

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Dates for Your Diary

Trophy Presentation is on 19th November.

Christmas Dinner is on 17th December. Menu to follow.

The club is now open on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for solo pilots - sorry no check flights available, all day Friday for club flying and weekends as usual. The office is open Friday through to Monday each week.

The club will be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day but will reopen on Tuesday, 27th December through to Monday 2nd January. We have a visiting club (or two) that week.

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<p>Club web site: www.longmynd.com</p>	

Chairman's Contribution

Charles Carter

Gliding like most weather related sports throws up anomalies during the course of a season so that some pilots who cannot pick and choose their days feel that it has been a poor season whilst those who are more fortunate with their timing or maybe more skilful with their weather forecasting have some vintage flying. This season fits into that category with weekend weather being fairly tricky but with some excellent spells also.

However, I think that it has been a vintage year for the club on the flying front with our hosting of Competition Enterprise which was a huge success followed by a successful Task Week both blessed with good weather. We have provided several of the British gliding teams with competitors and in the latest *Sailplane and Gliding* magazine the list of winners of national competitions contained many Myndites. Dare I mention that we also won the Inter Club League Final and the trophy now resides in our trophy cabinet.

Apart from the headline performances there have been many notable flights and achievements on the flying field, so if you have achieved that elusive badge flight this year or just had a great day out, made progress towards Bronze, gone solo or simply made progress with your training, well done.

If you have made a notable flight either horizontally or vertically please enter the details on the board in the clubhouse so that when the annual trophies are awarded we know who the worthy recipients are. Another reason for publicising your flights apart from advertising what a pundit you are is so that when, as is happening at present, the CAA attempt to steal upper airspace from us we are able to counter with facts and figures of wave flights to argue the case. Don't let us lose the right to our airspace through lethargy.

As you all know I have a bleat in each of my chairman's notes and this episode is no different so brace yourselves.

Carelessness is the theme this time and it is costing YOU a lot of money. Not the club as if it is some amorphous being which operates independently of its members but YOU. Did you know, for instance, that Colin has had to weld the chassis of one of the Landrovers because someone had driven it in such a manner as to break both main beams in half? Next time you are near a Landrover have a look at the chassis and see if you can imagine what you would need to do to break it.

Canopies need special care which is something we learn very early in our gliding experience but we do not appear to remember the lesson. Two of our two seaters will need new canopies to pass their C of A next Spring and they are not cheap - ask Roger. Both have been damaged by mishandling. There are many more examples which I could quote but I think that you are all getting the drift. I know as well as any that accidents can and will happen but please let us all try to avoid damage that could easily be avoided by a little more thought because it is costing you and, what is worse, me a lot of money. Shall we all try to make the Treasurer a happier man?

As I write these note the course season has just one more day to go so it is an appropriate time to thank our professional instructors John Stuart and Dave Crowson for their hard work and dedication to their duty and to thank the winching team and the office staff for their tremendous input not forgetting the housekeeping duties and the kitchen team. I have said this before but it bears repeating that we expect them to cope in their various duties on a day to day basis and they invariably do. Thank you to all of them. I am happy to tell you that Dave will again be assistant course instructor alongside JS next year.

The old lags will know perfectly well that the onset of winter does not mean an end to flying at the Mynd so for those of you who are new to the club let me tell you that during the coming months you can have some very exhilarating flying and training. The club is open to solo pilots on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and to all pilots for club flying on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

JS runs the Friday operation and you can get all that experience for the price of the flying. Take advantage of the facilities.

I look forward to seeing you at the awards dinner at the Club on the 19th November.

CFI's Bits

Neal Clements

Winter canopies

It's that time of year again, we have gone through the summer with dirty canopies and now we are about to pay for it. In the winter it is much more likely that your canopy will mist up and a dirty canopy mists far more readily than a clean one. In addition we are soon going to be landing directly into the sun and any dirt on your canopy will be magnified just when you least need it. In the office we have all the equipment we need for canopy cleaning, please can you make it part of your DI routine.

Post solo development

I have been busy attaching post solo people to instructors. If you have not yet been allocated and would like to be then please send me an email. Your assigned instructor will help take you through the progress card and will act as someone who knows your progress so you do not keep having to reacquaint instructors with your current progress.

