

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Social News

Ann Parry

Christmas Party is on 16 December.

Mike Witton's Birthday Party is on 2 December.

Halloween and Bonfire Night combined party was on Saturday 4 November, a wonderful occasion complete with bonfire, fireworks, moonlit night, the scene set with a graveyard outside the bay window and skeletons about the place (one engrossed in an old copy of *S&G*), excellent buffet, mulled wine, competition for best fancy dress (so many people dressed up it was hard to choose), dramatic performances from Alex Outhwaite and friends, music, dancing... and all after a full day's flying in glorious sunshine, with more on the Sunday, ridge and wave soaring. It was an extravaganza as promised - what will they dream up next? It was a lot of fun, thank-you!

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Chairman's Musings

Charles Carter

The course season has now ended. It has seen a good increase on course days sold over last year's figure so well done to Martin and Jan for their good sales technique. Also well done to John Stuart and Dave Crowson for keeping their course members content and supplied with good flying. They also fly on days when even the sparrows are walking and their enthusiasm to keep the ball rolling does them credit. Thanks must also go to those instructors who step in to replace the regulars when occasion demands. We must also thank the winching team for their unfailing efforts to get us all launched.

Next year will see a slight change in the pricing of the courses but they will still be remarkable value for fully paid up members and are an invaluable way of furthering any part of your flying progress. Make use of them.

I am pleased to say that Dave will again be John's number two for next year's courses.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the evening course run by Bob Williams, ably assisted this year by Rod Hawley, Tony Danbury, Sarah Platt and others who do such sterling work enthusing pilots of varying abilities during the summer months.

The committee have actively been looking at second hand K21s to replace FWQ but so far there have been no suitable aircraft on the market. Twenty five year old K21s appear to command a price tag of £35,000 and at that age are in need of re-gelling which is the best part of £10,000, Add on the cost of installing the instrumentation which we demand and you will see that a very expensive glider comes out at the other end. We continue to deliberate and will keep you informed.

The airfield is particularly vulnerable to damage at this time of year so it behoves all of us to do our bit to preserve the surface especially when it is very wet. Many gliding clubs do not fly during the wettest part of the winter to avoid doing permanent damage but owing to the quality of the flying at the Mynd during the winter we attempt to fly at all times. This can only continue if we all take care.

This year the club winter opening will be slightly changed from last year. Flying will take place all day Thursday and all day Friday with JS in charge. This should lead to greater use being made of good days given the short length of winter afternoons which have been the norm for flying on Wednesdays and Thursdays for the last few years. Shrewsbury School will be flying on Thursday afternoons but that still gives access to fly with John on Thursday morning and all day Friday and for private owners to feel that rigging is worthwhile. The weekends will remain as usual with the rota'd teams. Please come and make use of winter ridge and wave which can provide some wonderful flying and will keep you in practice for those early thermals next season.

I will be away from mid November until Christmas but please address any concerns or problems you may have to Jon Hall who will be delighted to hear from you.

Whacker's Away

Mike Whitton

As some of you may remember, over two years ago I was intending to go to work in China for a short period. Well, things have moved on and recently I have accepted a 'permanent' post in Shanghai. Therefore unfortunately I will not be back at the club in the foreseeable future. This is one of those opportunities that if I do not take now, it will not repeat itself so if I do not do it now I never will.

I have thoroughly enjoyed all my time at the Mynd and will miss the club. I hope to be back at Christmas/New Year if time allows. I have also decided that I cannot justify keeping the Cirrus (Charlie Echo Alpha) so if anyone is interested in my quarter share please contact Mike Greenwood.

I wish the club every success in the future.

PS. If anyone is ever in Shanghai - I can be contacted at Scott Wilson's address which is on the internet.

CFI's Bits *Neal Clements*

Winter training and canopies

Winter, eventually, will arrive and the Mynd is blessed with being able to offer superb flying during this period. While flat sites can only go up, round and down we can soar the ridge and the wave. Use the winter to get your endorsements in your progress book completed and get your Bronze paper out of the way.

Mentor system

Can I remind you of the mentor system we have. You choose an instructor or ask me to choose one and then liaise with them so you can be at the club when they are. Together you will be able to progress through your progress book until you reach whatever limits you choose for yourself.

Canopies

The club has invested in very expensive and effective canopy cleaner. Please make the cleanliness of the canopy part of your DI. The benefits of a cleaned canopy are twofold, firstly you can see out of it and secondly it resists misting. We are entering the season of low sun and it is vital you can see.

