Sunday was 'visit the relatives' so you had to get to as many of our fellow gliding clubs as possible. I was able to get in the launch queue early and towed off into a reasonable looking sky. The good thing about Enterprise tasking is that it gives the pilot more freedom and flexibility to make the best of the weather and this suited my style of flying well. I followed a good cloud street to Shobdon flying neck and neck with Phil King's LS-8. I always love running along streets with another glider, it's a fabulous sight to see the other pilot glancing back at you as you thrash along at 100 knots wingtip to wingtip and then watch them shoot up towards the cloud base as they run into the strong lift before the battle is reversed and you dolphin up to cloud base as they fall into the sinking air. After Shobdon I parted company with the LS-8 then turned towards Worcester. I was able to stay with the window of good air as it drifted slowly eastwards. Arriving at Bidford around circuit height a climb was badly needed, eventually I found one and the weak thermal gradually strengthened enabling more progress to Edgehill near Banbury. The south-west wind was really helping my progress but I was worrying about the inevitable into wind leg to come. Conditions looked poor towards Oxford and Bicester so I drifted off towards Hus-Bos where there was a lovely area of streeting from Daventry running well east into the Fens. It did cross my mind to just keep going into Lincolnshire under that amazing looking sky but I was running out of map and anyhow I had other ideas.

Now the hard part; having turned Hus-Bos I had to fly up the gap between Birmingham and East Midlands controlled airspace. The south-west wind was making this more difficult by drifting me towards the East Midlands zone each time I stopped to circle. Eventually after a few lowish scrapes including a close look at Twycross Zoo (I wonder how much damage a troop of baboons could do to a Venus?) I emerged from the restrictions of the corridor.

Pressing on I reached Cross-Hayes near Burton and was rewarded with a good climb back to cloud base as I was now clear of the airspace. It was now deep into the afternoon and I was worried about the forecast deterioration in the weather but the sky ahead still looked soarable so I pressed on towards Staffordshire gliding club at Seighford using the time in the glide to eat a cereal bar and consider my options. Arriving at Seighford low I was half expecting to land but luck prevailed and a smooth thermal had me back in the game and flying west to Telford. Now the sky was starting to change quickly with a lot of medium and upper level cloud blocking the sun's energy from reaching the ground, I was fighting

into wind under a weakening sky and to add a further problem there was a double celled shower tracking towards me on the south-west wind from Cosford direction. Dilemma - should I stop and climb in the weak lift to try and reach final glide height or press on west to get upwind of the showers? Having got so far I stuck my neck out and pushed onto Wenlock Edge where I was rewarded with a steady but weak climb to final glide height at 4000 feet.

As I rolled the wings level for home the showers had merged into one giant iron curtain and it was now impossible to even see the massive metallic cold war hangar at the RAF Cosford museum. After a bit of buttock clenching for the last five miles and a few harsh words with myself to stop paddling the rudder pedals I joined straight onto base leg landed and rolled to a halt abeam the trailers under a dead looking sky. Flight time 5:12 distance 326 km but more importantly a fabulous and interesting flight all the way round Birmingham that I had wanted to fly for some time.

Then followed a couple of days of non contest courtesy of the weather but I did have a memorable ridge-running flight with Mike Rogers late in the afternoon after the rain had cleared. The light was that perfect post frontal light with deep colours and stretched shadows, the colour of the heather was enriched after the recent rain it was an amazing sight as we steered the DG along at low level in the smooth ridge lift. When we eventually climbed away from the ridge to start our circuit the spectacular views across Wales and over to the Cotswolds were captivating and I don't think I've ever seen the Mynd looking finer. We closed the hangar doors after 8 o'clock.

On Thursday the task was basically to see how far you could go south-east using a variety of waypoints including Ludlow, Gloucester, Aston-Down, Lasham and incredibly Bembridge on the Isle of Wight and then to try and get back into a fairly stiff north-westerly. The weather was forecast as a layer of stratocumulus burning through as the day went on to give reasonable thermals. I set off with some trepidation and worked my way towards the Cotswolds. Passing Aston Down conditions improved and I was able to reach Lasham flying my Ventus '391' back to her old home airfield before struggling back into the 15 knot headwind. Perhaps the most memorable parts of the flight was taking in the of view the whole of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth harbour and the Solent before chickening out and heading for home. Another memory I have is flying north over the Chilterns edge near the Vale of White Horse and getting a bit low. As I struggled to make my glider climb in the weak conditions the sun burned through lighting the 3000 year old Uffington White Horse monument spectacularly and inspiring me to press onto Aston Down where I eventually landed after covering 300 km.

