

AirHeads



www.dscondors.co.uk

March/April 2007

Editorial - Welcome to the March/ April edition of AirHeads!

When Viv cast around for volunteers to compile & produce Airheads I thought aha, I know this game - and smartly took a good step back. This was my 1st AGM though and of course everyone else had taken at least two steps back - you live and learn...

Please take note of new committee personnel following the recent AGM - see page 15 (last).

Pressing right on, cast your eyes down the list of revered reportage/ madness we have in this bursting at the gunwhales pdf of plenty – many thanks to everyone who submitted anything.

Pete Marley

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SEVEN SUNNY DAYS (in winter!)

Here is a brief report on this winter's trip to Greolieres in the south of France with Andrew Pearse's Flying Frenzy. Many local pilots have been there before, but this was my first trip to the area, and it was great! It is billed as a training extension to the Club Pilot course but even after all my years flying I found it very suitable for the experienced pilot also. Better still, it was the first overseas trip where I had flown on every day.

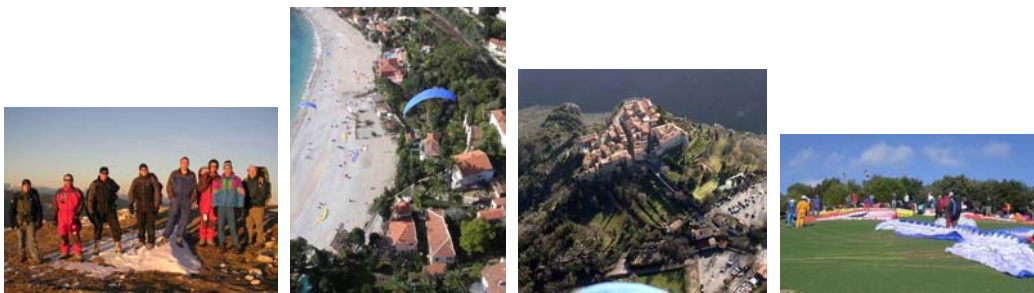
The pilots on the trip came mostly from the south and southwest, but we had one Yorkshireman. On the photo they are: Matthew, Roy, Martin, Martin, Stuart, James, myself and Tony. We flew from five different sites, had sunshine every day, conditions not epic, but flyable, and had a great time with fantastic company.

Some of the highlights of the trip (for me anyway) were:

- flying from Mt Gros (Roquebrune, Monaco), launching from the large, but crowded Astroturf, with scores of other pilots (including groups of beginners from Hungary), fighting for space in the thermals and ridge lift (James stayed up for 3¹/₂ hours), then landing on the beach
- flying down from past the village of Gourdon, across the narrow gorge and 6km down the valley (3300ft descent)
- watching the high arc competition gliders of Bruce Goldsmith and team do a 30km out and return at Gourdon while we were just pottering around on the local cliffs
- beautiful view from the top of Mt Lachens of the distant Alps bathed in red light from the setting sun as we did our last top-to-bottom
- the jokes and repartee on the radio between our two drivers, John and Mike as they drove up and down each mountain to guide pilots to the landing field

Thanks to Andrew, Kim, John Stuck and Mike Drew for the professional organisation, driving, help and entertainment. I can recommend this trip to all.

John Pinchin



Picture captions: 1. The Group 2. Monaco LZ 3. Gourdon 4. Monaco launch

Low Airtime / Flyphone

Flyphone going fairly well, but still trying to cajole more people into reporting. A few faithfuls always keep it going, please can everyone make the effort to contribute, even (especially?!) negatives.

Location & Caption Competition

Where am I this week?, see below pic.

Regarding the feet bit I forgot the text – what would your caption be?



Location answer in next issue of airheads, send your answers to Pete and we will see how many can get it right. (*with best caption featured in next issue - ed*). This time its an easy one. (*I know it, I know it! – ed*)

Dinks Nutbeem.



A change of hat

For those of you who didn't manage to attend the recent club AGM, this is to let you know that we had an unexpected volunteer for the job of club Treasurer, which was too good an offer for me to turn down. Bill Pym is now your Treasurer and I would ask if you can send your 2007 membership (due 1st April and I know you are all dying to pay on time!) direct to Bill rather than to me. His full address is 14 Shapland Place, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 5EP, telephone no. 01884 257632, a new membership form will be up on the website for you to use soon. Please make his job easier by paying promptly.