DI (Daily Inspection) books at the launch point

Below was discussed at the launch directors meeting:

It is essential that DIs are done correctly and that gliders are independently checked for correct rigging. To reinforce this it is good practice to examine the DI book at the launch point and the Number One of the day is to ask the Launch Director to do this on their behalf.

It is essential that independent rig checks are done and that launch point positives are also carried out.

DIY Round the Clubhouse

Allan Reynolds

Some of you may know that I am a committee member and my role is 'Buildings'. There are, from time to time, small DIY-type jobs that need attention around the clubhouse and grounds. At the moment, these are done by either a very small number of willing members, or they just do not get done. There are no proper arrangements for carrying out these small jobs by you, the general membership.

I am about to change that.

I want those of us who can, to offer to give a little time to do these simple jobs, especially if we are at the club on a duff day. It will then be a little better cared for than it sometimes is at present.

It works as follows:

I have put up a list of members in the clubhouse (which excludes those who help the club already in one way or another or live a considerable distance away). I apologise if I have missed you off - please add your name at the bottom - or included you when I shouldn't have. There is a space for you to tick to let me know how you can help. Please tick as many boxes as you can. You will only be called upon on a very small number of occasions if there are lots of names on the list for me to choose from.

I have also put up a "DIY to do" list for anyone to add a DIY job that needs attention. I will arrange for these to be done from members on the list. Please add to the list any skills or preferences that you may have.

The club is looking good, so let's keep it that way !

From the Flying Field

David d'Arcy

Are you in check? If not then excellent weekends like 7th-8th October must be very painful. Fortunately not all had homely activities to do like myself and took advantage of the email alert from the office to soar in westerly wave to 5000 - 6000 feet QNH with Dave and JS in 494 getting the honours with 6700 feet QNH. The T21 also saw some wave flying entering like most over Bishops Castle. In addition a safety lecture was given at the club on Saturday evening which was reportedly very good. Southerly wave was also available and had on Sunday (8th), where James Fisher got to 10,000 feet QNH in the Discus.

The Inter-Club League final was held on the weekend of 9th-10th September. Five clubs turned up, London, Lasham, Oxford, Essex & Suffolk, and Nympsfield. Missing were Yorkshire and Wyvern. Unbelievably, the wind was on the strong side Saturday, even though from the SE, our wavy east side of the hill channels and accelerates anything with an easterly component across the airfield making operations difficult. However, there was little sign of thermal activity and with flying winds of 20 knots the day was scrubbed. A number did fly and a few managed to catch some east wave where others only had 10-15 minutes. Sunday felt as if it would go, but a number of sniffers reported barely 1 knot climbs and by 14:30 the day was scrubbed again. More flew this day and a number stayed up, some for an hour or so, but afterwards reported averages of half a knot! So bearing in mind pilots had to pass 60 km to make it a scoring day a scrub was the sensible option. All this was a great disappointment to the club, competitors and Jon Hall's team, but many favourable comments were made back regarding the club and hill location. Well done to all those who turned up to help out - thank you.

Congratulations to Mike Rogers on his Silver distance to Bidford in the K8 on 26 September, unfortunately the K8 trailer was not so lucky, but made it home all the same (sometime between 1-2 am) the next morning with a little perseverance from Orch. Meanwhile Mike was whisked away to a pressing family dinner by club mate Henry Wood! (Beers on Mike?) Mike was also the recipient of a Royal Aero Club Trust bursary this summer, and since then has completed his Bronze badge, cross country endorsement and Silver badge claims. Support well placed I'd say, and many deserved congratulations for completing so much this summer. Also this day Tony Danbury did Tims Triangle, incidentally completing before Mike had even set off.

Sadly the Mynd had to say good bye to Astir 642 recently as the once busy syndicate had all but retired, however, the hill welcomes another DG300 through Steve Tilling, a fair swap I'd say.

During 25th - 29th September the club held its first 'Wood Week' which had support from the T21, Pete Orchard's Skylark 4 and would have had Rod's K6, but as it's still in bits didn't, as well as two visiting wooden gliders.

And lastly, well done JS and Martin. You wouldn't normally associate such, but finally we have good TV reception on every channel! Or so it has been reported. God knows why it's taken only 10 years.

Task Week 2006

Debbie Bilham

Not so many entries this year! It seems that Task Week is a victim of its own success in that many of the younger pilots who cut their competition teeth on Task Week are now flying Regionals and Nationals. Fortunately Johnny Roberts who finished third in the Junior Nationals recently, will be flying the DG-505 during the week.