Discus conversion

I wrote in a previous newsletter about the Discus and its place in the fleet. Don't forget to ask an instructor to convert you, it is a modern single seater glider with excellent handling, superb performance and very good brakes. There is no benefit in restricting the types of aircraft you fly. A well developed pilot has got to that stage by having experience of many types. I had the opportunity of flying a tailless glider once and I am very glad that I took the opportunity, even if it was only to learn that I don't want the experience again!

Short west launching

I would like to remind pilots that a short west winch launch is just that, it is a winch launch. There is no need to treat it any differently to any other. Especially there is no need to be "shallow". The launch is quite short so not climbing means that you are trying to catch up with the cable and if it has a parachute on it then you will probably succeed. There is a significant wind gradient on a short west so you do need to be extremely quick with your recovery, any delay will see you sinking through air that is slowing down as you descend.

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Treasurer's Notes

Keith Mansell

The summer is over and now comes the reckoning.

My recent review of members' accounts reveals over £11,000 outstanding.

Please help Martin, me and the club by settling your outstanding account soon, especially if you owe for trailer parking.

From the Flying Field

David d'Arcy

Welcome to new members Colin Dryden, Robin Pearson, Simon Taylor, Andrew Eckert, Benjamin Watts, and Peter Watts, I hope by now you will be making good use of our facilities and have got some flying in.

The panic is now over for all those startled members calling the office during September as we have found Martin. He was away gliding at Aboyne with Julian Fack and Paul Garnham in Duo Discus JF. William Brewis and Alasdair Lewis also accompanied them with Ventus 154. So now you won't be that surprised to know congratulations are in order for Alasdair, who achieved Diamond height with, I think, at least two 20,000 foot flights. Well done. Congratulations also go to Ian MacArthur for being selected for a possible British Team (Club Class) place at the 2006 World Championships in France. We also have two new Basic Instructors (BIs) those being James Moore and Sarah Platt, well done on passing your course to godhood.

The weekends haven't been too kind to us, but that doesn't mean we haven't been flying. In fact a number of members have been progressing their skills with type conversions. Those being; Andy Richards, Steven Gunn-Russell, Keith Sweeting, Sarah Butler and Nicky Jackson. So looks like Brian will now have some serious competition for the K8! However, you don't necessarily need to have had a soaring flight to make a trip to the Mynd worth while, although it helps, as the MGC has many other activities to offer. For instance you could corner an instructor and get that Bronze paper help you need, or tackle a committee member, and there are always those little jobs to do. I can think of a bedroom door, for one. Then there's walking, mountain biking, RC model or kite flying, stone picking (I actually saw the chairman doing this the other weekend:-) Saturday night social meal, etc., etc. So, hope to see you all at Bonfire Night and/or the MGC Awards Dinner, or soaring the Mynd in a 30 knot westerly!

The Mynd Sailing Team

Jon Hall

The Mynd Sailing Team again took part in the Solent Quest over the weekend of 15/16th October, having won the main day in April, the prize for which was a free entry into the October event, worth about £800. The team comprised Iain Evans (skipper), Rose Johnson (navigator and foredeck), Paul Shuttleworth (helm), Nick Heriz Smith (mainsail), Karen Mather and Jon Hall (gib) and John Tanner (tactician and foredeck). Once again sailing a 37 foot Sunfast 37 out of Port Solent the event consists of three races over two days. There were only 12 entries this time but three regattas taking place at the same time made the Solent even busier than usual. The weather was mild and variable with a lazy warm front bringing south easterly winds up to force 5.

The Mynd came second on the first day but only because the winners cheated better than we did. On the second day after overnighing in Cowes we finished 5th in the first race and won the second by a boat's length giving us a third overall. Not a bad weekend. On the strength of this result more or less the same team with the addition of Colin Calderhead instead of Karen are entering for some serious round the cans racing in the winter series starting mid November.

Recruitment Campaign

Jon Hall

We all know that new members are the lifeblood of any organisation and none more so than the gliding movement. New members bring fresh faces, new enthusiasm, new ideas, more volunteers, future instructors and committee members. Not to mention added revenue income. In common with the rest of the movement we have seen our membership diminishing over the last five years or so. This is commonly accepted to be because people are cash rich and time poor these days, that is they find the nature of our sport difficult to fit into busy lives with many demands on their time. I am sure this is a significant factor but it may also be significant that our particular decline really started with the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001.

