

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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70 Years at the Mynd

Anniversary Dinner - see page 12

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Chairman's Contribution

Charles Carter

The more observant among you will have noticed that a rather soggy Task Week ended on 30th August to be followed on the 31st by a day of classic looking proportions which continued to look soarable until 1900 hours. If you thought that there was any justice in the weather you would have already abandoned gliding so I am probably talking to the converted anyway.

Although I mentioned that the week was rather soggy, it was not quite as bad as all that and the "team" managed to get some reasonable flying on task and some very good flying off task. Our thanks to John Parry for directing in his inimitable style, to Nick Heriz-Smith for setting the tasks and winning the comp and to Dominic Haughton for forecasting the weather and coming second. Anyone recognise a pattern? Thanks also to Hazel Turner and Sue Holmes for their landout duties and all who put in so much effort to make the week go so well.

The character of the club is completely different during Task Week and for those of you who have not experienced it I can recommend that you come along. You do not have to compete on the tasks and it is possible to get instruction from lurking instructors and maybe even blag a ride cross country in a two seater. You can certainly get all the retrieving you can cope with.

EVV is back in service following a large repair after a field landing accident (pilot unharmed) and so the fleet is back to full strength and ready for a busy autumn and winter of flying. This is the time of the year when we can expect to experience the magic of wave flying and for newer members who have yet to have their first wave flight I would encourage them to get in a two seater with someone who knows what they are doing and find out how it works. It usually but not exclusively involves an aerotow and can sometimes last an hour or two and so is not a cheap option but the rewards are wonderful.

We learn in mathematics that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. I mention this because I strongly believe that some of you who drive the Land Rovers about the airfield must be mathematical geniuses given that I have observed many journeys being made in as straight a line as is possible and avoiding any road or hard surface which may be a degree or two off track. For those of you who recognise a familiar style of driving I will reiterate the following. When you get in the Land Rover take that first straight line to the hard road and then follow the road to your destination or as near to the destination as the road will take you and reverse the formula for the return journey. Do not tow gliders up the middle of the airfield and NEVER tow along the Vega strip. The road to the south end is about to be repaired so there will be no excuses. Bleat over.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find details of the 70th party and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the "do".

Hope you have good flying and if you think that I can help collar me.

CFI's Bits

Neal Clements

Notams

I hope that you are all aware that you must review the Notams for the area surrounding your route on the day you fly. The details are on the notice board and you need access to the Internet to do so, you can either do it at the club or elsewhere. If you don't do this then you cannot retrospectively review the Notams for that date as they may have expired. The site is difficult to use but we have no choice. If you cannot access the Notams for that day then you cannot fly cross country. The ramifications of not doing so are becoming more and more serious. Infringement of a temporary airspace restriction could mean that in the worse case you meet nine Red Arrow jets in the air, possibly colliding with them or causing them to cancel their display, guess who picks up the bill.

Sleap instructions

Recently a pilot landed at Sleap without calling on the radio first. Please note that this is not allowed, they have a very busy site with helicopters and power and, just like Shobdon, they must be called first. The new airmaps have handy frequency sheets with them so you can easily find out the frequency.

Are positive checks a boring waste of time?

Recently one of our most experienced pilots did positive checks at the launch point and discovered that the tail of a self connecting glider had been fitted incorrectly and would have failed in flight. The air does not care about experience or technical sophistication, it only responds to correctly configured aircraft flown well. This incident is frightening in its potential consequences and should serve as a severe reminder to us all. Don't forget:

- 1) Rig
- 2) Get a 3rd party to check the rig and sign the DI book
- 3) DI the glider
- 4) Take the glider to the launch point and have a positive control check over there.

Low level ridge soaring

There is still confusion about this. The rules are:-

- 1) permission of Number One or delegate
- 2) maximum of 3 at a time
- 3) NEVER amongst hang gliders, always turn back before reaching them.

In addition keep your eyes open for aerotow operation, the aerotow cannot be stopped easily and a low level glider approaching at high speed could be disastrous.

N_clements@blueyonder.co.uk

Winching

Colin Knox

During Task Week the CFI and I received several complaints about the winch launches. The winch driver concerned has been spoken to, he said he would like feedback about any problems with the launches. Winch driving is not easy and any help is greatly appreciated. So if you have a launch that you are not completely happy with, please after landing contact the winch driver of the day either on the CB radio or in person. Please don't call on the airband radio as some members have done in the past.

From the Flying Field

Richard Platt

Tom Priestley went solo on 29th July. Anthony Gluyas soloed on the 10th August (with a high cable break to keep him on his toes), and Robert Snear soloed and gained two Bronze legs the following day.

There are fewer cross countries to report than in the last newsletter, partly because many pilots were away at comps but also the weather has been pretty dire. Simon Adlard did 550 km in his Nimbus on 6th July with John Roberts (250 km in PZ) and Roger Andrews (100 km in 154) also enjoying the day. Ian MacArthur and Jon Hall did 180 km on the 23rd July. On the 30th JS flew to Vyrnwy, Richard Billany went to Sleaf, and Julian Fack and Dominic Haughton did 100 km.

Task Week was disappointing from the cross country point of view but the following week was much better. Rod Hawley took Helen Johnson for a jaunt around the country; Talgarth - Malvern - Milton Keynes (400 km) in the Duo, Dominic did a similar distance and Warwick Nuttall, Marcus Rowson and Clark Bain all achieved their Silver distances. The same week Keith Sweeting was sent off solo.

