

Sep97

# Air

# Heads



## MINUTES OF THE AUGUST MEETING 1997

The minutes of the July meeting were read and approved.

Matters arising:

**Charmouth** is now closed and will re-open at the end of August. It was suggested that a sign be erected in the landing field to prevent picnickers, kite fliers and the like.

Simon reported that **East Hill** has become overgrown and needs some clearing work for us to be able to fly. Hopefully this will come under the agreement with Devon County Council.

Eddie seems to be making a good recovery and hopes to be flying again in three weeks.

### Treasurers Report

Andy Tew reported that we have one new member, Mike Richards, from the Wessex a P.G. pilot with more than 300 hrs experience. The account now stands at £1741.00 with 18 members who haven't renewed. John Fielder has now produced Membership cards and helmet stickers, just in time for 1998.

### Sites

#### Branscombe

When flying, stay well clear of the Shetland ponies, recently a child was thrown off by a dual paraglider landing too close. The Whites are very tolerant of our activities, but this sort of incident puts the whole site at risk.

#### Safety

Derek Sadler had an unfortunate accident on Dartmoor after top landing, he attempted to deflate his canopy using his brakes and was dragged into a rock, breaking his arm and badly bruising his ribs.

Derek was then air lifted to hospital. This was quite a similar accident to the one Phil had on Bossington. It is generally agreed that

it is safer to use your "B" risers (or "C"s if you have four risers) to break the back of your canopy in strong conditions, rather than using the brakes or rear risers.

He made the proposal that perhaps a small sub from our membership fees should be paid to the Devon Air Ambulance as we seem to be one of their best customers. Opinions on this are welcome.

Phil then regaled us with the story of his roughest flight in 20 years. Flying his brand new SX at Triscombe, he was basically trashed all over the place and was very lucky to get away with just a dislocated finger and a very bent glider. He could offer no explanation for what looked like very acceptable conditions. Simon commented that we have been having some extraordinarily radical conditions in Europe recently resulting in large numbers of reserve deployments. The only lesson that Phil could draw from it was the importance of not flying alone.

Nick whilst aerotowing at Smeatharpe had a ground based lockout, but despite damage to his equipment was unhurt.

Andy has completed some interesting research at Branscombe. In very light conditions he did an Alpine launch, but before taking off spotted a rare breed of butterfly in the brambles close to the edge, so he aborted his take off and dived headlong in to get a closer look. Using his harness he very cleverly managed to suspend himself upside down for some considerable period of time. Sadly no camera was available to record this natural breed in its native habitat.

#### Air Ambulance

Angie reported that the Air Ambulance wanted to do some publicity either at Smeatharpe or Branscombe. With our present record there should be no problems producing some action shots.

### Competitions

Congratulations to Harriet who came 4th in the Scottish Open recently.

### Great Gardening Challenge

Channel 5 have asked us to produce a team for this, they have obviously done some research into our flying skills. Anyway Paul Richards and Triccia have volunteered and we await their National Acclaim.

### Advertising in Airheads

Recently we have been asked what was the charge for this. Generally it was agreed that a contribution to the Devon Air Ambulance in the order of £10.00 would be acceptable. But that we do not provide lists of members.

### Mike Glanville

After a long and illustrious flying career, Mike has decided to give up flying. It is very much hoped that we will still see him around on the sites, at meetings and at the Annual Dinner. There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:00 p.m.

### John Milner

### STOP PRESS:

Air experience days this Saturday and Sunday see page 7. Can everybody who is able come and support this good cause.

### Inside

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# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



September already, I know it sounds corny but, I'm typing this while it's pouring with rain outside. It feels more like winter and another year over. God I feel old!!

Sorry I'm rambling again, anyway, following on from last month, the gory details as promised!!

Having had such a good flight a couple of days before I was raring to go again, so I set off for Triscombe, I've had some nice flights there, honest! John was on his way, he had a good day as well, he tried to blow his car up!!