Saturday 19th August

I marvel at the power of modern technology. By the use of satellites and the internet I can record the day's events without leaving my desk in Leicestershire. So here is the write up: it rained! To be more accurate it was a day of steady rain interrupted by heavy showers. Needless to say, no task was set.

A couple of interesting habitations have appeared: Lisa, Steve and baby Freddy are staying in a Mongolian style yurt in the caravan park. It has a removable roof, which, as we shall discover later is not a unique feature. Those of you familiar with *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* will remember the Weasleys' tent which looks like a tiny ridge tent on the outside and a vast palace on the inside. The Brewis's tent is similar in some ways except that it looks like a vast palace from the outside too.

Sunday 20th

Westerly, low clouds (lots of that) and a task (O/R Sleaf) set with a re-brief at 1:00 pm. Since the feeling was that the conditions were difficult to assess, an assigned area task with TPs at Conover and Craven Arms (42 km) was set, with zones covering most of North Wales and South Wales - just in case it gets good.

A noticeable absence is the Ventus 154. It appears that their belly hook has gone belly up.

One or two brave souls launched and a few sensible ones didn't open the trailer doors. Just after Dominic Haughton (Met Man) took an aerotow, the Number One called down stating that he didn't want anyone else to launch; it was just SO good up there! Dominic replied, "I think I detect an opportunity here". Soon afterwards, he was the only one in the air. He got about 10 km past Sleaf before coming up against a wall of rain and turning back to Sleaf. He landed there and asked about the possibility of an aerotow retrieve but by then the Mynd was shrouded in low cloud with the risk that he would still have to land out and that the tug would not be able to get back onto the hill. By the time I arrived at Sleaf to fetch Dominic it was a glorious evening with nice looking lenticulars.

John Parry (Task Director) told us that conditions improved at the Mynd almost as soon as I had left and that 494 and 493 had launched later on and had been into both sectors. Meanwhile Dominic had incurred a penalty for taking a high (2,500 foot) aerotow. JP has still to decide on the penalty. Dominic pleaded in mitigation that he really didn't want to pull off at 2,000 feet.

Monday 21st

Nick Heriz Smith (Task Setter) arrived. The forecast is for showers early on and then clear, dry weather. It looks as if there will be a task. Tomorrow doesn't look as good with a frontal system encroaching in the west.

Yesterday's results: 4th Dominic (didn't get into southern zone), 3rd Mark Sanders, 2nd Allan Reynolds and 1st Dave Crowson in 494. He managed to jump a wave bar onto the Stiperstones and get into both sectors.

After briefing, Simon Adlard gave a quick talk emphasising the need to reply to the proposals to make the carrying of Mode S transponders mandatory by all aircraft flying in UK airspace. If allowed in its present form, it would spell the end of gliding in the UK, therefore it is important to make our voice heard. Afterwards the dining room tables were covered in a sea of proposals forms and laptops.

Initially a task of Hay on Wye, Bromyard, Mynd was set, with a fallback task of Hay on Wye, Leominster, Mynd. A re-brief was set for 1:00 pm. The westerly wind was stronger than anticipated so the task was re-set to Montgomery, Halfway House, Oswestry, Mynd. Not only was it windier, but also wetter than forecast so by the afternoon, it was overcast and uninspiring. During the afternoon the children's Mini Olympics event was held. Emily Haughton won a cup for running and Jenny Haughton

won the mums' race; there is a definite competitive streak in that family!

While waiting in the clubhouse, Jenny and I heard a familiar voice on the radio stating that "I don't think I'll get back". We didn't worry too much at that stage, knowing from past experience not to write him off until he's actually in the field. Dominic eventually got back for a low scrape on the hill and landing on top.

During the morning Simon demonstrated his respectable middle aged credentials by mentioning his Mondeo Automatic, a far cry from the monster trike which he once planned to build. A cup of tea or so later came reassurance that he hasn't changed so much from the Mynd Monster days. He told of how a sheep had died at his gate and he and Liz had observed its subsequent putrefaction over the next couple of weeks. I won't go into detail since some people might be reading this over breakfast but I'm sure that Simon and Liz will tell the full story if you buy them a pint.

The Haughton family honour was satisfied; Dominic won the day with in excess of 200 points. Nobody else managed more than 11 points.