You will be pleased to hear that I will still be around to nag you, but this time it will be about putting your XC flights (however short) in to the club XC league. I have a number of ideas to expand the league and the number of trophies that can be won but I am very happy to accept suggestions on the format and any ideas for particular trophies that you may have. Darren has some ideas for putting flights up on the website and we are hoping to include an updated league table in each Airheads. All it needs now is for you all to get out there and clock up some distance.

You will be pleased to know that following the April clubnight on XC flying, five of us went to Wales over the Easter weekend and managed XC flights from Pandy and Merthyr, three of those being a personal best. The moral of the tale is that you really do need to attend clubnights to get the most out of your flying!

Viv

Chairman's Chat

I was impressed by the excellent turnout for the AGM and the response to the vacant Committee positions. I would also like to thank all the retiring Committee members for their hard work over the last few years. Giving John Fielder a life membership I thought was an excellent reward for all his dedication to the cause, above and beyond the call of duty at times.

While Robin Campbell sails off into the distance, you are left with me to try and live up to the expectations of this role. I hope I can live up to the reputation that Robin has set!

With the flying not exactly brilliant so far this year, we can only hope that the wind will subside to allow us to catch up with the flying we had last year up to April. The usual warning of the punchy spring thermals has really only applied to one Wednesday last month, what a sorry state of affairs. So here's to some decent **weekend** flying in April.

Andy Tew

Spanish fly. Alicante with Doyouwanna. 25 February to 6 March 2007.

“Three old guys wanting some sun and gentle soaring” read my e-mail to Nick Pollit at doyouwanna last Christmas. We got just that and enjoyed a relaxing week. At times it was too windy but the sun shone warmly all day every day.



Derek Sadler (trying a Niviuk) and Harry Dike at Palomoret

We left Bristol on a cold and drizzly February afternoon, Derek Sadler, Mike Adkins and myself on Easyjet. Mike went through checkin first with his glider disguised in a large plastic bag. He had no problems. I had booked an extra bag and wrongly thought I had booked extra weight allowance. What made it even more annoying was that hand baggage weight seems to be completely ignored these days as long as it contains no liquid and you can personally lift it into the overhead lockers...it is, apparently, all in the small print. We got it right coming back: Spanish checkin staff are much more relaxed and their baggage aisles are wider so paraglider bags fit on relatively easier.

Nick, our host and guide, met us at the airport. We got basic accommodation and a hire car for 45 euros a day each. The car was a diesel Ford Focus and the apartment, Nick's own, allowed us a bedroom each (until a wonderful chap named Oggy from the Dales, their sites officer, turned up for a couple of days and broke a bed.)

Our first day was blown out so we drove 80 miles East to Velez Rubia where Ian Orpe (formerly of Southampton and the Wessex club) and his wife, Jayne, now live. Their new residence beats Southampton on a few important points. They have converted a farmhouse and outbuildings to luxury standard B & B or self-contained accommodation with beautiful views across their own land which grows almond trees and vines. Sitting on their terrace admiring the views it was difficult to believe that only a few weeks previous they had a fall of snow a metre deep, exceptional weather for an exceptional place. Ian showed us his local flying sites and even gave us a bottle of his home made wine. Bookings can be made at www.blueshuttersrustica.com or you can e-mail Ian & Jayne at ianorpe@blueshuttersrustica.com

The next day we flew at Palomoret where the weather was like a beautiful warm July English day but with very strong thermals. It is probably the main flying site near Alicante with a good tarmac road up to the large south facing takeoff and has two large safe landing fields 1200 feet below. Vast rocky outcrops to the sides and behind mean that even with thirty plus gliders in the air it still feels uncrowded.

During our week we visited several other sites but the only other one we flew was Cabo Santa Pola, a beautiful coastal soaring site and cliff run with huge bottom landing fields and beaches, 400 feet below.

Nick works very hard to get his visitors flying, but he can't moderate the wind. We flew on only three of our eight days though we could have flown two more had we been more adventurous, but we felt no pressure. Some younger flyers arrived whilst we were there providing international interest and some excitement, for me it was just pleasant to soak up the sunshine and admire the views. One evening we had a barbecue in the mountains whilst the lunar eclipse provided the light show overhead: A memorable and magical experience.