The sky did look good, although, with hindsight, it was probably more gusty than normal, with some nice cumulus developing. To cut a long story short I rigged and got all my gear sorted, this was probably a bad omen as the last few decent flights have been when I've been totally unprepared.

Take off was fun due to the waist high bracken, which required a very positive run, like bloody hell!! Climbing away from the hill still blissfully unaware of the surprise in store. A few seconds later and it was a bloody nightmare, the glider was thrown all over the place, one moment standing in the rear wires, then doing handstands, trying not to be thrown through the A frame and head butting the keel. It really was a case of delayed shock, I can remember thinking that this just could not be happening to me, definitely a bad dream gone wrong! Whatever I did really had a negligible effect, the best I could hope for was to try to keep compensating, and hope that I could get the glider as near level and in some semblance of

control when I hit the ground, which I knew with sickening certainty that I would eventually do. At one point it occurred to me that it would be an option to try to dump into the trees, they might have been softer!! Desperate or what?? I actually hit the ground directly below take off in the first, sloping field. The angle I approached at, it wouldn't have mattered what slope the field had. When I picked myself up and inspected the glider I could have cried, one thing was for certain I would have to buy it now!!!! Before I had chance to think anymore there was a terrible pain in my hand, without taking my glove off it was obvious that my finger was badly dislocated, feeling it all knotted up but with no sharp edges, only the round ball and socket could be felt through the glove, so I thought, here goes, this has got to go back. The doctor in casualty actually said if I hadn't done it then they would have had to give me an anaesthetic, it still swelled up pretty impressively. I managed to derig, and wrap up the sharp bits of aluminium, luckily there wasn't a mark on the sail.

Leaving the glider behind the hedge I walked back to the van via the pub, did I need that drink, better than an anaesthetic any day!!!

Looking back, there is nothing that seems to me to have indicated that conditions would be that bad. I'm quite happy to fly in rough conditions, but this was probably the worst flight I have ever had, and that's saying something. Various people have asked me if I would have done anything different, nothing I can think of, except let some other sucker go first!!

Back to normal, the glider is now ready to go, having replaced the leading edge, two uprights and the keel, I could probably rebuild an Extralite blindfold now!!

Thanks for the help, Simon. Cheque's in the post! And Harriet for the ice cream!

Back to more mundane safety matters, I had a call from my new found friend, the coastguard supervisor, who has been very positive and helpful. He has checked their records and in his area, i.e. North Devon/Somerset coast, they have only been called out twice in eleven years.



Phil has discovered a Skywings in which he does not appear in the Accident Statistics

# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT 2



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Apparently we are statistically the safest sport they deal with, including, walkers, fishermen, sailors, fossil hunters et al. So if anyone tells you it's a dangerous sport! I gather very little flying was had in Cornwall the other week, nice holiday but no wind, it was nice for a change not to have missed anything.

I bet the same will not be the case for those lucky lads in France. Hope they've had a great holiday!!! Don't forget, Charmouth is now open again, please abide by the rules and we can fly right through to the Whitsun Bank Holiday.

Fly carefully,

Phil

Phil building a glider from some old metal fragments he found at Triscombe

A cautionary tale from the British Microlite Accident Survey

8/3/97 Pegasus Quasar

It was on a fine day north of the Border that this pilot in loose formation with his colleagues, set forth on what promised to be a long cross-country across the Highlands. It turned out to be something Gerard Hoffnung would have dreamt up (remember the builder with the barrel of bricks?) At about three hours into the flight the pilot was forced down to about 800ft by rising ground and cloud, and was rightly starting to be worried about the fuel state. With this in mind, he then noticed that his map box was about to escape.....