Tuesday 22nd

Awoke to sunshine but with signs of advancing warm front. There were clear signs of convection under the high cloud, but will there be time to get a task in before the convection cuts off and the rain arrives? Dominic thinks not. Tomorrow will bring a series of fronts and troughs so will be a non starter. Dominic decided to go home and do some work and so did I. The curse of the met-man struck once again and the day turned out better than expected; indeed it was the best day so far. Rod Hawley went for a pee and came out to find that Neal Clements and Jan Outhwaite had snaffled the Duo. The initial high cover burned off, contrary to expectation, and many of those who stayed at the club had enjoyable flights.

Wednesday 23rd

Today I shall write about Murphy's Law, or as it is sometimes colloquially known, Sod's Law. As you are all well aware, Sod's Law essentially defines the principles upon which life the universe and everything functions. While the likes of Newton, Einstein and Darwin only ever touched upon certain specialist areas, Murphy's observations give a much fuller picture of the world we live in.

We are all familiar with some of the better known axioms such as:

- Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.
- When it goes wrong, it goes wrong in the worst possible way.
- Anything that cannot possibly go wrong will go wrong anyway.
- Expensive electronic appliances will develop a fault the day after the guarantee expires.
- The stiffest nut is always the least accessible and stiff all the way.

Of course gliding is just as susceptible to the diktats of Murphy's Law as any other facet of life:

- Large areas of sink occur at turning points.
- The probability of a sustainer engine failing to start is directly proportional to the urgency with which it is required to start.
- The sky always looks best from the office window.
- During a competition, no matter how bad the forecast is, if you have over indulged in the bar the previous night, it will be soarable and a task will be set.

It is part of British folk law and common knowledge that if you go out with a raincoat and an umbrella, then it will be sunny. Therefore it stands to reason that the converse is true:

- If you live close to a gliding club, stage a gliding competition AND strip the roof off your house, then it will precipitate with more vigour than a Glasgow urinal on Saturday night.

And that, dear reader, is why I have not written about any gliding today.

(Editor's note: while most people are familiar with Murphy's Law, few know O'Tooles Commentary on Murphy's Law: "Murphy was an optimist.")

Thursday 24th

The forecast for today is much better so Nick set the biggest task so far this week: Shipton, Hay on Wye, Burley Gate, Sarnsfield, Worcester, Ledbury, Mynd. Distance 214.19 km. An alternative first TP of Ironbridge is available for the daring. Launching started at about 12:30 and at first they struggled to leave the ridge; it wasn't as good as it looked. David d'Arcy met Tim Corbett (of Tim's Triangle fame) after landing in a field. John Roberts and Mark Sanders got back.

Julian Fack attempted to motor back from Worcester but ran out of fuel and had to resume soaring, and got back. He ran his motor for about 8 minutes and used 10 litres of fuel in doing so. There appears to be something a bit wrong here. Dominic suggested that he might be better off throwing the fuel overboard into a stubble field, followed by a match. Before that, Julian thought he had rounded Burley Gate correctly. Unfortunately he had been on the wrong side of the TP, therefore was penalised.

Dominic got a "teaser" climb of 6 knots and set off for Hay only to discover that this was the only good climb that he would get. After abandoning several weak thermals he landed in a field near to Woofferton. While retrieving him, a massive street formed which was still evident at about 7:00 pm.

Despite a few landouts, this was the best day so far, with some good flying. The day was won by Johnny Roberts, flying in the DG505, with Jan. Although they didn't turn all the TPs, they did get back. Rod and Neal came second in the Duo (494). Although they didn't get back, they did cover a lot of distance before landing out. Steve Tilling flew to Aston Down for his Silver distance. He struggled to the Malverns and then found a classic sky for the rest of the flight.

An occluded front is forecast for tomorrow, however, the satellite picture for 9:00 pm shows that it has already reached the extreme south west so we'll see what tomorrow morning brings.

Friday 25th

Although it started sunny and at times got quite warm, the high cover was in evidence from the start. Simon quickly identified it as "the type that doesn't burn off". By lunchtime the sky looked distinctly flat and grey. Chris Alldis had earlier reported that there was rain at Valley.

All the same we rigged - just in case - washed the glider and went for lunch. While we watched the sky getting greyer, Emily came in and strode purposefully towards Dominic and announced "Daddy, it's raining outside". In spite of the showers and grey clag, Derek Platt and Peter Turner did complete the task - in the Falke!

Saturday 26th

Definition of optimism: lots of people studying maps of the UK with squiggly lines across them, satellite images, meteo-blue models etc. on laptops and desktops. On the next table, Nick, Dominic and Jon Hall are gathered around a laptop pointing at a weather chart. Behind them the view out of the window comprises a backdrop of varying greys, ranging from light murk to the dark thunderous oppressive variety, with the grass fence, yurt and a few plants in the foreground. As I write this the valley floor is just becoming visible. Update 10 minutes later: it's gone again! (9:47 am).

