

# The MATG

And

# Soar Point

## January Newsletter

### From the Ed

Well here we go kicking off the new 2007 season. But before we do, let's have a quick review of the year. We've had some excellent weather and XC's flown from Swinford and elsewhere. We had the famous fly in at Husbands Bosworth and a camp out and BBQ at the height of the Summer. Greedy git Julian went on not 1 but 2 flying holidays abroad with most pilots flying somewhere new or surpassing previous personal bests. For me that meant flying my longest XC ever together with another flight that lasted 5 Hours!!!! After flying for more than 20 years it's nice to know that I still haven't reached my peak yet. Stop that sniggering in the ranks!!!

Most innovative landing award goes to Piers for doing a fly on the wall landing-against a Hanger wall!

Most spectacular injury goes to Rocky Rudin and longest retrieve ever goes to Julian after extracting me out of the boonies behind the Mynd. This list isn't conclusive and further revelations of bent aluminium will be greatly received and published for your edification. Tot, that includes you!

Did everyone enjoy this year's show at the NEC? I managed to meet up with an old Mercian Member, Glenn Roberts, who I am glad to report is hale and hearty and is now flying weight shift microlights.

The MATG came 12<sup>th</sup> in the club XC league with me and Tony taking 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the aerotow league. Let's see more entries for this season; it's only a fiver to see your name in lights in Skywings.

Has anyone ordered a new wing!! I'm on the look out for a topless so please let me know if you've seen one for sale. And finally let's make more use of the internet and phone this year. If you intend to go flying then let someone know!!! It's easier to get motivated for the long drive to the hill or airfield if you know others are going to be

there. That's how Julian managed to get lapsed fliers Steve Davies and Dave Barker out of the house and up to the Malverns.

HI GUYS,

The latest bright idea, if you don't already know, is to amalgamate the Midland tow group newsletter with the Mercian mag, Soar Point. It is very difficult to put something together with fresh air and it is hoped with the greater numbers of contributors, that we could at least produce something on a quarterly basis. Kevin has very kindly said that he is prepared to 'put it together' and will e-mail someone in the Mercian club for printing and distribution. This keeps the costs separate but requires a volunteer to do it.

Please write something so that as well as our drivel you can read someone else's to, even if it's your fantasies (flying related please) or how you plan to introduce the rest of us to your doll. No, on second thought, keep that one to yourself. You must have done something, done a small first XC, flown a new hill for the first time, learnt or are learning a new launch discipline, been on a club trip or what stops you turning out, or flying, cocked something up, we can all relate to it and learn from it. So go on, put quill to parchment, index to blackberry or something in between and surprise us with a tale, short or long it doesn't matter. A few words are better than none.

Julian T & Steve Y.



Julian is amazed to find he can fit inside the prototype 200 mph Ellipse at the NEC. His face shows a blank as Paul Bennett explains the concept of an all glass instrument panel!!

More captions always welcome!!!

## TOW CHAIRMANS CORNER

Last year, about mid October it was decided to keep operational through the winter. This year there is still interest to do the same and to encourage folk out we are running a Winter Discount, 3 tows for the price of 2 up to April 1st. £20 for 3 to 2000' or if your name is Kevin, one to 10500'. Another challenge for the lad but I don't think even he could hack this one. Anyway, it's a bargain which works out at just over £6 a tow to 2000'. We can organise a flour bombing day and/or a duration and spot do. Tony has kindly offered to run a 'refresher day' for those who need it.... Simon? It'll

be a bit of winter fun that helps to keep every one current at the same time. If Swinford gets too wet, which is likely, we can fly at Sittles Farm, Long Marston and possibly Husband Bosworth. ALL these places like to be asked in advance so as usual please let the duty officer know, if you want to fly at the weekend so something can be organised. It is no good ringing up on Saturday morning about 10.00 am and deciding that because the sun is shining you would like to go aerotowing, expecting a fun weekend to have been organized and that your favourite tug pilot is standing by for your arrival at the airfield. It will not happen! Come on men, don't waste the winter, I want to fly and I hope you do to. J.T.

### **Chairman's Letter**

It has been some time since I have last written a chairman's letter for various reasons, one of which is that I did not get off my butt and write it.

