

John Silvester flies 194k on his Gradient Avax for a new British record

Neil Roberts flies 135k to declared Goal on his Gradient Avax another British Record

Sunday the 29th July was an incredibly windy day, but no problem for old hand John Silvester. Taking off from an empty Moel Elio near Llanberis in North Wales on board his trusty Avax, he connected with an incredible line of convergence to a screaming average speed of 38kph spending most of his day in the cold winds at 5000ft above sea level. Flying over the remote Welsh mountains, with sometimes very small clearances from the peaks John pressed on and on. After five and a half hours in the saddle John was stopped by the wide waters of the Bristol Channel. I'm sure he considered attempting the 10k glide across for a second or two, but sense prevailed and he landed just before the sea at Chepstow to set a new British record of 194k.

The following day, Monday 30th July was a who's who on the Long Mynd at 11am. Comp wings and tube harnesses where the norm as 20 or more top pilots plotted Goal declarations to attempt to break the British Goal Record for the fourth time this year.

(In March Neil Roberts and John Kennedy went for it, with Neil landing just short and John eeking into the goal at 114k. Not a month had passed when Mark Watts and Adrian Thomas pushed the notch higher with a joint 116.6k. Only to be snatched by Martin Sandwith on the 24th July with a nifty 120k goal.)

The Sky was uninspiring as pilots drifted over the back into a very overcast sky. Many struggled to clear 20k and Neil was almost amongst them. Gliding over the shadowed ground at a few hundred feet and a last ditch glide to Wenlock Edge into a bit of sunlight, then boom, peaking at 5.5meters per second a steady 4m climb to cloud base got Neil was on his way.

"Realising that the goal I had chosen for myself was well cross wind, I pressed on mainly at cloud-base expecting to loose my route with the drift. Fighting upwind, only to get drifted off track, to fight up wind again". The flight remained relatively high until around 100k when reckoning it might be in the bag, the inevitable 10k death glide into a blue hole eventually brought salvation and another 4meter climb for a relaxed glide into goal.

Neil spent most of his four hours at up to 5500ft and set a blistering mean speed of 41kph, peaking at 74kph in the glides on his Gradient Avax. "The sky down wind looked brilliant and very tempting but having had so many flights taken off me over the years to Airspace and bureaucracy problems, I thought it better to land and bag a New British Goal Record".