The feeling is that it will be showery. After briefing an impromptu forum was held so that members could suggest ways of retaining members. It appears that the Mynd is one of a few clubs in the UK which increased their membership in the last year and the course bookings are healthy, however we seem to have problems hanging onto members after they go solo. Several ideas, including employing professional staff for weekend training were discussed.

By 12:30 the sky had cleared and a task of MYN Church Stoke, Montgomery, Newtown, Walford, MYN was set (distance 83.57 km). The last leg was set with possible forecast wave in mind.

We rigged and towed out to Asterton Knoll. The launch point crew were quite keen to stop for lunch (possibly due to the big angry looking storm forming up to the north, which appeared to cover most of the Cheshire gap, and the showers forming up to the west.) Dominic managed to get a launch before the break, the rest of us on the ground ran for cover.

There were several landouts and a few who came back without completing all TPs. Because of the Enterprise style scoring applied this week, a completion bonus was awarded for getting back, regardless of how many turning points were completed.

Among those flying today was John Stuart (JS), who celebrates his 60th birthday later in the week. A surprise party has been planned for him tomorrow. I can't imagine him with a bus pass somehow. During the afternoon he called John Parry on the radio to ask if he lands at Welshpool, will it count as Montgomery? JP took a few seconds to answer (he had to stop laughing first) that it didn't. JS must have scratched away and presumably got to Montgomery and beyond as he finally got back at about 8:30. (Sunset 8:16 pm before anybody asks!)

Dominic won the day, having been the only pilot to complete the task. Johnny Roberts and Mark Sanders were second in the DG505. Overall Johnny is in the lead by 3 points over Rod and Neal in 494 (Duo Discus). Dominic is 3rd, 100 points behind 494.

By now the Parrys have got into the routine of their sleeping arrangements: one of them in a comfortable bed in a warm, dry room at the club, and the other at home.

Sunday 27th

Today, westerlies are forecast with a good prospect of wave. An early satellite picture showed wave covering much of North Wales, the west coast, Ireland and Scotland. The task is an assigned area task with the first sector, centred at Montgomery and covering the area around Shobdon and Radnor forest. The second sector, centred at Shrewsbury covers most of North Wales, including Snowdon. JP announced that today will be the last task day with the prize giving tomorrow morning. Good thing too with the party tonight!

Before lunch the sky appeared mostly thermal but we soon heard radio reports of climbs to 8,000 feet above site.

Jon Hall was the first to landout in PZ. Several landouts followed including Dominic and 494. Julian completed the task but reported wave effect rather than useable wave. Johnny completed, having earlier radioed in to ask if he has to go into both zones to complete.

Seven competitors flew on task with 3 completing. Johnny won the day, and therefore the week, with Simon Adlard in 2nd place and Dominic 3rd.

JS had flown to Shobdon with Howard Rutherford in the Stemme 10. He had no idea why Howard was so keen to get him back to the Mynd so quickly. John was totally surprised by the party. He was presented with an Ian Walton painting of a K21 over the Mynd.

Denise Hughes had made a still life model cake depicting 797 on the bungee meadow, complete with windsock. Earlier in the day, she discovered that the delicate icing model glider had suffered a catastrophic structural failure, or as Den put it - in a dining room full of visitors - "ere, 797's wing's fallen off; I'll just 'ave to stick it back on with a bit of superglue."

The kitchen laid on a curry buffet and later Terry the DJ kept us entertained with his disco/karaoke setup. We were treated to 494 syndicate's rendition of "Bat Out of Hell" and Lennie and Cazza performing "It's Raining Men". As Noel Coward would have put it: "Marvellous isn't the word!"

Monday

Keith Mansell, who is looking remarkably well after his recent operation, presented the awards.

The competition runner up was the Duo Discus 494, flown by various syndicate members.

The week was won by Johnny Roberts flying the DG505 with various P2s. He commented on the benefit to the club of having a genuinely competitive cross country glider on the fleet. Some people remarked on Johnny's abstinence from alcohol during the week; maybe some lessons to be learned here.

Keith presented mementos to Hazel Turner (Control), Nick (Task Setting), Dominic (Met) and JP (Task Director). JP paid tribute to the team around him, without whom he could not have run the competition.

