

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Rockpolishers Third Round: Long Mynd Winning!

We are still waiting for the official results from Round 3 which was held at Nymphsfield again, as Usk have now withdrawn from the league. However, I believe that we have at least maintained our lead, and probably even extended it.

Scores from Round 2 at the Long Mynd are on page 9.

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Chairman's Contribution

Julian Fack

The Discus syndicate has been re-formed with a new set of members, and I am delighted that Andy Holmes has managed to pull together a new (larger) team to enjoy it. I am particularly pleased that this system, originally proposed merely to enable the Discus to be retained as a club aircraft, has attracted younger pilots.

The world of gliding, in common with many other sports and activities, has assumed something of a 'grey haired' image, yet the successes of the Junior Nationals and the British Junior Team have become so well publicised that we are in danger of reversing the trend in this country. I believe the Discus syndicate is doing some of the same for the MGC, and it seems have become a breeding ground for youthful success, which I hope we can all admire.

One of the reasons we proposed the Discus set up was to provide a 'syndicate' environment for those who either were not sure or else were unable to commit the necessary funds to a real syndicate glider. In every other way the experience is the same as a normal syndicate. Of course it is also available for all suitably qualified members to fly but the syndicate have first call on its time. I have donated a GPS to it, which is connected to the Cambridge Lnav and the club have provided a new EW model D logger, so it is fully competition equipped. If you have not yet experienced the combination of the Lnav and a GPS, or are considering purchasing one for your own syndicate, why not try it for yourself. I believe it is the easiest to use and most confidence giving flight computer on the market.

Although the cross country soaring season, as I write towards the end of June, has been disappointing so far, members have still managed some outstanding flights from the Mynd. David Rance seems to be well in tune with his new Ventus 2cM, and is flying very long distances at every opportunity, but he is far from alone. Rose Johnson managed to leave the site at 10:00 am on a 750 km attempt recently. She failed having 'only' managed 440 km in the relatively low performance DG101, on a day with just a 4000 foot QNH cloudbase! These are just two examples of the good things that our members are doing, all of which bodes well for the future.

By the time you read this Nick Heriz-Smith, Richard Hinley, Paul Garnham and I will be competing with the Duo in Euroglide 2002. This is a 'rally' style race, 2300 km around Europe in gliders. Two pilots will be in the air and two on the ground following on with the motorhome and trailer. A combination of glider radio, mobile phones and GPS should allow us to meet up every evening. What is really exciting about this type of flying is that, far from knowing where you will land, you do not even know which country you will land in.

Paul keeps a detailed diary so he will no doubt be able to enlighten you on the more interesting aspects of our adventure in a future MGC News.

If you wish to contact me on any subject please email me at j.fack@virgin.net or ring or text my mobile on 07812 108 588, but I will be away until the 8th July.

Task Week 2002

John Parry

Task Week is fast approaching, starting on Saturday 17th August and finishing on Monday 26th August. We were not able to hold Task Week last year due to the foot and mouth, so it is possible that there may be cross-country pilots who have never seen how it works. We try to achieve a well organised competition with organisation similar to Rockpolishers or even a Regionals, but rather more relaxed.

Depending on demand we could run more than one class, split according to glider type or pilot experience – please let me know what you would like to see. My email is john.parry@virgin.net

CFI's Bits

Neal Clements

We are in the wonderful position of having new members after such a lull. There are however dangers associated with this situation. Recently a new member, while being forward signaller, stopped waving and held his hand up. Of course the whole launch stopped but when asked why he was calling stop he said that he didn't know he was, his hand was tired. Of course the most disturbing part of that story is that he didn't know what stop was.

We take ground skills for granted but there are many of them, from unpacking the hangar and doing the daily inspection to running the retrieve winch, walking with a glider, launching aerotow, winch, bungee the list is endless. We don't yet have a ground skills card or endorsement on a card so until we do can I ask you to attach yourselves to new members and teach them the rules and the reasoning behind them. In addition don't be afraid to rope people into helping rig and de rig but make it interesting by pointing out how the glider is put together and the things to watch.

I will raise the issue of a ground syllabus at the next instructor meeting but please don't hesitate to email me your suggestions in the meantime.