We have had lots of pilots away at competitions this summer. Mike Witton and Nick Heriz-Smith went to Sutton Bank for the Northerns. Allan Barnes was in Norway for the Club Class Worlds. Rose Johnson, Iain Evans, Sarah Platt, Ian MacArthur and John Roberts were at the Club Class Nationals at Pocklington. Ian and John were at Hus Bos for the Junior Pre Worlds, Sarah Platt and Andy Holmes flew the 15 metre Nationals at Lasham, with Mike Witton, Ian and Johnny also there for the Juniors. Well done to all in their efforts but especially JR and Ian for coming 2nd and 4th respectively.

The Cambridge Connection

Ann Parry

The link with Cambridge is on my mind because my aunt Ann Mari Neumann and her husband Sigfrid both died this year. They were glider pilots at the Cambridge University Gliding Club (CUGC), meeting there and making their life in Duxford, near Cambridge. Both my parents (kid sister and kid brother of older CUGC members) and an uncle were CUGC members, as well as the Neumanns. Ann Mari gave my brother Thomas and me our first flight in a glider (strapped side by side in a T21, three up) when I was eight, and Sigfrid began teaching me to fly when I was fifteen. Thomas went solo on his sixteenth birthday, sent by our instructor mother Catharina Edwards.

Being in flatland CUGC wanted a hill to soar. In the postwar years they used to come to the Mynd for gliding camps three times a year. They brought everything with them: gliders, winch, tractor, instructors, members and Ted Warner (ground engineer become CFI). The story is they only went home when everything was broken, and those were the things that couldn't be mended on the spot. As well as the Mynd camps CUGC developed the hill expedition habit, using bungeys to launch. They would go on expeditions to North Wales (Clywds), Dorset, Wiltshire, The Lake District and Cross Fell. Catharina remembers bungee launching from the Malverns in an easterly during a Mynd camp.

Sigfrid Neumann was the first to make the dive for the east wind wave from the Mynd on 18 March 1953, reaching 6,600 ft. Other Cambridge pilots had made pioneering wave flights from the Mynd in 1937 (John Simpson) and 1949 (David Carrow). (See: Edwards, Anthony. Cambridge rules the waves. *Sailplane & Gliding* August/September 1993.) In Cambridge recently I visited Sigfrid and we talked of gliding. He explained that the idea for the National Ladder originated during a Cambridge camp at the Mynd when Cambridge was not doing so well.

CUGC exists in a changed form now, and does not regularly visit the Mynd, though the spirit of such camps can be found when the other place (OUGC) visits. I shall remember Sigfrid especially when the east wind blows and gliders soar above Wentnor. Today we watched a K21 (Dave's office) performing aerobatics above our house, descending from an east wind wave flight.

Snowdon and the Mynd

John Warren

Over the years I have often heard debates as to whether or not Snowdonia can be seen from the Mynd, usually after the protagonists have consumed several beers. Snowdon itself lies on a bearing of 307 degrees true, just to the right of Norbury Hill, and on a clear day a substantial lump of Wales appears on this bearing. Each time we stand debating the identity of these hills I leave intending to research the subject.

I have recently got around to doing something about it, and on a day when, cricket, tennis, or any other of my favourite distractions were washed out, I sat down with maps to satisfy myself as to whether Snowdonia can be seen from the club.

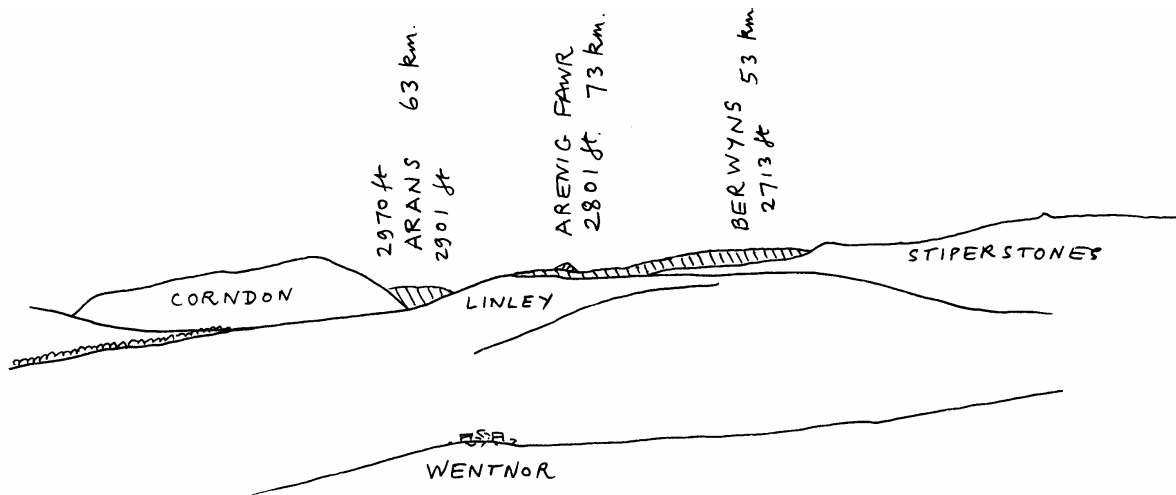
The answer, I believe is NO.

Snowdon is 62 miles from the club and stands 3130 feet above sea level. When the curvature of the earth is taken into account this elevation is effectively decreased by 1305 feet, known as "Dip". Otherwise known as the bit below the horizon.

At 45 miles from the club and on an identical bearing lies Arenig Fawr, part of the Arenig range just to the west of Bala. The Arenigs are well known for attracting copious quantities of rain and mist, indeed it is unusual to be able to see much of them from anywhere. Annual rainfall is in the region of 77 inches per annum! The peak is 2660 feet above sea level, and attracts a dip value of 687 feet.

From the above, if you believe me, the reduced effective height for Arenig Fawr is 1973 feet and Snowdon becomes 1825 feet. With the club at 1392 feet it can be shown that it is impossible to see Snowdonia without taking a winch launch of about 1000 feet.