Anyway I am putting that to right and hope to send a regular supply to the mag. This is the first issue that will be a joint edition between the Mercian and Midland aero tow clubs. Please tell me what you think of the idea and the format. Hopefully with the joint output of the two clubs we will be able to fill a magazine on every edition, something Terry was always looking for. Many thanks must of course be given to him for editing Soar Point for the last few years it's a thankless job and we appreciate it.

Everything is up for discussion so feel free to comment on any thing you want IT'S YOUR MAGAZINE. Do you want the magazine every month like Soar Point, or bi-monthly? Do you like the idea of a joint magazine? Do you want it emailed or printed then posted? Etc.

On other points we are starting a new year and the subs are due again. We have been unable to collect them for a couple of months as various people have been out. However the fees are going to remain at £15 for another year so please bring your cheque book to the next meeting. I am sorry to keep asking you questions but again things are in your hands... What activities do you want in the coming year? We can have a parachute repack, in March or April ready for the season. Then following this all the usual things like Curries. Piers has kindly volunteered to run a bar-b-que when the weather improves and there are lots of possibilities for club trips. Also, I need to know what you want for the club meetings. Would you like speakers? If so who, but remember we need to have a decent turn out if we are going to invite someone to come. PLEASE GIVE ME SOME IDEAS!

The weather has been very mild so far this winter but very wet and windy, with any luck that will change soon, so be ready and give your kit a good spring clean for the next season it could easily start in January or Feb. Make sure you can find all your kit after Christmas. With the short days you do not want to be looking for your kit for ages on the only good day of the month.

One last point... Be careful, You have not flown for some time and your reactions are a little rusty. Please take it easy the first time out, this is not the time to go taking off in radical conditions like very strong winds or powerful thermals.

All the best for the New Year and have some great, safe flying.

Steve Young



Phil Hadley has booked the St Johns Ambulance to deliver a First Aid refresher course on Feb 3rd. Time, 10:00 - 14:00. Club will foot bill initially and claim about £5-10 each from those that attend. The Mercian club have been invited to attend if they so wish. Phil will confirm with St Johns ambulance if there is a restriction on numbers that can attend.

The venue is TBC but is most likely to be the same Golf club as 3 years ago.

Many thanks to Phil for setting this up.

## AN APPEAL

I'm sure most of you will agree that hang-gliding is in your blood and is not something that you can take or leave. So what happens when something damages ones body and causes PAIN? For example, you are mugged on a Saturday night, a pile of bricks lands on you, a work or flying accident or even (I can't imagine this happening) a mishap ground handling ones glider at Edge Hill.

Do you not fly until you are 100% recovered? I doubt it

I would like to collect anecdotes from neophytes to tuggies to chief coaches to skygods on flying with PAIN.

I am aware that a large percentage of the tow group have experience of this and I would not be surprised if some hill fliers didn't fall into this category too and have heroic tales of endurance. (The carry up to Snowdon comes to mind-Ed) so I would be grateful if you could scribble something down and either post it to me, No 211, LE67 9PQ, e-mail it to [tayl0r@myway.com](mailto:tayl0r@myway.com) or tell me verbally when you see me and I can put it into words for you.

Please include a brief description of what happened, damage done, how painful was it on a scale of 1(little pain) to 10 (extreme)? Did you take pain killers, which ones, were you off work, incur a stay in a hospital, have a plaster cast, restricted movement, how long did it take to heal, could you rig your own glider, did you need help to launch (not counting your nose man)? Did flying make it worse or did the little pills block out the discomfort? Did you have a further mishap because of flying? Did your fellow fliers know of your injuries? Do you regard yourself as having a high or low pain threshold? Or did you not fly until fully recovered and finally has it altered your attitude to flying?

Please take the time to send something in as I hope to put something together for a future magazine and the more input, the more interesting the final article will be. Anonymity can be assured if you are embarrassed about something

## DANCES WITH MEN OF STEEL



**Figure 1** Tot and Tony at launch at Pleine Jeux

Last September I joined Tot's Tours to the Dolomites. For me this was a small part of Taylor's Grand Tour which has involved flying in 6 countries in 56 weeks. I leave it to you to decide if west of the Mynd is a country but I'm not arguing with any more of its locals, so I am including the land of the dragon.