Spain is glorious in the early spring; the doyouwanna website provides further statistics about sites and flyable days per month over the last few years. Please feel free to ask if you want further information.

Harry Dike

Condors Social Engagements 2007:

~~4th April - Maypole inn Thurloxton - XC - from condors sites~~

~~2nd May - Blinis Bar, Royal York & Faulkner Hotel, Esplanade, Sidmouth -
8.00pm
TBC~~

6th June - Blinis Bar, Royal York & Faulkner Hotel, Esplanade, Sidmouth -
8.00pm
TBC

Remember to check the flyphone/email for updates to events.

If you have any suggestions for topics or speakers for clubnight please contact Lester, lestgordon@aol.com or tel. 01823 253673

Sites News

I guess most of you know by now, I have taken over from John F as sites officer.

Many thanks to him for his sterling work, now perhaps he can come out flying more; I hope it's not like being safety officer, you've got to have an accident to qualify.

Two immediate concerns are Branscombe and Charmouth

Branscombe - Many thanks to Mark Turner for his work in keeping an eye on the situation here, hopefully it will be resolved in the not too distant future. (*eds note – I believe it now is*) I'm a bit worried to hear that certain members were thinking of flying and ignoring the Temporary Restricted Airspace. Fantastic! If they do, there will be some serious discussions – straight back to the good old days of hang gliding when we were seen as a bunch of cowboys and not serious flyers, is that what they want? All for the sake of a coastal bimble!

Charmouth - Still on the coast, I have had a call from Lisa at Charmouth Parish Council, looks like they are tightening up the rules. They want categorical assurances that anyone flying there under our agreement has to be a club member. Looks like they might be going to renegotiate they whole arrangement – the curse of health and safety. So, please, if you are flying there don't be afraid to ask anyone you don't recognise, if they are a member.

Any site problems please contact me

Phil

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East Hill

Here are some pics from 28th of March's very interesting flying at East Hill. The very large CB was visible off to the north and gradually approached calling a halt to flying. The wind was smack on, but gradually increased meaning that JOJ, last to arrive was unable to TO. Pictured below is Darren F on his Z1 against a boiling mass!!! and also disappearing into the milky mirk, strange that the air was so active. I had a great flight, until landing, when i decided to fly past Tony and Richard to the bottom of the LZ, - Dumb!! As I then had an overshoot and ended up in the hedge at the bottom of the field, apart from snagging and breaking a stabilo line (*lucky it wasn't something important! - ed*), nothing worse than a bruised ego! So moral of the story, if your going to do something dumb, do it with witnesses!!! Also flying was Tony D, Irish Bill Darren F and Richard Yea. Bill said he had such fun that he now wants to be a fully paid up member of the club, well, any volunteers to turn him upside down and shake out the change?





Library News.

Well exciting stuff for the Library, We have just got in a whole load of new stuff...

DVDs

Performance Flying with Jocky

Risk and reward, Paramotoring with William Shatner!! Captain Kirk Himself!

3 flights - Will Gadd shows us how it's done.

and Mike Kungs playground, ground handling skills, (I think I should borrow this myself!!LOL)

Also an interesting Free DVD from the Met Office on A level weather studies.

Books

Secrets of Champions (Sorry but Markey P has dibs on this one first)

The Condor trail, a guide to South American Flying

Instant weather forecasting (illustrated with great cloud pics).

and two nice 'coffee table' books of inspirational photos from around the world - Stolen moments and Airtime, lovely to make you want to fly when its raining out...

So dont forget, bring back what you've borrowed and get you name down to see some of the new stuff...
(See next page for the 'old' stuff - ed).

See You at a club-night soon!!!!

Rob Dixie

Two Good Reads

"Flying People" by Graham Perry, available only from the publishers Kea Publishing (keapublishing.com), at £13.95, is written for aviation enthusiasts by an enthusiast and an expert. Often light-hearted and witty, the book contains a wealth of information on the developments in aviation, primarily civil, over the last half century. The dilemmas facing designers, operators and regulators are explained in turn. I should declare an interest. Graham is father-in-law to my step daughter.