Editor's note: The Armchair Pilot considered this question a few years ago, and drew this to illustrate the same conclusion, having worked out the apparent heights and bearings:



VIEW FROM THE BUNGEY POINT.

NB. SNOWDON IS IN LINE WITH AREMIG FAWR
AT 101 Km, BUT CERTAINLY HIDDEN BEHIND IT

KWFE 31/3/2002

The Lodestone Factor

Colin Knox

Over the years that I have been working here, I have become convinced that there is a lodestone close to the airfield gate, that zaps brain cells from those that pass.

It seems to affect some more than others, though I haven't worked out whether some have fewer in the first place, or there are those who are immune.

This manifests itself in general on the airfield, for example launching K21s on white weak links, tying untieable knots and macramé features in ropes and traces, driving Land Rovers in unsuitable ratios obtaining revs hitherto unknown to the motor industry. Parking Land Rovers on K21 wings to test the spar strength, and not buying enough beer for the winch drivers, while still expecting wonderful launches.

And then the staff. Man and machinery in perfect harmony, computer and McCurdie, Alex (Mercedes) the Greek, who comes to work in a Merc and complains of low pay, Pete the Winch - formerly Pete the Wench, but we won't go into that! John "I have a theory" Stuart, the terror of military policemen. Dave (hairy assed builder) "It will be ready, honest Guv" Crowson, and me. My problem started in 1992 when I 'lost' some small pieces of kit off the hill, just a retrieve winch and tractor, nothing to get excited about. And now we have 'Cruncher Kath, the Maxda Masher', tall and lovely but watch your car. Not forgetting the cooks... you are perfect! (I have to say that in case they starve me.)

How I Started Gliding

Julian Fack

Most of us who are old enough remember the original film of *The Thomas Crown Affair* with Faye Dunaway and Steve McQueen. The most famous scene is the sexy chess game which is unforgettable, but I was also taken with the aerobatic scene where McQueen flies a yellow single seater Schweizer glider to show off his skills, accompanied by the hit tune "The Windmills of My Mind" sung by Noel Harrison.

Although I had built model aircraft at school, and had always been fascinated by flight, it was this scene in the film that galvanised me into action, and I said out loud "I am going to do that" during the show. I use the word "action" with some reluctance, because although I never forgot the scene or the tune, and vowed to do something about it every subsequent New Year's Eve, other things got in the way. It was not until my uncle's early demise that I really meant it, when I repeated the phrase as I stood at his graveside, and I soon visited the Mynd, one of the few locations where I had heard of gliding taking place.

I booked a week's course and enjoyed it, but found it frustratingly difficult at the same time. Meg and I were, and are still, very actively involved in our winter motorsport, and we were winning the British Championship at the time so I did not return for a second week until a year later. I was lucky with the weather, and had the shock of my life when John stepped out on Friday morning and said "now go and do it again on your own".

I had another shock some years later when *The Thomas Crown Affair* was repeated on TV. I looked at the credits and noticed that the original date of release was 1967, so I had waited 19 years before getting my finger out and finally doing what I vowed to do all those years before. I now realise that to be a good competition pilot you need to start early, or at least earlier than I did, but I have enjoyed every minute in the sport, and my only regret is not doing it sooner.

The Clever Box

Julian Fack

You may have noticed that EVV and the rear cockpit of FWQ have acquired new audio varios. Cair Aviation, who sell the XK-10 vario have a new product, the Clever Box Vario, and the CFI has decided we should gradually change over to it.

What does it do, and why are we going for it? The most important feature of an electronic vario must be the averager, without it we can have no idea how well we are really climbing. The Clever Box averager is configurable, and is displayed in big digits if required. Not only that but it also has a “whole thermal” averager, and it uses *that* information to give a “speed to fly” to the next thermal. Unlike the XK-10 the Clever Box has quite a pleasing audio, which is also configurable.

The Clever Box can drive the same analog dial as the XK-10 to give the current climb rate, although there is a bar graph vario display on the “Vario” screen, so the dial can be dispensed with if you are short of panel space. There is a good photo of the unit, showing the bar graph, in the Cair Aviation advert in *Sailplane and Gliding*.

Almost everything is adjustable in the software, including gust filtering, the time constant for the vario as well as the number of seconds the averager uses, and it has a couple of extra features if it is connected to a GPS. The lower knob has a “Locate” position which gives your location in words “10.7 nm NW Ludlow” and also an A/F position which gives bearing and distance to the nearest airfield “6.7 nm L.Mynd 275 deg”. The Clever Box in FWQ is GPS linked, so try it sometime, it works superbly.

It is simplicity itself to operate, the top knob controls the audio volume, and the bottom knob selects the function to display on the screen, all clearly marked around the knob, albeit in small writing. For instruction purposes it will normally be set to “Average” or “Therm”. The latter shows current average, whole thermal average, time spent in the current thermal, and speed to fly to the next thermal, all on the same screen.

The above features are all very useful, but it also has the advantage of being a small package, fitting in a 57mm panel hole, does not need a flask, and it is reasonably priced, at £299 + VAT, which is less than the cost of a mechanical vario like a Winter. For all the above reasons we are slowly fitting Clever Boxes to the club fleet. I hope you enjoy them, and if you are looking for a simple low cost unit for a private glider, take a look at the Clever Box, it is really is clever as well as being easy to use.

Lost

Chris Harris

Someone borrowed my tow out rope some little while ago and I have just realised it is missing (because I wanted to use it myself!) It is made from a bright orange, woven nylon type rope and has a chain link as the ‘ring’. If it was you please sneak it back to me ASAP. Next time I think I might ask for a deposit - only joking - maybe!!! Chris Harris 07974-356596

Editor’s note: You really should use proper rings on a tow rope; if you use a chain link you may damage the release hook if you apply any sideways force on it.