There were other days of note that I will remember for different reasons, on the Wednesday I found myself in central Wales in the evening on a tiny ridge in a rough looking valley at approximately 200 feet above the ridge top and having promised to take my fiancé out for dinner in Ludlow that evening. Almost resigned to landing out I had the wheel down and a field picked, incredibly I was able to witness the birth of a thermal breaking away from the sun facing slope and eventually worked the lift up to a height where I could connect with the good lift higher aloft and get home.

On Friday the last day of the competition I was treated to a picturesque view of the stratified rock formation near Llangollen then an even more spectacular view of the Red Arrows as they flew past me on their way to fly a display in North Wales.

Other pilots will no doubt have there own stories to share but the thing that impressed me about Enterprise was the have a go attitude that prevailed, I imagine this was exactly what Philip Wills had in mind at its inception and must have been the mindset of those early pioneers flying off downwind from the Mynd 75 years ago.

During the week I had flown over beautiful varying and sometimes daunting country and seen some of the best parts of England and Wales from the air having achieved two 300 km flights on days when I probably would not have bothered to rig my glider. I also picked up a bit of silverware for most enterprising flight and drank lots of beer too in great company, thanks to all who made it possible.

For those of you who are wondering what was possible, on the day I flew around Birmingham, Justin Wills flew over 600 km and landed at Sutton Bank in Yorkshire late in the evening. On the last day of the comp when I managed around 200 km the Antares landed at Gransden Lodge near Cambridge

having flown over 800 km!

## Rockpolishers Inter Club League 2009

*David d'Arcy*

As of mid-June the story after two events, Talgarth and Nympsfield, was that we were currently standing third behind Nympsfield and Usk, yes Usk! Not a good situation really, so we needed to pull our fingers out and get cracking and at the same time nobble Nympsfield if we were going to win this year as they were a good 10 points ahead of us. Of course that was assuming we could get ahead of Usk, currently second and 3 points ahead of MGC, who after a number of years of planning for future Rockpolisher pilots by attending with their K21, similar to what we now do with our 505, had turned in some good results. So the standing after Talgarth and Nympsfield was:

Club	Class	Talgarth Weekend			Nympsfield Weekend			Total Points	Overall Position
		Points	Total	Position	Points	Total	Position		
Aston Down	Pundit	6			2			13	5th
	Intermediate	3	9	= 3rd		4	6th		
	Novice				2				
Long Mynd	Pundit	2			4			21	3rd
	Intermediate	2	9	= 3rd	2	12	3rd		
	Novice	5			6				
Nympsfield	Pundit	4			6			31	1st
	Intermediate	6	16	1st	5	15	1st		
	Novice	6			4				
Shobdon	Pundit							6	6th
	Intermediate		0	6th	3	6	5th		
	Novice				3				
Talgarth	Pundit	3			5			17	4th
	Intermediate	4	8	5th	4	9	4th		
	Novice	1							
Usk	Pundit	5			3			24	2nd
	Intermediate	5	10	2nd	6	14	2nd		
	Novice				5				

We had fine weather for Talgarth but unfortunately not good enough to task on the Saturday so pilots soared the Black Mountains instead and then attended the BBQ 'bathed in sunshine' as usual. Sunday looked a much better day and tasks were set to the north around Shobdon, although I don't think anyone landed there. However, the cumulus window was quite short and the afternoon soon turned blue and stable. Those pilots who did manage to struggle off did just that - struggle! Miraculously the Aston Down pundit completed having spent much of the flight between 800 and 1500 feet, and our Dave Jones (novice) got all the way to Ludlow (half way round) before finally falling down due to lack of thermal over the town, a great effort but sadly the Nympsfield novice edged on just that bit further in his turbo.

