

Low Flying Aircraft

Most weekdays, weather permitting, the peace and tranquility of the valley is broken by the roar of low flying jets. It can be quite exciting to see these aircraft fly by the front door of the Brigands, Mallwyd is in a central position on the Mach loop

The **Mach Loop** is a set of valleys, situated between Dolgellau in the north, and Machynlleth in the south (and from which the **Mach Loop** gets its name), which are regularly used for low level flight training, with flying as low as 250 feet (76 metres) from the nearest terrain.



To the south of the **Mach Loop** there is an area called Tactical Training Area 7T, in which, at specified times, the aircraft may fly as low as 100 feet (30.5 Metres). The Royal Air Force publish a timetable of when the Tactical Training Areas may be in use, however experience shows this to be

of little use in determining whether low level flying will take place on a particular day or time.

Low flying is a vital skill for military aircrew, and the Royal Air Force uses various areas of the United Kingdom for low level flight training. The United Kingdom is split into 18 low flying areas, (or "LFAs"), the LFA's being numbered 1-19 (strangely there is no LFA15). The Ministry of Defence website has a map showing the location of the low fly areas. The **Mach Loop** is located within LFA7, which covers the whole of Wales, except for a small section in the north-east of Powys, which is within LFA9.

A favourite spot for fast jet photographers is Bwlch Oerddrws on the A470 between Dolgellau and Dinas Mawddwy. There is a small car park at the highest point of the pass and the keen photographers climb the hill behind the car park so that they look down on the aircraft with some amazing results.