Task Week 2004

Debbie Bilham

Friday 20th August - Prologue

What an extraordinary summer we've had so far. Within the last week we've seen Boscastle flooded, a landslip in Scotland and, yesterday, a shower of fish in Knighton. This unusual phenomenon occurs when a waterspout sucks up water and other matter from a pool and what goes up inevitably comes down, sometimes many miles downwind.

Last year Dominic Houghton narrowly won Task Week after employing somewhat duplicitous means. He packed his nearest rival, Julian Fack, off to Bicester for the Inter Club League Final on the last day. This year Julian is back with bigger wings, his Duo Discus (802) from Nympsfield.

Johnny Roberts may be one to watch. He is flying in the Juniors at the moment and leading by 3 points, however they have only had 1 day so far. Earlier in the season he came fifth at the Midlands and Junior Pre-Worlds at Hus Bos and came second on one day in the Club Class Nationals at Pocklington. Thankfully for the rest of the field he has another 2 days at the Juniors before he comes here.

I am crewing for Dominic this year as Duo wings are too heavy for me. Rumour has it that Julian and Dominic initially discussed a transfer fee in the region of £24 million, which was soon negotiated down to a dry white wine spritzer and a bacon sandwich.

John Parry is directing and Nick Heriz-Smith is setting the tasks. Dominic is once again doing the met however he is beset by equipment problems in that his laptop has gone belly up and the weather owl has taken early retirement.

Tomorrow might be OK but not so good for Sunday and Monday.

Saturday 21st August

This year, instead of a finish line there is to be a 2 km radius finish circle centred around the hangar which a glider merely has to enter in order to complete the task.

Task: Talgarth, Great Malvern, Mynd - 185 km.

Dave Rance (TL) got back very quickly arousing suspicion that he'd turned back early. Not the case; he'd flown one of his best flights ever. Nick came back shortly afterwards, feeling pleased with himself, until he spotted TL on the ground.

Dominic finished having flown practically the whole final leg without turning.

Julian landed out near Craven Arms having completed the task. He turned away to avoid the shower which was by now sitting over the Mynd.

Peter Orchard set off in EVV and landed out. Denise Hughes went to fetch him with the club's versatile open trailer and found that it needed a bit of ingenuity to figure out how to load the K23.

Dave Cole arrived feeling a bit melancholy; his Jantar was damaged, as was the trailer, and he'd fallen over earlier in the day and hurt his arm. "It'll be alright, it's probably bruised - that's all" he said in his usual cheerful demeanour.

Sunday 22nd August - Dave gets plastered!

According to the BBC, the Met Office and just about every other authority on weather a depression with heavy rain and strong wind should hit us at about midday. On the strength of that the day was scrubbed.

We rigged the K23 and shunted a few things around in the hangar in preparation of the anticipated deluge and waited, and waited. In the meantime, after a bit of persuasion, Dave Cole drove off to Shrewsbury Hospital to get his elbow looked at; it was a bit painful and his hand was swelling up.

Dave Rance took a tow and stayed up for a bit in weak wave; he didn't consider it to be taskable. He took the opportunity to practise short landings for fields.

While we'd scrubbed, the Juniors had set 150 km. Overall John Roberts finished 2nd, winning a home cinema system and a guaranteed place in the World Juniors squad. Ian Mac finished 4th with a possible

chance of a place in the squad.

After dinner I fetched Dave from Shrewsbury as he was in plaster and couldn't drive. We got back at about 10 o'clock. It was still dry. He would have to go back for surgery tomorrow to fix two broken bones in his elbow. "I've got some self tappers in the Land Rover" offered Jon Lewis helpfully. Dave seemed quite relieved that Rose Johnson wasn't about.

I went to bed just after midnight. I had to make a dash across the car park - the rain had arrived.

Monday 23rd August

Dawned wet, foggy and easterly. A clearance was expected with very unstable air behind and showers, towering cu-nimbs and thunderstorms expected. It may be taskable in between showers so Nick set an assigned area task to give greater flexibility. This is the first AAT set in a Mynd task week. "Any more questions?" asked Nick before the briefing dispersed. "Yes! Why are you wearing Wellingtons?" replied Jon Lewis.

Julian has a new toy which he has been itching to try out, a "1000 foot" rocket which he bought from www.overgrowschoolboys.com or something similar. The launcher utilises a foot pump, pressure chamber and combinations of burst discs to give different launch heights. The rocket went into cloud several times.

At the 12:00 re-brief John announced that the day wouldn't be scrubbed; instead a last launch time of 5pm was set. An updated 215 chart forecast a cloudbase for the afternoon of 2000 feet - not good!

Soon afterwards the heavens opened. Fortunately nobody had been silly enough to rig. John Parry recorded 1 inch of rain in 20 minutes. Lightning struck the bungee meadow, the clubhouse internet connection and John Parry's modem.

Simon Adlard and Ian Mac played Pooh sticks in the torrent which formed outside the hangar mouth. Dave Rance got his fly fishing rod and hooked a couple of K21s and a Pawnee but had to throw them back. Roger's workshop got flooded again.

Was the cloudburst triggered by somebody firing rockets into the clouds?

John Parry scrubbed the day; the airfield was, by now, far too wet to use.

Chris Harris and his grandsons flew their model glider and Julian launched a few more rockets.

Alasdair Lewis went down to Bicester to pick up the BGA gliding simulator which is now installed in the MT shed. I do like the marked thermals mode - if only they were like that in real life!

Weatherwise - more of the same tomorrow.

Tuesday 24th August - A little Bird told us!

I became a little suspicious of the source of detailed met information when Dominic accosted me at the breakfast table wanting to borrow my paper urgently. He turned immediately to the weather page!