My email address is n.clements@talis.com

Wakem is Rambling Again

Mark Wakem

John Hickling's passing prompted me to write on a theory which has been going round in my head, off and on for many years. Knowing my interest in the historic aspects of gliding, he was always a fascinating source of information on the history of the MGC and gliding in the UK. When I bought the Sky he particularly mentioned that I had made a better choice than my first which was a Kite 2A, a glider which in its early days had developed a reputation for dodgy slow-speed handling. This was subsequently sorted by increased washout on all the production run, but the damage was done and it never sold well.

It is my regret that I never got round to offering John a flight in my Sky, because it would have been the 'hot ship' of the day when he was CFI in the early 50s. I would imagine that as CFI of a major club he could have flown one, but remember the number of private owner hot ships around were much lower than today, even as a proportion of the total glider fleet, so the opportunities to 'Harris' a flight were much much lower.

My theme is that, like a chick becoming fixed on its mother as it comes out of the egg, the new glider pilot always remembers the first hot ship they see when they arrive on the gliding field. It is so beautiful, it blows you away, and over the months that follow as you toil on basic training you see the Gods flying it. You hope that one day, you too may fly one. But what actually happens is that by the time you think of private ownership the ship of your dreams is now a bit passé, and with a little stretch in your finances you could go for yesterday's whizzo as opposed to the day before yesterday's. And you may never fly or own that dream ship unless you come to Vintage gliding later.

In my case, as a (very, I hasten to say) young lad, when I started training at North Weald I was blown away by the beauty and grace of the last generation of wood. To be sure, the Libelle and Cirrus were there in numbers, but the Dart and SHK were not much worse in performance; and the Club Pundit of the day, Alan Vincent, had just done a 500 km in a Ka6e, I think.

So my goals were those, Dart 17R, SHK and Ka6e, and I have yet to score any of them. But I live in hope, and I have stepped back a couple of generations in owning the dream ship of 1951 instead! But why don't you write about your first dream glider?

288 Does It Again for Rockpolishers

Tony Danbury

Somewhat against my better judgement I allowed Dominic to 'volunteer' me for Intermediate Class of the MGC hosted Rockpolishers. Dave d'Arcy had shown that 288 could do it at Nympsfield so I had to have a go.

I hadn't done a cross-country flight of any distance since August 2000 so was more than a little apprehensive. Fortunately I got some practice the day before with a slow 300 km to Newport Pagnell and back.

Weatherjack predicted a blue day with a low ceiling. It was just that with some thin clouds and a 10 - 15 knot SSE breeze. UGH!

Mike Dodd (CFI of Shobdon) seemed to having a good flight in his Ka6 when he was called down for a re-brief of a shortened task. The Intermediates (5) were set MYN-TEL-GTW-MYN (Telford-Great Witley) - 120 km.

Many of the club winch flights appeared to be rather brief so I elected to spend my pension on an aerotow. Just before launching my dear crew (David d'Arcy) suggested I switch on my logger.

Dave Rance warned that the tow would be rough and he was very right. Having dropped of at 2000 feet I found a little weak lift just north of the club and declared a 'start from tow' but was then asked if I had been off tow behind the start line! As I wasn't sure I returned to the club and restarted at about 800 feet. Should I return for a re-light? Then I saw an LS8 circling just to the east (smell of cigars?) so joined that thermal. The LS8 moved down track and I followed to the next thermal then he went home!

In the distance towards Telford I saw the white wings of a glider against the brown smudge of the inversion so there must be some lift over there.

Half way to TEL I was down to 1250 feet (QFE Mynd) but got 2 knots to 1000 feet higher. Although the straight line to TEL was to the west of the Wrekin I elected to keep to the east hoping for a thermal. As I got close to the Wrekin at 800 feet (QFE Mynd) I could see a glider in a silage field to the west of the power station (Jon Hall) and a Ka6 circling low nearby (Mike Dodd). Things were looking 'unpromising'.

The Wrekin worked so I drifted with the wind to the TP and then came back to Wrekin where I got another thermal to 2500 feet (1.9Kts) so proceeded down the next leg over the power station, which gave absolutely nothing.

I could see a couple of large silage fields about 10 nm away near Bridgnorth but when I got there the town threw off a thermal to get me back to about 2,500 feet. Again, I could see another silage field about 10 nm further on just north of the wooded area. I used a few short thermals but, with the wind of about 12 - 15 knots on the nose, I had to leave any thermal less than 2 knots or lose out.