In the past we have tried special offers and recruitment weekends which were very successful in bringing in 30 or 40 new members at the start of the season but by the start of the following season not many of them renewed. This may be because we as a club failed to engage with them or to instil in them the enthusiasm we all have for the sport. It may be because we failed to get them to solo quick enough. It may be because once solo we abandoned them to find their own way instead of helping them to become cross country pilots. It may of course simply be that low cost special offers attract the sort of people who cannot really afford to glide and once reality bites they choose to do something else.

However over the last couple of years the club has adopted a different strategy and concentrated on reaching new members who really want to glide and this has paid off. We are now retaining more members each year than for some time and are seeing a small but steady stream of recruits throughout the year. The success of our members in national and international competitions no doubt has helped in this respect and we maintain a relentless stream of PR and local advertising. The Mynd currently has a very high profile within the movement but it is time to concentrate on those outside it.

What we have not really yet capitalised on is the hundreds of people with whom we all come into contact every day through work, clubs, schools and other organisations. To try and remedy this I am asking you all to download from the club website members section an A4 recruitment poster, print it out and put it on display at your place of work, the local chip shop or post office, your school notice board or anywhere you think it may do some good. And don't forget that for every new member you introduce you will receive £30 in your flying account by way of a thank you. Just make sure that they mention your name when they sign up.

www.longmynd.com/members_section.htm

Land Out Poster

Jon Hall

How many of you have come to the end of that cross country flight a few miles from home and elected to put down in a friendly field. Off you go to find the landowner only to return to blue flashing lights and the fourth degree from the local plod because someone, having come across an aircraft in a field, thinks it has crashed. If you are really unlucky the air ambulance will be there too. If it hasn't happened to you yet it probably will - eventually.

All of this can be avoided by carrying with you on every cross country flight notification that the aircraft has not crashed, that the pilot is fine, has just gone to find the land owner and will be back soon. To make it easy you can download from the club web site members section a PDF A4 poster that gives all the information you need. Just add your name and telephone number, stick a few in a plastic bag and keep under the seat. Believe me the five minutes it takes will save hours of interface with bureaucracy in the event.

www.longmynd.com/members_section.htm

A Visit to Aboyne

Alasdair Lewis

(or a guide to Deeside Eating)

Having heard stories about Aboyne I had never seriously considered flying there until William Brewis decided to take 154 up there for a week and asked if I would be interested in flying her for the second week. After being assured by Julian Fack that the weather was usually good and the airfield wasn't as difficult as people said I agreed.

Arriving on the Saturday I scrounged a check flight and was soon enjoying the magnificent views and learning how to land. If you can land along the Mynd club road then Aboyne is a piece of cake, their twin runways each being a magnificent 10 feet wide.

The sting in the tail, I discovered, was that there is a white line painted at the far end of the runway and you are expected to taxi up to it, early stopping being penalised to the tune of a tot of whisky to the CFI for each 10m short. A point that I was unaware of at the time... My instructor thought that for my landing a crate would almost be enough.

Then time to find the cottage. Julian is right about that track. The uninitiated would give up long before the mile and a half, however the cottage and the views are fully worth the drive.

Once we had settled in Julian and Meg started what was to become the "where shall we eat now" ritual, eventually settling for a pub restaurant some 15 miles away near Banchory.

Day 1 was reasonably sunny and the wave bars were forming to the north of the club. Julian encouraged me into the air and I was soon enjoying(?) my first aerotow in 154 (belly hook only). Keeping a good eye on the tug and the not so good eye mainly on the very small fields in front I was surprised to suddenly notice the vario jammed against the top stop. By the time my brain registered the fact that Pawnees don't usually have such a good climb rate we were approaching 3600 feet (the whole tow taking 4 minutes - the canny Scots charge by height too!) The trace shows a climb rate peaking at 22 knots.)

Then came mistake number one. By the time I remembered to put a notch in the trace I was at 4200 feet.