Paul Bird, a young member of the Harris dynasty saved the day. Last night he had managed to access the BBC weather web site and reproduced it, with most of the detail of and a great deal more style than the original, on the briefing room whiteboard.

Again very unstable air with showers and the risk of thunder. The airfield was still very wet so no task was set. There was always the BGA simulator for those really desperate for a fix.

Jon Blackhurst arrived with his brother, Gary, on a short visit. He seems to be finding his job and life in Canada very agreeable.

Dave D'Arcy set a new standard of sartorial elegance not seen on the Mynd since Simon's naked 100 km charity fundraising flight. Somehow he'd managed to upset Cazza (don't ask me how!) who took revenge by removing his trousers (don't ask me how!). He spent much of the day sporting a very fetching sarong topped off with a curly blond wig.

Ann Parry decided to tidy up the clubhouse announcing that she would throw out all the rubbish and old computer junk. I was a bit worried; I'd put my laptop on charge. We dismantled a couple of bunk beds which had been left in the TV room.

As forecast we had some showers but none like yesterday. Some local flying took place with short west launching.

Dave Cole came back from the hospital with his arm fixed and plastered.

Wednesday 25th August

A task at last. The internet link is still down so Dominic went to John's house in Wentnor to get the met; some showers, mainly to the north east with a 15-20 knot westerly.

Nick set an assigned area task with areas based around Montgomery, Sarnsfield and Telford with a time limit of 2½ hours. The idea was to ridge soar Wenlock Edge and other hills.

Soon after the start large grey showery masses formed to the east over Telford and Wenlock Edge.

Six brave souls set off; the others had more sense. The few were Dominic, Nick, Dave Rance, Ian Mac, John Roberts and Julian.

Ian Mac was the first to land out in a field in which the farmer had only been able to cut half the crop before he had been forced to abandon his combine when it got bogged down. The farmer reported that it had been raining all day. Ian asked for a big meaty 4 wheel drive retrieve vehicle.

Johnny Roberts was seen landing by the local constabulary, who thought he'd crashed. They brought him back to the bottom of the hill in a panda car.

Dominic landed in a stubble field north of Ludlow. The farmer is a wonderful chap who offered Dominic a tow with the tractor if he got stuck in the field. Unfortunately he needed to call in the favour, or as 2½ year old Emily Haughton, put it: "The big green tractor pulled Daddy's car out of the mud!"

Julian must surely qualify as the coolest dude who ever took to the skies in a Duo Discus. Firstly he forgot the motorhome keys and had to drive to Wenlock Edge to pick the keys up from Meg, who had driven halfway to meet him (major loss of brownie points: it was her day off). By midday he still didn't have any wings attached.

This was not an easy day; the thermals were rough! At this point we must spare a thought for Jon Lewis in the back seat. The human digestive system can only take so much variable "G" loading (believe me! I know). They'd taken some appropriate receptacles supplied by the world's favourite airline who, it seems, cannot organise bank holiday staff rotas. It appears that they can't organise sufficient structural integrity in their sick bags either. While all this drama was taking place in the rear cockpit, Julian had picked a field and put the wheel down. "I'm OK now" piped up a voice from the back.

There followed an epic climb and ridge soar along Wenlock Edge before they arrived at Ironbridge power station to find that it wasn't working and landed - yet another 4 wheel drive retrieve needed. In spite of all that he still won the day.

This is the first assigned area task flown in task week and the scoring program threw up a problem. If a pilot re-entered the start zone then their previous efforts were cancelled and a new start assumed. After much midnight oil burning JP came up with scores. The solution lay in assuming all starts from launch rather than using a start zone.

Thursday 26th August

Better than yesterday; westerly with a warm front approaching later in the day. A wave and ridge task is likely, re-brief at 11:30.

Another assigned area task: Mynd, Sarnsfield 35 km radius, Oswestry 30 km radius, Mynd. 2½ hours. The pilots voted for aerotow launches and opted for 3000 feet to the west of the ridge.

John Roberts in JZB got into the wave and completed the task. Mike Greenwood took some superb pictures from the front seat. Julian, Dominic, Liz Adlard and Neal Clements landed out.

494 (Rod Hawley and Dave Crowson) had a good trip into the first sector, flying down to Talgarth and soaring the ridge before returning to Corndon and the Mynd. They are unsure as to whether they made it into the second zone.

There was some uncertainty as to whether John Roberts is actually in the competition. It wasn't helped by his calling "Non competition finish". It appears that the glider is entered in the competition (paid for by Paul Shuttleworth and Jon Hall!) and he won the day.

Nick Heriz came second; he completed the task in thermals having failed to contact wave.

Friday 27th August - The duff day that wasn't

A warm front went through last night and the day started damp and grey. Dominic thought that it may clear later but the wind would strengthen from the 15 knot westerly and that the airmass would not produce any great convection. No task set by the 11:30 re-brief and by 12:50 (re-brief before lunch just in case) Nick decided to scrub as he didn't want to set a task with strong winds, low cloudbase and no wave.

Dave Rance got to 12,000 feet, Dominic only made 9,000 feet. Several took advantage of the pronounced street running out towards Cadair Idris with cloudbase over 4,000 feet. Several photos were taken, some of which may yet appear in gliding textbooks to illustrate the "classic day".

Although Dave Rance is in the lead, this is his last day here as he is going down to Devon with his family and fishing rod tomorrow.

Saturday 28th August

Woke up to 8/8 medium level cloud which, according to Dominic lies ahead of a rapidly advancing warm front so there is virtually no chance of a task.