I could not see any inviting landable areas south of the woods so was examining the silage field closely but, probably set off by the woods/fields interface, another decent thermal ran into me. This one averaged 2.6 knots and got me back to 2100 feet so I moved on over the woods. Bewdley gave me another 800 foot climb and then, much to my surprise, I saw from the GPS that there was only 4.50 nm to TP2. Hey that'll surprise them back of the club if I manage TWO TPs! Due to height and the terrain I didn't actually see the TP until nearly on it. However, having got round it height was just 450 feet and the way home uninviting.

As the route was now downwind I just took any and every thermal, however weak, and drifted towards the Clees. Big mistake! Dominic asked me the next day why I came over the Clees as there are no good fields. Now I know and would certainly not come that way again.

I drifted on, hoping that the hills may throw something useful off or I might find a good field and, just as I was passing between the peaks, prayers were answered. At 900 feet and still 15 miles to go I bumped into a beauty. The average was only 1.7 knots but it took me up nearly 1900 feet. (For the

third time that day I lost a thermal but, on reversing direction of turn, got it again).

During the climb I had drifted closer and closer to home and at 2800 feet was within 14 miles AND I had about 12 knots of tail wind. NOW I believe in miracles.

Five miles out I called "5 minute, marginal" and the tone of the response was of disbelief! Flying at 'min sink' the vario just wagged between zero and one down so by the time "one minute" came I had a good margin to get home.

I understood Dominic's delight that I had got back when he told me that two of the Intermediates had returned to the field and the other two had landed out, putting a question mark on his task setting.

However, to put this flight into context, two Pundits completed a larger task and the most superb flight of the day was by Glyn McArthur in DZM to Camp Hill, to collect the Plate, and back as far a Stoke-on-Trent - Fantastic!

Ridge Rules - OK

Chris Ellis

The ridge was quite busy a couple of Saturdays ago. All the club aircraft and several private gliders were airborne at the same time for most of the day. It was not a strong day so ridge lift was limited to about 700 feet but the odd scrappy thermal worked up to 1,200 feet agl. There was complete high cloud cover which cut down the level of light making it difficult to see white gliders against a white sky. What became apparent was that there were one or two pilots who were either unaware of the ridge rules or who found them inconvenient. Now might be a good time to reiterate them.

The rules of the air are based on the rules of the sea, not British roads. When meeting another ship bow to bow both shall manoeuvre so that each has the other on its port (left) side. In such a situation the Captain would stroll (or on some of the modern cruise liners ride his bicycle) out to the port side wing of the bridge to make sure there was sufficient separation. This is why the Captain, P1 or PIC always sits in the left hand seat of a multicrew aircraft. The same law applies to our ridge.

The rules are:

- The dividing line is the road at the bottom of the hill. If you are flying south you must be to the west of it. If travelling north you must be to the east, over the top of the ridge. In both instances the road will be on your port (left) side.
- All turns must be away from the hill.
- Overtaking must be between the aircraft being overtaken and the ridge so that if that glider turns away from the hill you are not in the way.
- It is permissible to thermal away provided that this is not too low down. There is no specific definition of too low but good airmanship would dictate that you do not obstruct others or take unnecessary risks. If you wish to make use of a patch of strong lift it is better to fly a series of 'S' turns until you are high enough to circle safely.
- Do not fly slowly low down. You are flying through rising and turbulent air, there is, therefore, an increased risk of stalling. A famous test pilot once remarked that he had lost more colleagues through flying too slowly than through flying too fast.
- KEEP A REALLY GOOD LOOKOUT. The closing speed of two gliders on the ridge is over 100 knots. They just appear from nowhere! Always assume that the other pilot has not seen you.
- When about to land, fly far enough out to the west to give yourself a good view of traffic on the ridge. When you can see that you can cross the ridge safely make your 'down wind' radio call and commence your circuit. Be particularly aware of hang gliders. If you are not sure what to do if the ridge 'goes soft' and you end up a little low ask an instructor to explain the circuit procedures.

Please help to make the Mynd ridge fun not a fright.