As I climbed to 9000 feet I briefly saw JF which had taken the next aerotow. While still messing about in weak lift I heard Julian saying that they were now over Loch Muick (some 29 km into wind) in good lift so I rushed off to join them, arriving to hear Julian saying that they were now over Braemar at 17,000 feet in 6 knot. Failing to connect at Loch Muick I then headed to Braemar where, true to form, I couldn't find anything there either. After scratching around (at 11,000 feet) I found lift to 15,000 feet - at least the gold was bagged. Then while returning to the airfield I stumbled across good lift at Balmoral. This took me to 21,000 feet - the magic diamond - assuming that that aerotow wasn't too high! I would have loved to do a bit more exploring, however there was mistake number two. Fill the oxygen bottle. It was only half full when I started and now in the red. As this was my first use of oxygen I didn't want to take any chances, so it was a slow descent back to the airfield.

This time the food guru said "Potarch", more travelling and more good food.

Day 2 was gloomy, overcast and windy. The Aboyne Wise Men tried one flight and put their toys away. Time to visit one of those distilleries. Karen, having both hers and my "free" samples, became very merry.

For a change we went to a local eatery. The Boat at Aboyne, joined by Richard Bennett who did his best for Anglo-German relations by telling German jokes (not too loudly) while sitting next to a table of them.

Day 3 was bright and sunny. A stiff south westerly. I vowed to stick to JF like glue, but as neither of us found any good lift we went our own ways, mine taking me back to Braemar where a climb to 18,000 feet gave me a stunning view and I "local soared" to have a look at Feshiebridge. The cloud had increased and all the high ground was covered, but the Spey and Dee valleys remained clear, providing a pointer back to Aboyne.

Back to Banchory for the meal. A strangely deserted eatery, strains of Reginald Dixon from the music system not helping according to Julian. Wasn't brave enough to admit that I had the same tape at home.

Day 4. A murky day with cloud over the hills and another gusty south westerly. Julian, Paul and Meg went sightseeing, and so did Karen and I. Arriving back at the airfield in mid afternoon I moved 154 to the launch point, undecided as to flying, but it seemed madness to have towed a glider all the way to Scotland and not fly it. My mind was made up by one of the Camphill contingent announcing that he was climbing at 7000 feet. Not expecting anything I took an aerotow, this time remembering to pull off when the lift seemed reasonable and to then make a good notch. A quick climb in front of an obvious cloud took me to 10,000 feet where some of the other members were stooging around. The lift petered out but a hop across wind to a promising cloud over Ballater soon gave me 12,000 feet and I was joined by an early solo pilot in an Aboyne Puchatz. (Myndites read and weep!) Downwind a textbook lenticular was forming at about 15,000 feet, but it didn't look very substantial and it was with surprise that I found weak lift in front of it. It gradually strengthened and I topped out at 18,000 feet. By this time more cloud had formed and upwind another lenticular beckoned. I flew around it but it didn't produce anything good so I drifted back to north of the club and chanced upon some lift. By this time the whole of the Dee valley and the adjacent areas were under 8/8 cloud, but the flatlands to the north remained clear. Julian and Paul had by now arrived back at the airfield and got airborne but unfortunately couldn't find a suitable entry point.

The climb at Aboyne peaked out at 21,000 feet but a smoother lump in the cloud sheet persuaded me to hop into wind and there I found another reasonable climb. As the height increased I set the altimeter to 1014 and then agonised as to how close I could get without exceeding FL245, finally bottling out at an indicated 24,300.

As it was getting late a quick descent to 9000 feet and a dash back under the cloud followed by a turbulent approach ended a most wonderful flight, and now I had a "cast iron" trace for the diamond claim.

An even closer eatery - the Candlestick Maker in Aboyne (used to be a butchers and then a bakers). Possibly the best meal of the week. Managed to get Richard to explain how oil rigs steer their drills around corners - an interesting topic (honestly!).

Day 5. Another non flying day, time to get the paperwork sorted and the loggers calibrated.

The final dinner, back to the Potarch. Paul, frequently accosted by the waitress, worrying she might be trying to proposition him!

Day 6. Another non flyer. Decided to call it a day and trail back. Settled the flying bill and the food bill (which happened to be the greater of the two).

In summary:

There are some flights that one will never forget, to get three in four days just shows you how special Aboyne can be. Their club members and the other visitors are friendly and helpful, the hangarage vast, the airfield interesting, the scenery spectacular. Next time I go, if the weather permits, it will be time to turn those heights into distance. A 500 km can be flown without having to cross any airspace.