"Bombers" by Gordon Thorburn, available from Amazon for £12.53, is a must for anyone interested in Second World War aviation. It is essentially a diary of operations of No.9 Squadron R.A.F. Bomber Command from beginning to end of the war, firstly in Wellingtons then Lancasters. He has researched operational records of both the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe, personal diaries and accounts, technical developments, and much more. The colossal effort, industrial and human, and the losses are mind boggling. It makes todays conflicts seem minute, and pathetic for anyone to complain when those warriors put up with appalling odds and achieved remarkable feats of airmanship.

John Jones



The library has proved very popular, so much so that people have been complaining about the difficulty in borrowing certain titles. As I have said before if you have a look at who has borrowed what you want, give them a gentle nudge to return it promptly, and reserve it for next time with me, I will make sure you get what you need, or in certain cases we may even order another copy...

Books

Paragliding, From Beginner to XC
Meteorology and flight (1st edition)
Meteorology and flight (2nd edition)
Radiotelephony manual
Navigating with GPS
Performance flying
Hangliding training manual
Towing aloft
Understanding The Sky
Touching Cloudbase
Microlight Pilots Hand Book
Flying With Condors

Vids

Cloudbase 3 Hang Gliding Extreme
From Nowhere to the Middle of Nowhere
Starting Powered Paragliding
SAT Attack
Security in flight

Kit

The Harness Optimiser

DVDs

Air Riders Weather
Speed To Fly & Security In Flight Combo
Red Bull Vertigo
Starting Powered Paragliding
Weather to Fly
Greolieres, Flying Frenzy Low-Airtime Trip 2004
Parrahawking
The Never Ending Thermal
Over Kuhmbu

If anyone still has titles outstanding for several months get them back to me, by post if you can't be bothered to come to clubnight. Next month I will name and shame, so lookout if your hoarding stuff that is collecting dust, or baby goo, pop it in the post today!!!!

Rob email: mac-man@blueyonder.co.uk

Paragliding Safety

Hi, I would like to introduce myself, as the new paragliding safety officer. As a club we are lucky not to have too many serious accidents but we do have many close misses that through luck do not end more seriously. I hope to encourage a culture of safety by having no blame reporting of any accidents, incidents, or near misses, no matter how small. I do not want to know who was involved just what happened, where and how you think it could be avoided in the future. If you think the situation was out of control or there was a safety issue other people would benefit from knowing about, then please send me an e-mail simon@orronoco.co.uk or ring me on **07867 905950**.

As we get more experienced and our actions become automatic, we forget all the little things that caught us out when we first started. If I can log all the incidents, we may see patterns occurring at particular sites that would be worth adding to the sites guide or things that happen over and over and would be worth bringing to everyone's attention on a regular basis, especially new pilots, hopefully stopping them making the same mistakes we have all made.

I can always benefit from being reminded of the bad situations we can find ourselves in if we don't constantly stay alert to the dangers so when I get reports, I will enter them in Airheads and add some comments. There are always several opinions to every incident and being a relatively new pilot myself I am always keen to learn more so would welcome any feedback.

To start the ball rolling, below are a few incidents that have happened in the last couple of weeks. None of these resulted in any injuries so would not have been reported but could potentially have been dangerous so well worth a mention.

Flying in airspace :-

Familiarise yourself with all airspace you are likely to come across before you take off. The airspace must always be uppermost in your mind when flying, hard to do I know when concentrating on staying in the air, but if the aim is to register the XC then all your efforts are wasted if you stray into airspace.

360 close to the hill :-

When new pilots take their first flights out of the school environment, take things very steady, just do top to bottoms if necessary. The landing part is always the most dangerous so spend plenty of time practicing approaches with height before actually attempting them. Always use the S pattern of approach for a hill landing never 360 straight towards the hill. Ask about the safest place to land, this may not be the takeoff, if unsure a bottom landing is usually the safest.

Flying into trees :-

Always give yourself that escape route and allow enough height for that unexpected bit of sink that is waiting to catch you out. The usual scenario is scratching to close, hit some sink, just scrap over the first tree by holding your feet up, then crashing into the next tree, very scary especially when you feel your lines going lose and your wobbling precariously 30 feet up in a tree, not to mention really really embarrassing. If you're lucky you stay in the tree, feeling a right prat, if unlucky you drop the 30 feet out of the tree. If you survive you then face the mammoth task of getting the glider out of the tree. Always best to be avoided.