Dominic explained the reason why yesterday's forecast was so wrong; he'd based his assumptions upon a forecast, as opposed to actual, sounding which indicated stable air. At around 2 p.m. yesterday the Portacabin weather station recorded a sudden drop in humidity from 60% to 40% along with a drop in temperature which signified the arrival of a new airmass. While this offers a rational explanation for what happened, I doubt if it will in any way lesson Dominic and Nick's, now short, odds on winning the Golden Shovel.

Today sees the start of the British paragliding championships in the adjacent field so the ridge could be interesting if it works.

Given today's poor prospects a re-brief was called for 12:00.

Another assigned area task, with zones based around Newtown, Oswestry, and Montgomery and a 2 hour time limit, was set. Clearly John is getting the hang of scoring them.

In contrast to earlier forecasts, the sky to the west cleared and a westerly wind picked up to enable ridge soaring. The paragliders took off like a swarm of winged ants leaving a nest on the first warm day in spring.

Liz Adlard summed up the day, after two aerotows, as barely soarable. Only Nick and Dominic completed the task. Nick had managed to stay high throughout most of his flight and won the day. Dominic saw Colin Calderhead in a field to the south of the Welshpool valley and expected to join him but scratched on a ridge then thermalled until he had enough height to return to the Mynd. He then lost several hundred feet and went back to top up, waiting for 20 minutes for the next thermal to give him enough height to get back to the Mynd below the airfield.

Sunday 29th August

A front went through at about 06:00 this morning; I was woken by the strong wind. By breakfast time the wind had dropped to around 15 knots westerly.

During briefing a vote was called to see how pilots felt about tasking tomorrow: although no firm conclusions were drawn, nobody seemed very keen. If we get a task today we will have had 5 days which by this year's standards is good going.

Dominic forecast that the cloud would clear with the possibility of wave. The airmass would be unstable possibly leading to showers, with cu-nimbs and thunderstorms later. A re-brief at 11:30 was called.

At 11:20 Dominic asked if I could have a get-away car, with the engine running, waiting outside the

hangar. A massive shower had appeared out to the west.

Neal Clements gave a topical briefing on cloud flying techniques and after lunch the sky out to the west looked clearer although there were some doubts expressed about the wisdom of flying a task with gusts of up to 30 knots. All the same a small AAT was set. At least there were no paragliders about.

Nick set off, then Dominic; the others soon followed.

Julian landed at Minsterly. Surprisingly, Nick failed to get into the wave and didn't fly the task.

By evening the ridge was working and there was wave in evidence. Johnny Roberts got to 11,000 feet over Church Stretton in JZB. Several pilots stayed on the ridge in the hope of following including Rod Hawley and Dave Crowson in 494. The sun sunk, the bar shutters were raised and several offers to clear the sheep were made. Clearly they were determined to make full use of the day. At 29 minutes and 59.9 seconds after official sunset, they stopped rolling on their ground run.

Just as JP thought it was safe to switch off the computer, having worked out the final scores, our heroes staggered out of the gloom and into the Portacabin bearing a logger; while we had been eating, they had flown the task.

Monday 30th August

It seems that the climax to Task Week was a dramatic affair with late night re-counts and a win by the closest possible margin.

Paul Garnham presented the prizes. Dave Rance had been unable to collect his bottle for the best height gain on Friday and so asked that it be given to whoever had helped out on the field the most. Chris Harris nominated Helen Johnson. John also awarded a bottle to Chris in recognition of his field organisation and tugging throughout the week.

The final result was Dominic was the runner up with 1600 points and the winner with 1601 points was Nick Heriz-Smith. The prize for the Best Novice was awarded to Liz Adlard.

Awards for Control took the form of a basket of plants for Sue and a phrenology head for Hazel. Several commentators observed its resemblance to a certain tug pilot, who offered to sign it.

During the morning there was an informal debate on the possibility of moving task week as it clashes with other competitions, as we have seen this year and last, and can clash with people's holiday commitments.

Finally I haven't mentioned many restaurants this time. There is one catering establishment due a mention for following the two basic rules of cooking - use good quality, fresh ingredients and keep it simple. Their lasagne was particularly memorable; it was made from good lean beef and they hadn't tried to do anything clever with it. You don't need to go very far to find this place; in fact you don't even have to leave the clubhouse. Well done Jo and Simon.

Anniversary Dinner

Chris Ellis

Just in case it has escaped your notice, 2004 marks 70 years of gliding from the Long Mynd.

To celebrate the event there will be a special anniversary dinner on October 2nd 2004. Rather than go to an hotel, as we do for our annual dinner, it was deemed more appropriate to 'Dine In' at the club.

Jo and her team are pulling out all the stops to provide a meal to fit the occasion.

There will be a choice of starter - Prawn and Avocado or Medley of Melon.

The main course will be Roast Sirloin of Beef with a vegetarian option of Creamed Mushrooms in Filo Pastry.

There will be a welcoming glass of Bubbly or sherry and wine on the table.

Jo would appreciate it if we could give her some idea of your choice of starter and if you would prefer

the vegetarian option.

A musical diversion is envisaged but not yet finalised. If all else fails, the Chairman's gramophone.

Tickets are available from the office at £20 each, an absolute bargain. Book by phone and debit your flying account if you wish. If you have already booked please contact Martin with the names of your party and their menu selections.

As the weather can be a little inclement at that time of year dress will be 'smart informal'.

Time: 7:30 p.m. for 8:00 p.m. Please book early - places are limited and selling well.

Club Class World Championships 2004

Allan Barnes

Gliding in Norway. Majestic mountains, incredible fjords, virgin forests, amazing wave conditions, fantastic cloudbases, pumping summer thermals, and sunshine from ridiculously early until late into the night. It was all on the website; what better way to escape the cold and damp of a Northeast Victorian winter and achieve an amazing opportunity - to compete against the world's best in the 2004 Club Class World Championships. As a kiwi having just moved to Australia from the UK a few months earlier, and with a Standard Cirrus still in England, it might just be feasible. I signed up to fly as the one and only team member for NZ, while Dave Wilson, my syndicate partner in the UK, signed up as team manager and crew.

