

# Usk Ridge Soaring

A guide to local soaring opportunities for the aspiring pilots of tomorrow

## Monmouth Ridge

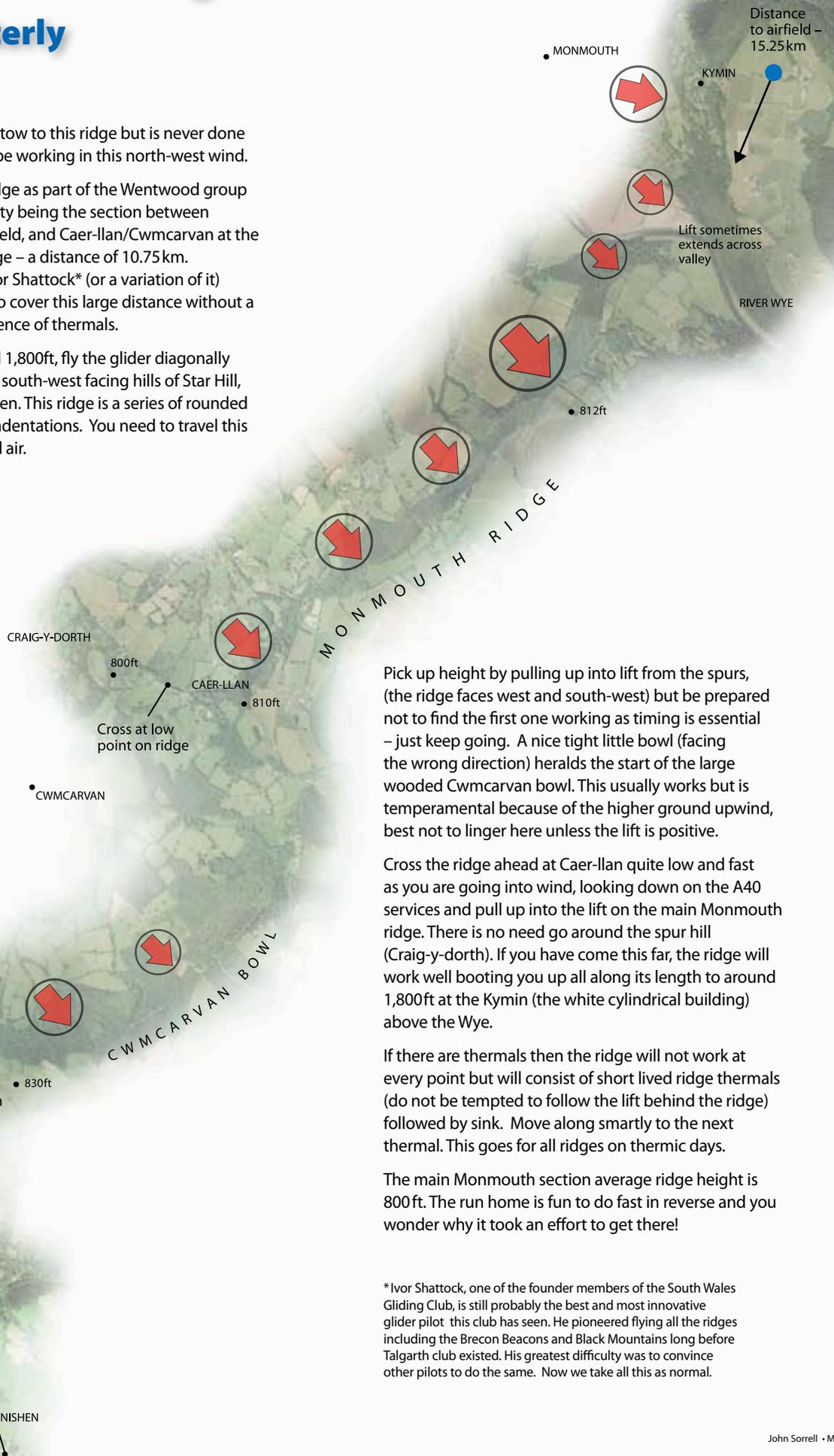
### North-Westerly

There is the option to aerotow to this ridge but is never done as Wentwood would also be working in this north-west wind.

Normally one soars this ridge as part of the Wentwood group of ridges. The main difficulty being the section between Graig-fawr, east of the airfield, and Caer-llan/Cwmcarvan at the end of the Monmouth ridge – a distance of 10.75 km.

The technique used by Ivor Shattock\* (or a variation of it) seems to be the best bet to cover this large distance without a good ridge and in the absence of thermals.

From Graig-fawr at around 1,800ft, fly the glider diagonally crosswind fairly fast to the south-west facing hills of Star Hill, Cobblers Plain and Llanishen. This ridge is a series of rounded spurs and shallow valley indentations. You need to travel this route and it provides good air.



Pick up height by pulling up into lift from the spurs, (the ridge faces west and south-west) but be prepared not to find the first one working as timing is essential – just keep going. A nice tight little bowl (facing the wrong direction) heralds the start of the large wooded Cwmcarvan bowl. This usually works but is temperamental because of the higher ground upwind, best not to linger here unless the lift is positive.

Cross the ridge ahead at Caer-llan quite low and fast as you are going into wind, looking down on the A40 services and pull up into the lift on the main Monmouth ridge. There is no need go around the spur hill (Craig-y-dorth). If you have come this far, the ridge will work well booting you up all along its length to around 1,800ft at the Kymin (the white cylindrical building) above the Wye.

If there are thermals then the ridge will not work at every point but will consist of short lived ridge thermals (do not be tempted to follow the lift behind the ridge) followed by sink. Move along smartly to the next thermal. This goes for all ridges on thermic days.

The main Monmouth section average ridge height is 800ft. The run home is fun to do fast in reverse and you wonder why it took an effort to get there!

\*Ivor Shattock, one of the founder members of the South Wales Gliding Club, is still probably the best and most innovative glider pilot this club has seen. He pioneered flying all the ridges including the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains long before Talgarth club existed. His greatest difficulty was to convince other pilots to do the same. Now we take all this as normal.