The weather was pretty much what was expected yesterday, westerlies and wave. Jon Hall got to 14,000 feet and JP got to 10,000 feet.

(Editors' note: we're happy to report that our roof is now back on our house, and building work nearly complete. Noticed the Joneses in Asterton were without their roof recently too...)

Euroglide (Eurodrive ?) 2006 - Part 2

Paul Garnham

In the previous newsletter I described our slow progress during the first week of Euroglide and the frustration we experienced due to days of poor or unflyable weather.

Monday 19 June

At the Wasserkuppe. Following overnight thunderstorms and torrential rain, a pleasant morning dawned with light westerly winds and blue skies. However the club instructor warned us that more thunderstorms would develop rapidly during the day and that we should make an early start if any progress was to be achieved. Frustration levels increased as we heard that 15 gliders had already arrived back at Eindhoven. By 1030 the club's K21s were launching and soaring for a while. Nick and Richard took off around noon along the famous downhill runway with a report that CuNims were only about 100 km away. Meanwhile Julian and I headed south. Later Nick thought that a landing at Wurzburg was likely so we headed there and soon found the airfield. We lunched and waited. Eventually we saw the Duo soaring quite well to the north and it seemed that further progress would be possible. We set off again to the south and eventually heard reports that Bad Windsheim seemed the likely destination. This is a pleasant grass airfield, again on high ground, and well away from settlements. Hares gambolled and skylarks sang. There was a tower, a hangar and a clubhouse but no activity. Nick had already secured the key to the loos by the time we arrived. Within was an amusing cartoon entreating men always to adopt a sitting position and a rambling handwritten screed containing words like "Achtung !" and "verboten". Perhaps just as well I couldn't understand it. After a clean-up we drove into Bad Windsheim, a picturesque little town somewhat under the influence of the nearby American helicopter base. We soon found a pleasant "Greek" restaurant with an international clientele. Later we located an internet café and perused the met. sites. It seemed that thunderstorms were engulfing France and Germany, including the monster that engulfed us as we drove back to the airfield later. We were then treated to an hour or two of fantastic electrical discharges, and felt a little uncomfortable as we were camped on the highest point for miles around. 90 km flown that day.

Tuesday 20 June

Another blue start. We drove into town and studied the weather sites. Still no encouragement to be had. After a top-up of provisions at the local supermarket we decided to have a go so phoned the winchdriver. A few small Cu appeared as Julian and I launched to the dizzy height of 800 feet. After struggling a while we got a good climb to cloud base so felt able to press on to the west (by this time thoughts of getting to Switzerland had evaporated). Both from the air and the ground we noticed how many properties in these parts have solar panels, some covering the entire roof. One suspects that there are significant inducements on offer. Still the conditions were against us with thermals weakening and many Cu just not performing. The reason was clear, the onset of 8/8 top cover that soon ended a short soaring day and a very short flight. Indeed the engine had to be used to get us on glide for the airfield at Unterschupf, north of Stuttgart. Only 49 km flown so not a competition flight. Another pleasant hilltop airfield with the usual facilities but almost deserted. Two workmen had little to say for themselves and we passed the time by consuming our lunch. We then walked about a mile down the approach road towards the nearby village. I gave up but Julian continued on and guided our team to the club. As we began to de-rig it began to rain quite heavily. As we closed the trailer the rain stopped, another fine example of McCurdy's rule, or was it MacCready's? We decided to tow to Landau (SW of Mannheim), an airfield familiar to us, having landed there on Euroglide 2002. The autobahnen were very busy. We passed a fantastic collection of aircraft near Sindsheim, including a Concorde and a Tu144, Canberra, Ju52, Mig 21, Canadair CL215 and more. At Landau we camped on the spot we used in 2002 and soon met some locals, one of whom, a Doctor, also an instructor, seemed expert in all gliding matters, and he was most helpful to us. It was as well that we had not arrived by air as the World Cup air exclusion zone had been activated at Kaiserslautern and flying to and from Landau was verboten. Indeed a policeman turned up shortly after our arrival to check that no movements were taking place. The only movements we saw were by some very beautiful model aircraft, one of which, an Extra, was under the expert control of a disabled man. As well as performing amazing aerobatics, it

towed up an 1/8 scale Discus 2 at scale speeds that in reality would make your eyes water. Another superb model was powered by a 5 cylinder radial engine. That evening we enjoyed probably the best meal of the trip at a village restaurant recommended by our Doctor friend. We also glimpsed England struggling to draw 2-2 against Sweden. Later, as we were enjoying a nightcap in the motorhome, a couple of cheery policemen knocked on the door and exchanged pleasantries about England's performance.