Nympsfield turned out to be a great comping weekend, if only they could all be. Andy Davis gave a bit of a talk at the Saturday briefing about his take on the day which was most interesting, and as it turned out fairly accurate apart from the sea breeze making it all the way to Worcester when it was predicted to only go to a little past Cheltenham at the most! This meant that the GRM (Great Malvern) turn point was across a large blue gap for Intermediates and Pundits who were a bit late setting off due in part to a slow launch queue. However most made it home with smiley happy faces, that is apart from our boy Foster (Intermediate) who had a land out, err sorry I meant carry out! If my retrieve could be any worse than the three journeys it took to fetch Dave Jones at Talgarth, it certainly tried. Having got a TomTom and GPS co-ordinates what could be simpler, only the TomTom said somewhere in Wiltshire! Okay okay, he's on the B4070 I (driver) said for the umpteenth time. By this time the TomTom was on navigate to 'place' mode and everyone bar me was happy. Thirty minutes later (bear in mind Steve was

only 20 minutes away) we worked out our place ('Slade' which should have been 'Slad') was somewhere in south Wales and we were back in Stroud. Finally we got on the B4070, met up with Steve and got his glider safely back in its trailer - there are pictures BTW. To top it all we couldn't even find an open fish and chippy, so had to settle for Doner kebabs and a couple of young ladies who turned out to be Mormon missionaries - my mistake but hey they were girls... Sunday's briefing saw no Talgarth as most of them had gone on to the Bidford Regionals (I think) and not in a huff over the Saturday launch queue debacle, as it was suggested by Usk. Anyway, there was a happy PC in Alex who picked up a bottle of wine for only his third cross country and second flight on type and then told everyone how he did it (unaccustomed as he was). Our intermediate sat still, but Jon was getting nervous at the thought of another speech - however, BGGC hadn't even read his logger file! Boo! He got third in the end.

The weather for Sunday was predicted to be even better, so not unexpectedly Sunday's tasks to the NE were bigger, 360, 250 and 200 km as opposed to Saturday's 250, 200 and 150 km. And thanks to Usk there was going to be the use of their tug for a short time during the pre-lunch period, since Nympsfield had managed to put out of action 3 of 4 tugs in the last 5 weeks. Thanks also go to Andrew Sherrington and Nigel Lassiter who gave some much needed help and organisation to the 30 or so gliders awaiting their day of days at the Nympsfield launch point. First home for MGC was the Standard Cirrus (!) in what I can only describe as a 'safe' finish - everyone else was having some fun racing in but Steve went through at 60 knots and 800 feet. When challenged apparently the Cirrus doesn't like it over 60... Anyway, Steve was well pleased with himself. Jon wasn't much later having had the odd struggle here and there. "I should have gone faster!" (Comments we all make I think.) Then there was quite a wait for 18 and KAW. In the meantime I had heard of a mid-air near Abingdon, which was on track for the novice task. My nerves were not happy! Thankfully, 18 turned up as did KAW so we could return to our ice-creams, tea and cake and watching yet more home gliders finishing! On what did look like a fantastic gliding day, even if local soaring off the wire was a little tricky due to the sea air, so thank goodness for the aerotow option. So we packed up and waited, and waited some more. In the meantime Steve had some bad news to break to his captain - his logger had failed! "WHAT?! ... You... complete..." To say the least, I was disappointed as was Steve. Had it all been rosy, Steve could well have got second on Sunday, but we can all dream can't we! And we still waited, but it wasn't going to happen even though Jon had downloaded his trace for Nympsfield to score with in a vain effort to help. So we all packed off home a little deflated after a great cross country weekend and inter-club competition.

The scores finally came through a week later, and showed Nympsfield with a clean sweep again! Not surprising really as I should think any one of the 25 single seaters (including Iain and Rose) could have played at Pundit or Intermediate for them. However, the professional scoring system used by Nympsfield gave some odd day scores due to the small field of gliders and so a little email action by your captain prompted BGGC to produce a second set of results that gave a much better distribution of points and the weekend win to Alex as I justly thought it should have - congratulations Alex. Interestingly, Shobdon turned up with a K6 and flew Intermediate on the Saturday and Novice on the Sunday and walked away with fourth in both classes!