I had a wedding to go to so arrived in Italy a day late and was not surprised to be greeted with the immortal words "you should have been here....." Yawn, "Heard this one before

guys" but over a splendid meal it all came out, 12000 feet, awesome views, gnarly thermals and Mike's take off crash, dodgy landings, and the I.H.S and general heroics. There were photos, a plaster cast, plenty of bent aluminium and a corker of a black eye to back it all up. Not bad for a first day and I looked forward to my first flying in the Dolomites with trepidation.

Next morning, with Mike walking like Herr Flick from 'Allo 'Allo, this trepidation turned to butterflies as we ascended the 3300 feet in the enormous cable car. Standing on the rocky and snow eroded take off, 7500 feet asl, and faced with landing at 4100' the butterflies started waltzing in my stomach. Perfectly normal I was told and no, this important information wasn't in the tour brochure. Rigged and ready one naturally wants to watch a few locals take off and soon the waltzers were enjoying a tango. In fact over the next few days I saw enough dodgy take offs to last me a lifetime so with the numerous demonstrations of how not to do it, how to- just get away with it and how to "fall over the edge" style of launches, fresh in my mind it was soon my turn. The light, gusty, wind switching direction through 180 degrees focuses ones attention nicely. Preflighted and hang checked, the tango skipped the polka and upgraded itself to a full blown jitterbug, I have to get it right, keep the tow group end up and worse, if I got it wrong, I could end up looking like Mike. Ouch. I cannot get this thought out of my head as I go for it at full throttle, trying to watch my footing and the horizon at the same time.

OH YESSSS we're airborne, free, the jive fading to insignificance, just looking at the views, I am reminded that this is why I do it. Lacking concentration I miss the crucial first thermal and find myself on the way down. I don't mind, I can add another country to my GT list and in my serious wind up, take off list I decide to slot this in second behind the first Verbier launch, where not knowing whether the piece of undersized junk I had hired, with its frayed top rigging would even fly. Landings at over 4 grand I can leave to your imagination!

Over another delicious meal, Ken points out that the second day take-off isn't any easier. Secure in the cosy surroundings of a log cabin mountain restaurant with good food, good company and lots of laughter my alter ego was finding it hard to believe, but then I wouldn't have believed it if I had been told that one of these tough mountain fliers would order a glass of milk to go with his meal. Unsurprising then the next day the dance started at rumba level where I witnessed a wingtip touch the

ground on takeoff and where the extremely lucky pilot spent the next hour carrying bits of his glider back up the 150 feet he had fallen. Tot, Pete, Ken and Jerry fly in a half hour launch window leaving Steve & myself to experience air currents even more erratic than yesterday. When it wasn't switching or blowing over the back it dropped to zero. We wait, the waltzes and tangos enjoying the afternoon at my expense, until the imminent closure of the cable car forces us to pack up and carry down. It was a most difficult decision after having invested considerable time and money to be there.

Mike's hard man image was enhanced as he removed the plaster cast so he could use a knife in his right hand to eat. His eye barely open through the amorphous purple and grey mass, he tackled his mixed grill, glimpses of the pain occasionally showing on his face. By the next morning he could put some weight on the ankle, so he pronounced he was going to drive himself into Bolzano to see the 5000 year old iceman. This earned him the accolade of "Rocky"..... His gimlet eye showing a steely glint, no-one argued with the man. No-one cocked their next take off up either and I confess, I nearly had the crucial first thermal but I'm not used to circling at 40 mph with loads of rocks, trees and paraplankers near me so I blew it, pathetic, but there you are. I did manage to soar a hotel and a small tree covered hill for 20 minutes until I was spotted and joined by an Atos, another flexi and 2 pgs. My small piece of rising air became crowded so I headed off up the valley to wind off 1500', musing that towing is a very lazy way to get airborne (no carry ups) with very little traffic and certainly no scratching. A near perfect landing I muse that Tony is never around with his camera when my landing goes OK.

Over breakfast the next morning, it is decided to move north to Austria as the local "previsione" was rubbish for the next few days. To entertain us while Pete was in the shower, his underwear received a large dollop of Heat Rub, spread in the appropriate place - not my idea but we all found this mildly amusing as it was a 3 hour drive. He's another tough nut, not an itch, not a scratch, the man must have balls of steel unless ----- well I'll let your imagination do the rest.