What have I learnt? As Neal says, P P P P P. When possible fly with a full oxygen cylinder, tuck your trousers into your woolly socks, don't forget to notch your trace, just because other people are at the same height don't assume that there isn't better elsewhere and take a camera - a picture is worth a thousand words.

Finally, I will never know how high I could have gone, the ubiquitous Class B stopping any chance of finding out. I was only a few kilometres from the "wave window" but even if I had been in the allowed area I couldn't use it as I haven't got a R/T license and I hadn't given the two hours notice. I understand that in the near future the Class B airspace is planned to come down to FL195 so as to "harmonise with Europe", so depriving many people of the chance to get a Diamond.

Task Week 2005

Debbie Bilham

Saturday 20th August

There are fewer entries this year with only twelve, one of which (the recently restored T21) is flying hors concours. John Parry (JP) felt he could not set tasks that would suit the T21 and the hot ships such as Dave Rance's Ventus 2 Turbo. Several regulars are away at the Junior Nationals at Bicester, and Nationals at Nympsfield and Lasham.

After a successful Competition Enterprise at the Mynd Enterprise scoring is to be used this week. The idea is to give pilots more freedom to plan their own tasks and remove the strictures of a regionals scoring. We have done well in Rockpolishers this year and Dominic Haughton will be flying in the final. This doesn't conflict with the last weekend of Task Week thereby denying Dominic the chance to pack his nearest rival off for the deciding day.

There are the usual warnings of possible GPS jamming trials and this weekend sees the Shobdon Air Races. Next weekend we can look forward to the prospect of the Paragliding Nationals taking place in the field next door.

Nick Heriz Smith is setting the tasks, Dominic is providing met information and JP is competition director. The forecast was for good weather today but with a front approaching tomorrow night and another system due to hit us later in the week.

Nick set an assigned area task: Mynd, Bromyard, and Worcester with a minimum distance of 128 km and a maximum distance of 338 km. There would be no time limit and no speed points, only distance points with a 50 point bonus for getting back. If it turns out to be a good day and everybody does the maximum distance then the only difference in scoring will be down to handicapping. David Rance has a conspiracy theory: the T21 syndicate are out to get him.

Earlier on we had heavy cloud formation which implied that the airmass was a lot wetter than forecast. Dominic was despondent in that there was a lump of alto cu he had not foreseen over the airfield. It cleared quickly leading to a rush for launches. Dominic went to inspect the heather and in doing so lost his place in the aerotow queue, i.e. about 20 minutes. Dave Rance took the first launch and made a dirty dive for a hopeful looking cloud. It paid off.

Julian is flying his new toy, his DuoDiscus Turbo. I asked if the engine was stowed in the back of his van as the engine of his single seater Discus had usually been. "No, it's stowed in the back of the glider." Clearly he means business. Nick had as usual left his engine out of 154.

During the afternoon a member of the public found an unexploded device on Spyglass Hill which probably wasn't a souvenir of the heyday of the Long Mynd CPA. The police and army bomb disposal people soon arrived.

The day turned out much better than expected with most pilots getting back. Nick returned having covered all but 4 km of the maximum distance. As JP later observed, two of the club's fastest pilots failed to get back. Dominic landed out just north of Craven Arms and Dave Rance, who had been scratching the same stagnant piece of air with him, popped his engine, but only after Dominic had landed. It seems that the Haughton/Rance overgrown schoolboy mutual winding up society are on good form again this year. Dominic thinks that with another 10 minutes he would have made it: was that a 50 point pee this morning?

Later the police and bomb disposal came back looking for Neal Clements. He was unsure if and when they'll blow the bomb up which is a pity as we'd like to watch. He told us that sometimes they take them away with them.

The met indicates that the front may be coming in quicker than expected.

Dominic was praising the reliability of his Calibri logger. JP was more cautious. He was heard saying, "The only reason for having two loggers is that you don't carry three."