Stalling the canopy :-

Fly the correct wing for your ability. Let the wing fly, the best way to keep the wing stable and above your head is to allow it to fly at the speed it needs, slowing it down will eventually lead to a stall or a spin, if close to the ground a very serious situation, you maybe lucky and land in a bush, you may not. When landing on the hill keep your airspeed up until your last flare close to the ground, if you find you cannot get down that last few feet go around again and have another go or bottom land. It is easy to think you can just keep pulling brake and you will land where you want, if 20 or 30 feet up it can be a very heavy landing when the wing stalls. If you are only a few feet off the ground, with your wing braked to almost a stall, it still may not be safe, in windy conditions on a steep slope that few feet can become 50 feet in a couple of seconds, constantly assess the conditions and situation you are faced with at the time.

Dragged by the canopy :-

Always one that catches most of us out from time and time. If landing in stronger conditions try to land clear on any obstacles and always deflate the canopy and get it under control immediately as you land. Regularly practice all the different canopy deflation techniques and decide which one is best for you. Practice this over and over, preferably not in front of a crowd of onlookers as your dragged through the nearest bush, but on a site where there is plenty of room, Batcombe is ideal. If the conditions are on the strongish side and the ones flying are not enjoying it then practice ground handling, it is a very good feeling to be able to confidently handle your wing in stronger conditions. I'm still waiting, one day!

If you think I'm talking a load of b*****s let me know

Safe Flying

Simon F

Mike Glanvill

- *an inadequate farewell to a Condor's Life Member.*

It is in the nature of things that the vast majority of the Condors' current members have never met Mike Glanvill, and I was tempted to use this as an excuse to avoid writing anything. But, as one of a handful of people who have been considered worthy of a life membership of the club, and as a thoroughly decent man, I think his passing should be noted.

Mike started flying in 1976 when he was 53 years old. He wasn't a naturally skilled pilot, and often looked a little unsafe. But he persevered, and became more and more reliable as time went on. Sometimes he would have an "off" day, and these sometimes resulted in incidents or accidents. One of these ended with a broken glider, and Mike tried to make an educational cine film to prevent it happening to anyone else. He simulated the crash by running down from the top of Bossington whilst turning the camera over and around in his hands. The film was great fun, and really scary! As a result of his occasional lapses, Mary preferred to wait at home rather than accompanying him to the hills, and after flying his first thought was usually to call her and put her mind at rest.



When the first Microlights came along Mike bought one, but never really got to grips with it. He did, however, manage to free-fly the double-surface wing very effectively, and this encouraged him to buying the most current high-performance gliders he could find. These Airwave Magics were great in the air, but they were heavy and cumbersome when on or near the ground. Given that he was now getting on for 60 years old, Mike managed remarkably well. He was, however, famous for looking extremely scared on take-off, and for shouting "RELEASE!" only after having taken two or three paces of his take-off run!

One day at East Hill he made me promise that I would help him to find some good lift, and shepherd him off on his first ever cross country. Whilst holding his nose wires on take-off I was made to swear that I wouldn't go without him. Ten minutes later I was airborne, too - and

looking for likely thermals. I was also trying to locate Mike, but couldn't find him anywhere. He had found his own thermal, circled up to cloudbase and promptly set off without me.

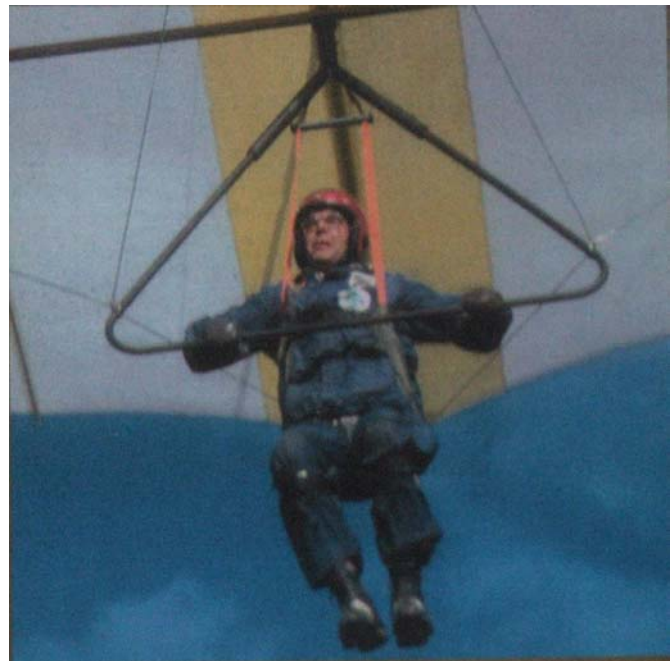
When Airwave announced the new Magic Kiss, clearly the best advanced wing on the market, Mike decided that he wanted one. It was lighter than its predecessors and easier to land, but it did at all times