Six months later and we were there. The tedious flight to the UK, followed by a very mixed month of practice in England, a long drive north to the ferry port in Newcastle with the glider in tow, and a car groaning with camping gear and mountains of relatively cheap booze and food. In spite of sharing the crossing with 500 Viking Harley Davidson riders returning from pillaging York, it was a relaxing trip across a millpond-smooth North Sea to Stavanger on Norway's west coast. Then a 12 hour drive across incredible mountain scenery, with mouth-watering cumulus skies. We later heard that a 1000 km flight was done in a two-seater that day, launching mid-afternoon and landing at mid-day the following day after spending the whole night in wave!

We arrived at the airfield in Elverum at sunrise (3 a.m.), having not needed the headlights all night. Everything they'd said about Norway seemed to be true! A day later, Cathy, a spirited Australian backpacker who we'd met in England a week earlier, flew in to join us as team chef, physio and domestic services manager.

My first flight surprised me. There were a lot more trees than I had expected. Billions more. But at least the two valleys seemed to have a good scattering of landable fields. Percentage-wise though, I estimated that a lot less than 1% of the contest area was landable. Next day I pair-flew with Pete Masson from the British team and winner of the first World Club Class Champs in Gawler, Australia. We scorched around a 240 km task with 4 knot averages to 9500 feet. Who needs landing fields? This was going to be fun! During the practice week we explored large parts of the contest area and also got into the higher mountains to the north and west.

The opening ceremony in the nearby town of Elverum was well organised, with hot sunny weather and gorgeous streeting cumulus. It looked like the best flying day so far. Every pilot was glancing longingly at the sky as the dignitaries made their speeches and a club pilot taunted us by repeatedly performing aerobatics overhead and then thermalling back to base. One dignitary inadvertently provided a little light relief by explaining that "gliding is a difficult sport because gravity is trying to pull you down and the wind is trying to blow you up".

Day 1 arrived looking just as good as all the others. A 280 km racing task with 6 turnpoints was called. The forecast was for cirrus thickening during the day so early starts were recommended. But the usual game of false starts meant that the first gaggle did not set off until the cirrus was already quite thick. Each thermal seemed slightly weaker than the last, and every thermal was a whirling eggbeater of gliders. Eventually I found myself near the bottom of a gaggle of about 20 gliders milling around in zeroes, all under 2000 feet. There was one landing field within reach - about big enough to land 4 or 5 gliders. The thermal seemed to be weakening. If it died there were going to be broken gliders. Should I give up now, and secure a spot in the landing field but risk others landing on top of me? Or hold on with the hope of a resurgence? I held on, and a few minutes later we all gradually started climbing back out. By 5 p.m. the cirrus was so thick that the sun was completely hidden, and I found myself on a final glide to a landing field with 7 other gliders, after 6 exhausting hours at an average speed of 40 km/h. The French showed the rest of us their technique of pulling the glider out into the middle of the road and de-rigging there to save taking the trailer into the field. Meanwhile traffic was diverted via the roadside ditch!

The unpopular multiple start-cylinder approach, with each pilot obliged to start in a specific cylinder, meant that even gliders with the same handicap scored differently for landing out in the same field, as they had flown different distances. I was reasonably content with 18th place, with a potential 12 days still to fly for. Petr Krejcirik of the Czech Republic flew 30 km further, landing only 10 km short of goal, to win the day.

For me, the next 3 days all went roughly as follows: rig at 7 a.m.; have breakfast and prepare kit; briefing at 10; enter tasks into Winpilot; drag glider to front row of grid; prepare for 11:30 launch under showery skies; stay prepared through numerous postponements of between 15 minutes and one hour; de-rig at any time between 2 and 5 p.m. after cancellation. This was almost as exhausting as flying, since the front row had to be ready to launch the whole day. We'd now had 1 valid day in 4 - it wasn't looking good.

The following day looked like the same pattern, but the showers kept away and we got off under conditions that steadily improved as the day progressed. A 389 km task with 8 turnpoints had been set in order to keep us over the landable valleys. I started late under cloud streets so reliable that it was seldom necessary to thermal. Playing 'catch the gaggle' worked well until I overstretched myself and ended up scratching low in a military danger area, in half a knot, listening to the Aussie pilots joyfully calling seven knots just a few km away, and watching streams of gliders pass me at cloudbase. Once re-established things went well again but the damage was done and I came in 30th for the day and 23rd overall. Impressively, Petr Krejciric won this day as well, at an impressive 117.4 km/h, for a 'perfect' 2000 points overall.

Showers returned for the following day, but I was finally back from the front of the grid and under a bit less pressure at launch. The task-setter decided on a 106/272 km assigned-area task. By the time the start window opened, a huge cu-nim had moved in directly over one of the start cylinders, with a base about 1200 feet below the general cloudbase. An early start was critical as the cu-nim looked like killing lift over a large area of the first sector. I decided to start by diving under the base of the cu-nim and into the start cylinder, but at VNE I realised I was still too high and about to vanish into the side of the stormcloud instead. I veered away and pulled brakes to get underneath. The direct route to the first sector was over an unlandable plateau of lakes and forest, but as I left the rain under the cu-nim I saw that the safer valley route was totally rained out. The sight of 30 gliders ahead of and below me, heading off 'en masse' under a dead sky into unlandable high country seemed spectacular for its stupidity. I maxed out my height at the edge of the cu-nim and then followed.