Sunday 21st August

In spite of the perennial warnings about GPS jamming, it seems that the MOD have nothing on MGC members when it comes to screwing up the operation of GPS and logging equipment. John has had to deal with the usual catalogue of problems with loggers and GPSs, some due to genuine equipment failure, others due to finger trouble. Dave Rance walked into control with his logger/GPS unit with the aerial plug still in. Unfortunately the aerial cable wasn't still in. Dave Cole's didn't log as it had been set for the wrong format and wouldn't talk to the GPS. Today Bob Williams carefully checked that it was logging properly before setting off and it logged all the way to Church Stretton, where his connecting cable fell out; he hadn't screwed it in securely.

Nick was the winner yesterday, Julian came 2nd with Dominic 3rd and David 4th.

The bomb disposal people came and blew up the bomb on Spyglass Hill at about 9.30. The explosion was a disappointment. There was a smoke ring and that was about it. We didn't get a loud deep "Boom", mushroom cloud or see the top of the hill blown off like Krakatoa. Shortly afterwards three of the Shobdon air racers passed by to the north, low over Spyglass Hill, before diving down into the valley.

Today is forecast to be warm and blue with the warm front arriving this evening, with rain overnight and post cold front conditions tomorrow. The task set was from Enterprise. There were 9 turning points set in a ring around Shropshire with the Mynd in the middle. Pilots have to fly around clockwise starting where they like and turning as many TPs as possible. If conditions are good, they can go round more than once. Again there are no speed points, it is distance that matters.

Dominic got to the front of the aerotow queue – no heather inspection today. While waiting for thermals to start, it became clear that Dominic's Calibri GPS logger had failed. He tried various combinations of aeriels, Calibris etc and eventually got it working. JP, Nick and Dave Rance were incredibly helpful in getting him sorted out with a Garmin back up. During his flight the Calibri appeared to work normally, however when John came to download it the trace was incomplete.

At about lunchtime the air ambulance came to the paragliders' field to attend to a pilot who had broken both wrists. There was a lot of blue to the east. Nick and Dominic set off to the south west; only after Dominic called that he was going to the north east. Conditions were not easy. Martin and Richard Bennett took off in 494 and returned having had a difficult time in "turn and curse" and failing to reach any TPs. Later Neal and Jan went for a flight and found the thermals much more consistent.

Dominic changed to Welshpool's frequency just in time to hear Jon Hall (PZ) landing there. Jon got an aerotow out and later looked marginal for getting back to the Mynd prompting recollections of the occasion a couple of years ago when he single handedly put the tug into profit for the year in one day.

Dominic got the timing of the front spot on. It turned out to be quite a hot day with some cu forming.

Paul Garnham arrived during the afternoon. The rain arrived during the night.

Quote of the day: "The advice to stay high is like the advice to stay rich."

Monday 22nd August

Yesterday two pilots were joint 3rd; Sarah Platt and Dave d'Arcy. Not only do they have identical gliders they have identical scores, do they only have one logger and a piece of string between them?

Nick and Dominic were equal first, both turning 7 TPs and getting back. A debate took place as to whether JP should accept flights which have not been validated by a logger due to failure, but can be verified by other means such as a Garmin tracklog. The consensus is that he should.

Following the retirement of the weather owl, Dominic has found a new source of reliable and accurate met information. Yesterday the lady in Church Stretton launderette told him "You'd better make the most of today, love. Winter is coming."

Another possible forecasting aid is Neal's tent which got trashed in the strong wind last night. It could indicate the weather as follows. If the tent is: Ripped then it is windy; On Wenlock Edge, very windy; White, snowing; Hard, frosty; Invisible, foggy and if Wet then it is raining.

George Wearing deserves a mention for having turned five TPs in his Open Cirrus without a vario after both his mechanical and electric ones failed yesterday.

A re-brief was set for 12:30 and soon afterwards the rain cleared and the wind increased. Cadair Idris and the windfarm can be clearly seen. Dominic checked a forecast sounding for the new airmass which has arrived only to find that it may not be as convective as hoped for.

We had the top team in the kitchen this morning: Neal, Jan Outhwaite and Helen Johnson. Neal and Jan cooked a superb vegetable soup proving that the CFI has his uses after all.

By 12:27 there was a huddle by the dining room window pointing excitedly out to the west. The TPs are Newtown, Montgomery, Mortimer's Cross and Montford Bridge and the Mynd. They can be taken in any order, alternating with the Mynd, and the TPs cannot be taken twice in succession.

It was difficult locally at first. Nick took a re-light after failing to get away from the ridge and Clive Jones scratched away from below hill height.