Wednesday 21 June

Our new-found friend arrived with print-outs of the (bad) weather for the day. With the end of the competition looming in only three days time we decided to press on into France, to Nancy (Malzeville), another club previously visited and where we were confident of getting a launch. Two and a half hours later we were struggling to manoeuvre the combination around a very tight roundabout near Malzeville above Nancy. The struggle was pointless, we were on the wrong road, but soon found the correct entrance. One might say that on this visit to Nancy we were beset by more than our share of bad luck. We were told that flying north or west from Nancy was out of the question due to military airspace restrictions lasting for three months! Too late to tow to another airfield, we pitched camp near the futuristic gliding club, which sits rather incongruously alongside the large WW1 hangar where dirigibles were once housed and which bears the scars of two world wars. Later we drove into town to discover that a music festival was in full swing. In short, heaving crowds, no parking available, especially for a motorhome, and every hostelry bursting at the seams. We took one look and left for the suburbs, but finding an evening meal proved difficult and eventually we succumbed to the dubious delights of the Buffalo Grill. In the end it turned out to be quite acceptable. Back at base Nick realised that he had mislaid his phone, probably left on the table at the BG. Not a good day overall.

Thursday 22 June

Before leaving, we shopped at a massive Cora supermarket and re-visited the Buffalo Grill where, somewhat to our surprise, Nick's phone had been handed in. Although it was probably soarable we could not fly from Nancy so decided to tow to Châlons en Champagne near Rheims. Shortly after our arrival, announced noisily as a piece of steel in the road did serious damage to the grey water tank on the motorhome, a Dutch Euroglide competitor landed in a Ventus. He had come from Orleans, and was the only other Euroglide pilot we had seen in ten days. As we set up camp a Boeing 777 could be seen doing very expensive training circuits at an airfield to the south. We had visited Châlons on Euroglide 2000 in company with Phil and Diana King and our competition had finished there as there was insufficient time to fly back to Eindhoven. This time maybe we stood a chance? Châlons is noteworthy as Bristol Blenheims operated there during the early days of WW2 and heavy losses were suffered before the area was overrun. A nearby museum is devoted to this period. Today there are both power and gliding clubs present and once again we had the run of the facilities. In the evening we had a pleasant meal in town with our Dutch colleagues and just for a change the forecast for Friday was good.

Friday 23 June

The temperature had dropped to 5 degrees overnight and by 1000 Cu were appearing. The locals were rigging and the four drum winch was out. I asked for a launch at 1100 and by 1145 we were second in the queue. Then a cable broke and, inexplicably, everyone disappeared for ages instead of using the remaining cables! Eventually we had a rough and very expensive launch to 1000 feet (€16!). I recall that we got 1700 feet in 2000, much better value. However we were rewarded by a good thermal straight off the cable and our confidence about reaching Eindhoven improved. Cloudbase was only about 4000 feet QNH so the working band was not too generous. Julian initiated the mandatory engine test, but it failed to fire up (no fuel on, ah that would explain it!). A look at the controlled airspace between Châlons and Eindhoven is enough to put one off altogether and to undertake the flight in a single seater is truly a challenge. North of Châlons, military airspace abounds with firing ranges not far away as we discovered in 2000, so we flew west before turning north to avoid the area. Thereafter it's a matter of keeping out of the extensive controlled airspace, some of which leaves only narrow corridors of free airspace. In negotiating these corridors GPS and Winpilot were of great assistance. As we approached the turnpoint at Dahlemer Binz (south west of Bonn), the Cu increased to 6/8 and changed in character, looking a bit wavy, although the wind was very light. We spoke to our Dutch friend a few

times. He had taken off behind us but was now slowly catching us up. Thereafter things became more of a struggle. The visibility diminished, and thermals became weak and difficult to centre. However we climbed slowly to 5000 feet near Bruggen, looked down at the enormous base at Geilenkirchen where NATO AWACs are based (call sign - frisbee tower!), and soon crossed the Maas and its yacht marinas as our Dutch friend whizzed past us. Now on a final glide for Eindhoven we placed our trust in the Cambridge and were relieved to arrive at checkpoint Leende with the correct height to enter the zone. A call to the controller at Eindhoven, and we were off over the city again with plenty of height. Meanwhile the Ventus was doing a competition finish (with permission from the Tower of course). We landed and rolled to a halt close to the Ventus. We had flown around 380 km that day and had actually seen cumulus clouds, a rarity on this trip. Miraculously Anton Poortman (the joint winner) and his colleagues from the Eindhoven gliding club were there to ply us with cold beers as soon as the wing touched the ground, a great way to end what had been a frustrating yet interesting fortnight.