From the Flying Field

Ann Parry

I haven't done my homework for the past two months for this section. On reflection I would be glad to hear from any club member who would like to take over *From the Flying Field*. It attempts to be a record of achievements and flying from the club over the previous two months. Does anyone out there read this bit? Have you ever thought, "I could do it better? Why didn't she mention such-and-such or so-and-so?" If so, please contact me.

I use the daily summary file to check what has been happening, as well as noticing things myself. Over the years I have much enjoyed John Stuart's comments during the week in the daily summary file. For new members, the daily summary file is one of the blue folders found in the dining room. It is the record of the day's flying, and has sections for badge achievements and cross-countries. Usually the No 1 instructor makes a comment about the day. Cross-country flights are also recorded on the large sheet of paper hanging on the dining room wall by the door to the hangar. Here you can see who has been flying what to where and back or not. This is what is used as the basis for awarding the annual trophies. Gains of height are also recorded here. For budding cross country pilots, did you know there is a trophy awarded for the best Silver distance?

There have been quite a few achievements, so I'll try to note them for the next newsletter. Or how about trying your hand at it? On the good days the usual crowd of pilots who are able to arrange their lives to take advantage of the soaring weather (one told me it's all about delegation...) have been doing so. This led to David Rance's flight to East Anglia and back on 19th June. This was subsequently reported in the local press as being the longest flight from the Mynd (614 km). However sources since then have pointed out that Simon Adlard has done a slightly longer flight in the past. He flew from the Mynd but ended at some other club, and he didn't come back here for a week or so afterwards, so somehow the flight did not enter Mynd folklore or records. Among the cross countries on 19th June Ian McArthur flew a 300 km to Newport Pagnell and back, which seems to be the current favourite 300 km flight, taking advantage of good conditions in the middle of the country. However Ian can't claim it for Gold distance as sadly he missed the turning point by about a wingspan. So he tried it again last week, very nearly getting back to the Mynd.

On the **Rockpolishers** front, we are waiting for the results from the 22nd and 23rd June at Nympsfield, but the rumour is that we are still in the lead, maybe even having added to it. Saturday was scrubbed, but Sunday was a competition day, with John Roberts winning Novice, Andy Holmes joint first for Intermediates, and Chris Alldis flying Pundit. The last weekend is at Aston Down at the beginning of August. If we carry on well, we may have to think about attending the finals again.

Our Holiday at the Long Mynd

Margaret and Alan Childs

When our CFI, Dick Skerry, suggested a Lincolnshire Gliding Club outing to the Mynd Alan and I signed up immediately, having been made welcome on a casual day visit three years previously whilst camping near Offa's Dyke. Being retired we decided to extend our stay to two weeks as our annual holiday. Hitching up our K6cr behind our old Bedford camper van, we set off a week ahead of the others. Unfortunately our wooden trailer failed to withstand the rigours of the journey, the stabilising strut worked loose and Alan was faced with the 'white knuckle' drive up from Church Stretton in an untried, elderly van with a trailer which pitched up and down. Imagine our relief when we eventually saw the gliding site, only to be told there was an easier way up via Ratlinghope. Having been advised to avoid the camp site due to gale force winds and lashing rain we made our 'home' on the car park and there we stayed.

This was our first experience of gliding at a hill site, having reached solo and then Bronze at Strubby airfield, on flat reclaimed marshland four miles from the east coast. We had both progressed to cross country attempts but these are difficult from so close to the sea and had all ended in field landings well short of 50 km. The superior soaring conditions at the Mynd offered a real challenge as we eagerly got checked out from the short west runway next morning. Strong, gusty winds and rain delayed our first solo attempt in our K6 but we put our names down for a bungee launch and witnessed its hazards when the wind dropped a bit and the K21 trundled down the hill, just missing the fence twice! Perhaps we'll get a go next time. Helping as ground crew with the mid-week course we made friends and learned a lot, listening in to John Stuart, Dave Crowson and later Martin Moss.

While Alan started repairs on our trailer I took my first launch in the K6 into the ridge, having been briefed thoroughly about what was to me an extremely fast and high circuit and landing. I made that landing after 5 hours 14 minutes, tired, stiff and bursting to pee. (*It was only going to be an 'Orientation Flight', Alan*). After getting used to flying the ridge and some conservative thermalling over the valley I had realised I'd never get a better chance to do my Silver duration. By then it was too late for Alan to have a go and we didn't get a ridge day after that.