Brian and George got both of their varios fixed – and then their logger packed up.

Amazingly Nick landed out. His field had just been sprayed with slurry to enhance the aromatic qualities of 154. After JP went to retrieve it, Ann wouldn't let him back in to control without first taking his shoes off.

Tuesday 23rd August

Yesterday Dominic's back up logger failed in flight – battery failure and JP was unable to get a trace from his Calibri. JP tried again with the Calibri – he hit it with a bigger hammer- and it downloaded OK, phew! Good thing too as he won the day and is now in the lead overall. Julian and Paul Garnham were second and Dave Rance was third after a re-count as JP had problems with his logger also.

Today should be usable with wave and the front coming in tonight. It's starting to look as though tomorrow won't be a washout either. Today's task is very similar to yesterday's except that Church Stoke has been added as an extra TP. This detail was lost on Dave Rance who called over the radio asking if control could confirm that Bishops Castle was the additional TP.

Bob Williams landed out soon after take off. It turns out that he had visited one TP and was heading for the next without returning to the Mynd in-between.

The T21 has been bungee launched today and soared on the ridge. At one point it looked as though it may go on task. It is difficult to say what would be the most embarrassing aspect of it landing out, Roger Andrews' dayglow orange overalls with the broken zip and his hat taped on with wing tape wrapped under his chin, or the state of the trailer.

Alan Reynolds made his first field landing in his ASW24. Dave Rance had visited the "Bishops Castle" TP three times before he realised his error and that was only after Dominic called control to confirm the lat and long of one of the TPs. We wait with bated breath to see if he had alternated with the same TP which would be discounted under the "not the same TP twice in succession" rule. Nick landed out again today, Dominic thinks that he was sucked in by the Newtown sink hole. Some wave but mainly thermals.

During the afternoon Dave Cole spotted what appeared to be a vehicle on fire at the bottom of the Asterton road and called the fire brigade. It turned out to be a road sweeper that was giving out an extraordinary amount of dust with its flashing yellow beacons shining through the dust cloud.

Wednesday 24th August

Wet and windy in the night, still raining and damp in the morning: however the fronts are expected to clear later so a task is likely. The radio forecast says Wales will have a sunny afternoon and Dominic's sounding shows a superb airmass behind the front.

Yesterday's results: Tony Danbury was 3rd, Dave Rance was 2nd in spite of turning Bishop's Castle twice and Dominic won the day again. He is now in the lead by 285 points.

Today's mission is a circuit around Shobdon, Leominster, Sarnesfield, Prestigne and Mortimer's Cross. You fly down via Walford and then go round as many times as you can, if you miss a TP then you must return to the Mynd which counts as a TP. Nick set this so as to keep over low ground in the event of

low cloudbase and with Shobdon in mind as a place to land. The clearance went through as predicted and seven gliders went off on task.

Dominic was the first to call in having landed out in a field near Leintwardine. Soon after landing he heard a motor start up and Dave Rance flew overhead: he'd been waiting for a chance to do that all week. Later he called Dominic while we were on the way back with the glider; he often did so.

Rod Hawley and Neal Clements landed at Shobdon in 494 and were surprised to see Julian follow them in JF. He'd gone to start up his engine and found that he was short of fuel. Dave had covered a large distance due to flying a long way round the TPs. If JP insisted that TPs be flown within 3 km then Dave wouldn't have scored very well.

Back at the Mynd, the T21 had another busy day with several bungee and short west launches.

Thursday 25th August

At briefing Neal presented Julian with a Sainbury's fuel discount voucher "for use in emergency".

Yesterday Brian Lomas, flying the Open Cirrus, came 4th. Dave Rance was 3rd, Nick 2nd with Dominic winning the day and increasing his lead to over 300 points.

The forecast is for very unstable air: a showery day with cu nims building up. Thermals are expected to be weak low down but strong near cloudbase, around 5000 feet. The wind is forecast westerly at all heights which could give rise to wave.

The task is an assigned area task with two large areas; basically North Wales and South Wales. Pilots can visit either or both zones and the bonus for getting back will be 10% of the distance score. The idea is that pilots can go where the conditions are best.