I count myself very lucky to have got out of there, as most landed in a boggy area of nature reserve. Australian Phil Ritchie was luckier - he escaped uninjured after crashing into trees just short of the same field. Team-mate Terry Cubley landed in waist-deep swamp. As it happens, I had just committed myself to landing in a shallow lake when I saw Brit Jay Rebbeck circling to my left at about 800 feet. I eased in underneath him and only then saw Rich Hood, another Brit, below us both. It took us several minutes to claw our way out of danger, but eventually the three of us climbed back to base from where we could comfortably survey the carnage below. The sky was still totally overcast, but we found enough lift to clear the plateau and enter the first task area. By now it was clear that speed was irrelevant, so we drifted downwind to the far edge of the assigned area before making a final glide back into the murk. Having switched to the British radio frequency, it was an absolute pleasure listening to the team talk between Jay and Rich - true masters of team flying. Even in the dire conditions in which we found ourselves, the radio talk was always relevant, concise, and above all, positive and enthusiastic.

Incredibly, 3 pilots completed the task. They had failed to climb by the time the start gate opened, and eventually started after most pilots had already landed. Lithuanian Kestutis Miliunas had a winning speed of 43 km/hr. I was happy with my 8th for the day, but disappointed that the day only scored 232 points. Many pilots thought that the 3-cylinder start, combined with the nature of the task, had hugely disadvantaged some pilots - those who had had to start low or glide further before any chance of a thermal.

Three more cancelled days followed, including one which brightened and became taskable immediately after the cancellation was announced. Each morning briefing reignited arguments over the start arrangements. Several nations brightened up proceedings by hosting national food evenings - the Italian night was particularly good. But overall there was a definite despondency setting in - it seemed that the organisers had 'lost their bottle' and were now reluctant to start a task in anything but racing conditions.

Day 4 lifted the gloom. The organisers finally gave in to pilot pressure and introduced a 10 km start line to replace the three start areas that had arguably generated so much inconsistency in results on day 3. Polish pilot Sebastian Kawa won the 2 hour 30 minute, 175 km/331 km task, with 3 assigned areas. Incredibly, he flew by far the greatest distance to achieve over 100 km/hr, more than 5 km/hr faster than second placed Thomas "Super Czech" Suchanek, the defending World Champion. He reportedly crossed a large blue gap to run a line of cu-nims with average climbs of over 10 m/sec. A risky but successful strategy. Once again I lost key points by pushing too hard, and having to scrape back up from low. The final glide into a rainstorm caught out many people, who found lift instead of sink and struggled to finish low.

The competition organisers had hoped to show us the incredible mountain flying to the north and west, and on the last day this desire resulted in a long primary and backup task in that direction, even though conditions there were stormy. Common sense eventually prevailed, and a third task to the familiar south was eventually briefed with a first start at 3 p.m. Even with the late launch, the starting games were worse than usual, with crazy congestion at cloudbase just before the start line and some very dangerous flying. My gaggle reached base in a strong thermal just short of the start line, but rather than leave first, everyone just increased their speed until we were all hurtling around at cloudbase at 90 knots.

After starting, conditions were excellent, and when we reached the nearest edge of the first assigned area, a cloud street headed off to the horizon, far beyond the Swedish border. This cloud street bore no heed of landable areas however, and so the lot of us flew 30 km in and out under it with barely a turn the whole way, and nothing but trees and lakes in sight. Don't try this at home - unless in a lot of very good company! German pilot Michael Streit won the day at 108 km/hr.

The last two days were also cancelled due to weather - giving us a total of 5 flown out of 14 available. At the end it had been more a competition of nerves and patience for pilot and crew than one of flying. The eventual winner was Sebastian Kawa, who had daily positions of 28th, 3rd, 5th, 1st and 15th.

And my final impressions? The good days we had prove that flying here can be great. We were just unlucky to get the wettest and least sunny June in Elverum since 1898. More of a problem to me and to most people is likely to be the cost - everything in Norway costs much more - except for salmon and firewood!

Some selected results:

Position	Pilot	Nationality	Points
1	Sebastian Kawa	PL	3494
2	Jay Rebbeck	GB	3408
3	Arkadiusz Downar	PL	3398
4	Richard Montigny	FR	3396
5=	Richard Hood	GB	3385
5=	Petr Krejcirik	CS	3385
14	Allan Barnes	NZ	3193
34	Terry Cubley	AU	2663
44	Pete Masson	GB	2362

Task Week Results 2004

John Parry

Day results are points/position

Place	Points	Glider	Pilot(s)	Glider Type	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
1	1601	154	Nick Heriz-Smith	Ventus	679/2	321/4	313/2	288/1	
2	1600	Z19	Dominic Haughton	LS8-15	665/3	411/2	160/5	195/2	169/1
3	1341	TL	Dave Rance	Ventus 2CM	711/1	337/3	293/3		
4	963	802	Julian Fack	DuoDiscus	410/8	430/1	123/7=		
5	786	493	Alasdair Lewis	Discus	521/5		106/9	56/4	103/2
6	707	494	Dave Crowson, Rod Hawley	DuoDiscus	366/9=		235/4	68/3	38/4
7	654	FWM	Neal Clements, Colin Calderhead	DG300	516/6	78/8	60/10		
8	620	JZB	John Roberts	DG505		291/5	329/1		
9	574	646	Chris Alldis	LS8-18	574/4				
10	491	EVV	Pete Orchard	ASK23	266/9=		125/6		
11	451	288	Tony Danbury, Dave D'Arcy	LS4	451/7				
12	410	HYD	Liz Adlard	ASW24	287/11		123/7=		
13	227	882	Clive Jones	ASW19		156/7	30/12		41/3
14	222	DZ	Ian MacArthur	LS4		222/6			
15	42	FMU	Jon Gammage	Standard Cirrus			42/11		