Postscript

We don't believe that our poor result stemmed from our piloting, but on a long competition such as Euroglide there are many factors at work, such as strategy, local knowledge, information sources, and not least luck. In retrospect, we were well up with the fleet at the end of day one. Not using some of our displacement allowance to go forward at that point was probably an error and the move to Dinslaken was a bad decision. Nevertheless the fact that Rory O'Connor went on from Dinslaken to go round the task in good time suggests not only that he is a first class pilot, but that the few hours between his departure and ours were crucial to all that followed. In the course of the next few hours we were overtaken by poor weather and were never able to escape from it. We finished last in the Turbo section and fifth from last overall. The next Euroglide is in 2008.

Diversification

Mike Witton

For many years, members of gliding clubs have had difficulties in balancing their family life with their gliding ambitions. This is often stated as one of the major factors behind the loss of members. Gliding clubs are simply not orientated towards supplying a day out for the entire family. Having spent a lot of my childhood at the Mynd I have first hand experience of just what an incredibly dull place a gliding club is to spend your weekend as a child. Kids are too young to learn to fly, unable to leave the club to seek entertainment elsewhere, discouraged from spending too much time watching telly, kept away from the launch point because it isn't safe etc. The entertainment is pretty sparse for anybody not directly involved with flying. This includes children, spouses and guests of trial lessons among others. Even regular flying members on duff days or when they choose not to fly for any reason. If we could make our club a more amenable place for the typical family to spend time then we might achieve a better member retention rate. In the modern socio-economic climate, the demands on people's time are many and varied. Although we offer one of the best gliding operations in the country for a club of our size, I would argue that this is no longer enough. We need to broaden our appeal to more people by making the club more of a day out for all the family.

After having a few brain storming sessions with Keith Laidler and others, we have come up with an initial list of ideas.

This is not an exhaustive list and all of the ideas are open to suggestions and debate. If you have any bright ideas then please let either me or Keith Laidler know. All suggestions are welcome. When we have a fairly comprehensive list of ideas we will start developing them and formally approach the committee.

At this stage these are just ideas. I have no doubt that some of them will fail to come to fruition due to problems of practicality, logistics, budget and other assorted complications. However, this is of little importance. We only need to get a few of the ideas running successfully to have achieved the goal of improving our appeal to more people. Our initial idea would be to start with a few of the cheaper ideas.

Some of the ideas would involve a charge of some sort (mountain bike hire for example) and this could be used to fund some of the more extravagant ideas.

Please keep an open mind when considering these ideas, no matter how outlandish they may appear to be initially. Of course we don't have to change anything at all - after all, survival isn't compulsory.

Initial ideas:

- Computer games for kids
- Mountain bike hire
- Basic GPS units pre-programmed with set walking routes
- Board games
- Dartboard in bar
- Games for kids
- Mini golf course
- Model aircraft
- Hovercraft
- Land yacht
- Table football
- Horse riding club events
- Cricket stumps/bats
- Rounders bat/ball
- Steam room
- Jacuzzi
- Grass skis
- Sledges
- Wigwams, tents and yurts
- Gift cabinet
- Giant Jenga
- Trampoline
- Coin operated telescope

The first idea that we would like to try and get off the ground is mountain bike hire. The idea would be to buy half a dozen mountain bikes (in a mix of adult and child sizes) which would be available to hire for a relatively low price, say approximately £10 per day. The hire cost would be kept low deliberately. Just enough to cover the cost of operating and replacing them at the end of their life. After all, the intention is not to make a lot of money for the club directly but to encourage more people to spend time at the club. As an additional item we could hire out laminated copies of large scale local maps possibly with pre-marked routes of varying difficulty (possibly for approximately £1 a time).

Contact mikewitton@hotmail.com with your suggestions.

Electricity to the Trailers

Richard Bennett

Investigations are under way to assess the viability of supplying 240VAC power to the glider trailers. The purpose is primarily for the operation of de-humidifiers to improve storage conditions. Further information will be distributed to syndicates/owners in the very near future. If you are already interested before seeing the plans please send an email to Richard Bennett (FVP/494) stating glider registration and approximate position of the trailer. Email is rwabennett@fastmail.fm. Note - there are two Richard Bennetts in the club!