Dominic found an unusual NOTAM: "Welsh Cultural Event" at Machynlleth. It doesn't specify what they're doing but they're doing it up to 2000 feet.

There were showers at first. Dave Rance took a launch and flew the ridge for an hour or so before landing back to go again later. Dave Cole and George Wearing landed out. Tony Danbury returned having flown to Pontesbury and Craven Arms, just entering both zones.

Mark the caterer deserves a mention in dispatches for his home made orange and lemon cake.

The T21 has seen action again on the ridge.

The forecast was spot on: during the afternoon some big cu nims built up with massive showers.

Nick landed at Sleaf and asked for a tug retrieve. Dominic landed north of Shrewsbury and I set off to get him. While in the field we got showered on. By the time we derigged it was getting late and so we decided to go back and have dinner at the Mynd. In the car I asked Dominic if Dave Rance had called him. "Oddly enough, no. I think he's beaten me today, he went right up to the North Wales coast." When we got back to the club we saw straight away that his trailer was missing. So was Julian's.

Dave and Julian had both motored back to the Mynd and believed that they had plenty of height to get back on the hill: which they would have done had the Mynd not been, very suddenly, engulfed in a "glider pilot's hell" type squall, which in a matter of seconds left them facing 12 knots of sink, rain and winds in excess of 50 knots as measured at the clubhouse. Julian managed to land in a field to the east. Unfortunately for David he suffered a heavy landing in a field, which put him out of the competition.

While all this was going on, Nick was sitting in the control tower at Sleaf drinking tea and listening to the tug being guided in using QDM: Roger Ellis had had an interesting afternoon as well.

Friday 26th August

The forecast doesn't look too good today so Nick declared a rest day, the first so far this week. With his flight to the north Welsh coast, he won the day yesterday but there seems to be a touch of "Apart from that, how did you enjoy the play Mrs Lincoln?" about his victory.

Since we've had six days so far and the weekend looks hopeful, it was more or less decided that we would not fly on Monday. Given that the roads around the hill are such a pain on the Bank Holiday, this was welcomed.

Saturday 27th August

Liz and Alan Sparrow arrived.

There was 5 – 7/8 alto cu and Rose Johnson reported that “It’s pissing down south of Leominster.” The cloud is forecast to clear later and Nick set the first closed circuit task of the week; Kington, Hereford, Brecon Beacon 147.84 km. There are speed point awarded under Enterprise rules and a bonus for getting back.

By the afternoon the paragliders were struggling with only five getting away from the ridge. Dominic went off and did 17 km down track before coming back. He didn’t cross the start line.

Later in the day Julian set off in the Duo with the intention of motoring around Wales, however he found a weak thermal at Wentnor and decided to go for it. He was the only pilot who attempted the task.

In the evening, Dominic approached me with an important job: to work out, given TP bonuses and getting back bonus, what was the maximum task size tomorrow which would enable us to go down to the pub for a nice relaxing pie and a pint while the rest of the field slug it out for second place. I did the sums but reckoned without two important factors: Nick is in second place and Nick is setting the tasks.

Sunday 28th August

Yesterday was a contest day - just. Julian scored 21 points, having set off on a weak thermal at five o’clock. We still remember from last year that interesting things can happen when Duo Discuses set off on task late in the day.

This morning was sunny for a while at about 7 am but soon clouded over. The BBC have forecast 2 inches of rain for the west coast of Scotland and we’ve got the cloudy tail end of the front. We’re caught between two airmasses, damp warm frontal muck to the north and clear air to the south with a 15 knot SW wind.

By the 12 o’clock re-brief it was still overcast and Dominic faced calls for the return of the weather owl. The cloudbase was still below the winch launch height. It was still looking good for the afternoon and Nick produced a task sheet which looked rather like one of those children’s “join the dots” puzzles with 3 triangles, small, medium and large and a total of nine TPs. All three triangles to be flown with a 30 point bonus for completing all 3, 15 points for each TP, a get back bonus of 30 points and two points per km flown. Rig the LS8 and forget the pub!

By the evening, everybody had got back, Ian Mac was in the lead overall in the Junior nationals, with a day to fly tomorrow and England had narrowly beaten Australia to win the test match, giving them a lead of 2-1 in the Ashes series with one more match to play.

Dominic and Nick had completed the task.

It looks as if Dominic has won Task Week.