Alan got dragged away from his repairs to drive the retrieve winch as he'd done it on our previous visit, (we both have to drive the winch at our own club) and Alan hopes to take up Peter's invitation to see the operation from the main winch end sometime. He did get some flying from both north and south runways. While he was up next day I went for a leisurely shower and managed to get myself locked in. After much hopeful banging on the wall Martin heard me from the office and fetched Colin to get me out. If he'd known I was fully dressed by this time he might not have been so keen to help! Oh dear! I thought, they'll remember the visitors from Strubby.

At the weekend I learned to identify a lot of glass gliders whilst trying to keep the log. As a stranger from an all wood club, I rushed round frantically asking names and gliders with launches every three minutes. But on the Sunday I again struck lucky. It was my turn to fly so I declared a Silver distance, my first effort downwind (downwind at Strubby on a thermal day is usually into the North Sea). After two hours and unable to keep on track as the wind veered I ended up in a field near Abergavenny. It was a good landing but the farmer left me to stew for two hours by saying he was going to let his cows into that field after milking. Alan had no chance of reaching me in time. I don't think he would have done it and when his wife and children came home they sat in the glider for photographs and we were treated to tea and cake. The cows went into another field and the whole family 'helped' us de-rig. I thought I'd blown it but next day I learned that I'd done enough to complete my Silver. Thanks Mynd.

Saturday nights were an eye opener. Having been invited to the meal on the first Saturday we duly stood on the bench and introduced ourselves which wasn't a problem as those sitting near us, had already befriended us and made us feel part of the club. We drew the line at repeating it the following week though, after the AGM, and Alan referred Denise to the 'minutes' of the previous week. By our

presence on the third Saturday too you will appreciate how much we enjoyed ourselves. What a nice tradition, keep it up.

The second week of our holiday involved days engulfed in cloud and the rest of our club came and went without much flying. Alan tried but never got the right conditions for his Silver but we both thoroughly enjoyed our visit. We shall plan to come again another year if you can put up with us. We want to try bungee launching and wave flying! Thanks to those not mentioned by name who made us so welcome and to you all for being such a happy, friendly club.

Wind and Rain

Chris Ellis

It has long been a standing joke that whenever I am duty Number One instructor it will rain. Saturday May 25th was no exception. The forecast was for frequent showers with the wind 240/25 knots. The actual wind direction was nearer 270 and the speed varied between 25 and 35 knots. Whilst we were waiting for the first clearance we set the field up for a short west launch. The first intrepid pair launched at around 10.45 and as they did so the wind promptly backed to south west. This combined with a degree of turbulence resulted in a swift return to earth as the next shower started. During the ensuing rain interval we moved the winch to the knoll to launch to the SW.

As the day progressed the wind settled to a pretty constant speed of around 20 knots but gradually moved more and more south until by the end of flying when I am sure there was a touch of east in it. During the afternoon thermal strength increased to over 6 knots with lots of them and close together. Staying up was easy, just like a ridge day.

The interesting point I want to make is that a lot of members behaved as though it WAS a ridge day. Pilots were flying up and down the ridge, obeying all the ridge rules and circuit procedures when it was producing little or no lift but there were plenty of thermals. There were, however, thermals everywhere all around us. Although the rate of climb more than compensated for the very rapid drift to the north the natural instinct was still to get back to ridge.

When I landed late in the afternoon and went for a cup of tea I was rather perturbed to find a glider parked in the 'lee' of the hangar, supposedly to protect it from the west wind, facing south directly into at least 20 knots.

Need I say more?

Rockpolishers Results – Round 2

John Parry

Points awarded at the Long Mynd event

	Novice	Intermediate	Pundit	Total	Position
Mynd	1	5	1	7	1
Nympsfield	0	3	2	5	2
Aston Down	0	1	3	4	3
Shobdon	0	4	0	4	4
Talgarth	0	1	0	1	5

The overall position at the end of Round 2

	Round 1 Points	Round 2 Points	Total Points	Position
Mynd	12	7	19	1

Nympsfeld	12	5	17	2
Aston Down	10	4	14	3
Talgarth	6	1	7	4
Shobdon	2	4	6	5
Usk	4	0	4	6