Kossen is a pretty village with large flat green landing fields around at a lower altitude. This was much more my cup of tea with a pleasant gondola ride up to the 2800' Unterberghorn with its 3 takeoffs. A short 100' carry up to the rigging area where the current European Champion, Tony Ramauf, joined us with the Atos VR over which Steve was smitten. He only has to clear it with his wife before he places his order! With altostratus pushing in from the SW it was only going to be a sled ride. Launching into the zephyr was a waltz, and being 2500' lower than Italy even Hardball Pete managed to launch on one leg with cramp in the other. I land realising this is my 6th country to fly in just over a year.

Rocky Rudin's tough guy image crumbled somewhat when we said our goodbyes and some thoughtless oaf shook hands with him. Hardball Pete has taken the heat rub back for a refund and Ken and I have returned to our humble lives, no doubt you will be hearing from the rest of the Skygods, Tot, Steve, Jerry and Hardball.

Try not to yawn boys, it's rude. Thanks for the fun guys, it was a ball.  
Julian.

Duty Rota

These pilots are to be contacted if aerotowing is taking place or if we are off to the hills.

January	Kevin Casserley	01543 416385	M 0771 976 1611
February	Nick Spencer	02476 506017	M 07811 036540
March	Julian Taylor	01530 244339	M 07752659181

### For Sale/Wanted

Wanted, Topless 14 or 15 metre Laminar or Moyes.  
Preferably, Tony Smiths ☺. Contact Kevin Casserley 01543 416385

Free, to a good home. Guinea pig hutch, contact Kevin Casserley

### PETER KAY'S UNIVERSAL TRUTH'S

1. Triangular sandwiches taste better than square ones.
2. At the end of every party there is always a girl crying.
3. One of the most awkward things that can happen in a pub is when your pint - to - toilet cycle gets synchronised with a complete stranger.
4. Sharpening a pencil with a knife makes you feel more manly.
5. You're never quite sure whether it's against the law to have a fire in your back garden.
6. Nobody ever dares make cup -a-soup in a bowl.
7. You never know where to look when eating a banana.
8. You always feel a bit scared when stroking horses.
9. The smaller the monkey, the more it looks like it would kill you at the first opportunity.
10. Every bloke has at some stage whilst taking a pee, flushed half way through and then raced against the flush.
11. It's impossible to look cool whilst picking up a frisbee.
12. Driving through a tunnell makes you feel excited.
13. Old ladies can eat more than you think.
14. You can't respect a man who carries a dog.
15. Despite constant warning , you have never met anyone who has had their arm broken by a swan.
16. You've turned into your Dad the day you put aside a thin piece of wood specifically to stir paint with.
17. Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

---

### Julian Harmans 1 Minute Interview

Julian, you are in the unique position of being the only member of the Mercian/MATG who has survived a real life reserve deployment.

Could you please describe what happened??

1 Had your reserve been re-packed recently? If not when?

Julian- The reserve was bought in 1992 from the infamous Mr Whittal. It is a small RS2 firebird HG reserve and I can't actually remember fully Repacking it ...ever...naughty me!!!

2 What size and type is your reserve?

Julian- See above - small for a rigid wing, but boy it deployed like a rocket. There is a debate in that as most deployments are below 300' the faster opening, the better. That means smaller. It worked for me...just.

3 How long did you think it took from throwing the reserve to being fully inflated?

Julian- I knew the glider had spun through extensive sailplane spinning experience. The outer wing started going backwards and at that point I went for the reserve - absolutely no hesitation. I have never deployed before – nor practised it. BUT in flight I regularly do 'spooof' deployments; i.e. look for the handle and then mimic a throw across my body (side mounted reserve) to get a 'muscle memory'. I truly think this helped

4 This final question is optional.....Did you shit yourself???

Julian- Not enough time mate. At 300' and having already done 3 flat spins, the World was just sky and I was just so relieved the 'chute came out - it was like a slow motion film. I watched the container fly to the end of the bridle, then this chute opening. My first thought at this point? "It's a pretty coloured yellow reserve". Then I was faced with the ground coming up. My reserve connects not to the hang point but to another point on the harness so I was suspended from the shoulders and the glider from my hang point which resulted in a head down - zipped in position. I hit the side of Westbury sort of head & shoulders...bit of a bang...walked away...lucky.

The glider was a write off. What did I learn? Don't be a test pilot and get someone else to test fly the glider after a major rebuild/upgrade!!!

Phew!! Thanks Julian. See you at the airfield soon.