Two weekends later we were all back for Usk (27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> June) and another promising day, however the met briefing suggested otherwise with little to no thermals by mid afternoon. Moderate tasks of 130, 114 and 88 km were set in the area to the north of the club and launching soon ensued. The buoyant conditions settled down and even became a little tricky with a turbo having to fire up in the start zone and 288 having a re-light, however, they all seemed to get away. Pundits were soon home with the aid of a sea breeze convergence running from Hay (their last TP) round to Usk giving 802 (Nymps pundit) a spectacular finish! However, the local rules handed out at briefing said no finishes under 500 feet! Pilot Rob wasn't to know this as 802 was aero-towed to Usk (by a now working Nymps tug) and so finished last instead of a possible first (haha). However, he would have been hard pushed to beat the Talgarth pundit in his Dart who completed and won the day with 96 kph! Although a scoring boo boo meant Paul Shuttleworth had to stand up and tell everyone how he did it the next morning! Somewhat surprised. Mark Sanders and 288 also made it home although he had no convergence to use as he was

coming from a difference direction. Jim List had a good flight and almost made it home landing out just 3 km short on higher ground towards Monmouth. On the retrieve I got a distinct feeling one of us was in for a 'shotgun wedding' with a local's daughter, so it was all hands to the pumps and no time for cake and spinning tires and relief as we set off in completely the wrong direction once done!

The weather for Sunday was again difficult to call as a warm front was forecast and pre-frontal top cover was killing off any heating. Tasks were set and then re-briefed on the grid at 12:30 and then scrubbed at 13:30 due to lack of thermal activity. All the same, Andy Davis took an aerotow in his new JS1 a little later and had a staggeringly patient first thermal of 20-30 minutes before leaving, which opened the flood gates for the majority of the rest of the grid who then decided to have a go. I think all had soaring flights. Julian went to Leominster and back in JF and we think Andy Davis did the task, which was Usk-LEO-SHO-Usk.. Pilots said soaring was okay although climbs were weak and to their surprise Julian and Andy both encountered a clear sea breeze front on their way home. So it was a solid second in all three classes after a little scoring argy-bargy spotted by Mark and on to the final round at the Mynd.

Mynd Rockpolishers weekend 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> July: having not the luxury of being a Number One or the like it was with some trepidation that I attempted to direct the ICL weekend. Thankfully, Dave Crowson was able to provide met and tasking support. Again we were faced with a tricky day to set with the prospect of little to no thermal and a 20 knot westerly. In hindsight we should have set an assigned area task or a task with multiple turn points but at the time this didn't come to us so we thought we would scrub early giving pilots the chance to enjoy the local soaring conditions. As it was we had two visiting pilots landout even doing this! However, all those who flew (74 launches on the day) had a good time with MGC supper too. So it was on to the Sunday and again we were let down by the weather, where we woke to low cloud and drizzle. At briefing wine was awarded to the two Aston Down pilots for landing out, but really should have gone to their captain who retrieved both! Nympsfield were crowned 2009 Rockpolishers champions, although sadly the Rock trophy is still missing, and a rather nice Novice trophy was awarded to Martin Talbot from Nympsfield, who narrowly nosed ahead of our own Alex Rowlands.

Can I just say a big thank you to all those who took part in Rockpolishers this year. We'll win the Rock back next year!

Club	Class	Usk Weekend			Mynd Weekend			Total Points	Overall Position
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Aston Down	Pundit	4						17	5th
	Intermediate	0	4	5th					
	Novice	0							
Long Mynd	Pundit	5						36	2nd
	Intermediate	5	15	1st					
	Novice	5							
Nympsfield	Pundit	3						44	1st
	Intermediate	4	13	2nd					
	Novice	6							
Shobdon	Pundit	0						6	6th
	Intermediate	0	0	6th					
	Novice	0							
Talgarth	Pundit	6						25	4th
	Intermediate	2	8	4th					
	Novice	0							
Usk	Pundit	2						33	3rd
	Intermediate	6	9	3rd					
	Novice	1							