need a deft and delicate touch from the pilot. I was a bit concerned, but Mike was insistent, so I took his order on the basis that if he didn't like it he could swap back to his Magic 4. As word got out that Mike was getting a Kiss, some people expressed the opinion that he wasn't good enough to fly it. I remember a club meeting at which several people were making negative comments about Mike on a Kiss (in his absence, of course). Having a vested interest I was unusually reticent, but Steve Tilling wasn't. He ended the discussion emphatically, saying "*Bollocks! Mike is a better pilot than any of you.*" That might have been a slight exaggeration, but Mike took that Kiss and flew it very well, confounding the doubters.

Eventually, though, age took its' toll and he began to struggle more. He sometimes wasn't sure in which order to assemble the different parts of the glider, but his flying was usually good, and he enjoyed it immensely. He reverted to a Calypso in order to have an easier time of it, and then decided to take up paragliding. It was while training at a mountain site in Wales that he suffered a very serious heart problem, as a result of which he almost died, and eventually had to have a pacemaker fitted. We sold all his flying gear except his harness but, once he was given permission to start driving again, I would occasionally lend him a glider and we would sneak off to Bossington without telling anyone!

Mike loved his flying so much, but was also an accomplished diver, caver and fisherman. He had a lot of hobbies, and a lot of toys, and lived life to the full. As well as being a full-time GP, he found time to train as a barrister, and was eventually accepted at the Bar. He promptly then took on the government and persuaded the Courts to overturn a ruling preventing a doctor's wife being employed in his surgery! This was something of a landmark case, which got a lot of coverage in the higher quality papers.

It was Mike's huge capacity for fun that endeared him to me and mine. As we became closer friends so he and Mary spent more time together with my young family. The boys loved him - he was like a kindly, hyperactive teddy bear with a gruff voice, and a naughty grin that betrayed his massive sense of humour. I have photos of them together that provoke memories of very happy days.



So, here was a man who was always up for excitement and fun. He enjoyed laughing at himself, and rarely had a cruel word for anyone else. But he was no longer a young man. In recent years his heart problems restricted his ability to do all the active things he most enjoyed. It was sad to see him declining. When, in 2006 Mary was diagnosed with cancer, they confided that they had really had enough. Mary died in November, and suddenly Mike was totally lost. I knew he was just waiting for the day to come, and he wanted it to be soon.

In truth, the Mike Glanvill that I loved had been ebbing away over a period of years, and thus his death on March 17th was more of a release than anything else. Knowing that it was what both he and Mary had wanted made it easier to bear.

I'm sad to lose this fine friend, but so very, very grateful to have known him so well.

Simon.

Further Editorial

Well, I'll tell 'e summat – tis not quite as easy as it looks! Still, managed to shoehorn this issue together after what seems like an eternity... do bear with me, it can only get better ☺. Please email me any feedback.

Being an office-bound North Coaster, I still haven't flown almost all the South Coast sites but am looking forward to doing so this year – everyone's saying it's going to be a hot one, so maybe plenty sunny southerly coastal soaring? Let's hope so!

Plenty of Condors heading abroad plans this year – some to Annecy (I'm off there next week – only for a week but hooooo-ha!). Wherever you go, please try and jot down a few lines about your experience, good or bad, together with a few pictures, and you never know, you might help someone else and surely that's what life's about. Certainly short this month on Competition reports, XC reports, Flying Round-up, etc, etc. There's so much missing! I'll be chasing harder for next issue ;-).

Pete

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Club Contacts – please let me know if there are errors here!

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