In the attempt to get the map back in and secure the map holder, his gauntlet snagged his seat belt release, and the buckle end flipped over the side of the cockpit. Unbeknown to him, when this happened the seat belt snagged his ignition switch. It was while he was attempting to retrieve the buckle and refasten it that an engine misfire started; this continued until eventually the engine stopped. Abandoning the refastening of the seat belt (and by this time thinking that he was out of fuel) he aimed his glider at the least hostile piece of ground in an area devoid of good landing spots. Turning into wind was the last action that this pilot managed before touching down. The eventual point of touchdown was with closely packed, tufted grass up to 2ft. high atop a bog, and on contact the aircraft stopped almost immediately. Not being strapped in, our pilot flew on, and as a drowning man clutches at straws, he took the front strut with him....

He landed face down, and as the aircraft toppled onto him, fortuitously the wing had folded under the trike, so this took most of the weight and - mercifully - he was relatively unhurt. When he had gathered his wits, he made his aircraft safe by switching the ignition off (ON!) thinking that lack of fuel had stopped the engine. It is now a few weeks on, and this pilot is back in the air enjoying his flying again. (These fliers north of the Border are made of strong stuff - must be all that porridge...!)

Ray Wilkinson - Chief Safety Officer, BMAA.

(This was printed in last months Wessex magazine - Wessex Airmail)

# CIRCUS WITH ALTITUDE



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## EAST HILL DREAMING.

I just couldn't believe it! Here I was at 3000 feet above take off, and below me there was a scene of pandemonium as the entire Condors entourage stuffed picnics and gliders into bags, loaded cars and hot-footed it away from the site.

This was in the days when there was a considerable degree of competition in the club. I was flying well, and was always on the lookout for a good XC. The forecast drew us all to East Hill, but the wind was light. Very light indeed, so we rigged and talked about flying. But the day looked good, so everyone kept a look out.

## LET'S GO

Eventually I clipped in, for no reason other than the fact that you can't go cross country until you have taken off. I walked to the front and hung around, waiting for something magical to happen. And it did. (Those were the days!) Two buzzards appeared out in front of the hill, below take off and climbing steadily. I took off, flew straight out to meet them, and started turning as soon as I reached the lift. It was light, and the drift was almost non-existent, but I was going up. Everything was all right with the world.

## LET'S GO (2)

Nobody else took off, doubtless entranced by my display of buzzard-like prowess. That was when I realised they were packing up and leaving. The buzzards! They were wimping out and going to play with the winch at Smeatharpe!

## LET'S GO (3)

When I could climb no higher I

drifted off downwind to look for another thermal. Climbing away from a hill in almost zero wind was bloody good, but I had to do a good distance, too. Couldn't get beaten by that bunch of wimps, could I?

Well, yes. I didn't find any more lift, and landed just past the Three Horseshoes - all of three or four miles away. It's amazing how long it took to get back to the car, and by the time I got to Smeatharpe everyone had either gone XC or had packed up. Everyone flew further than me. But I didn't care too much because I had flown well. Wouldn't catch me daring to take-off like that these days!

## LET'S GO (4)

What happened to those two Buzzards? Well, I can't remember, because they were above me when I reached their thermal, and I soon lost sight of them. But I suspect they decided to go to Smeatharpe, too.

...More about Buzzards and East Hill next time, but it is a great pity that nobody has had the opportunity to fly there this year. You can't do the flying without the weather.

## NOTHING MUCH AT FIREBIRD UK!

Want to see some good flying gear? Don't come to Turfhouse, then, because there is hardly any stock to show you.

FIREBIRD. The season finally started, and we have been caught out with a rush of orders for Flames and G-Sports. The Flame is going a treat up north, getting a real name for itself in the Peak District and Cumbria. So, not enough demos (Sorry, John and Derek!).

MOYES. Well, I can't pretend that hang gliders are selling very well, but we have had a lot of trouble keeping up with the demand for spares. The embarrassing keels incidents at the League didn't help, but worse still is trying to find enough Genuine Moyes Stock to keep Chairman Phil in the Air. (Amazingly enough, although Phil was crashing the only SX6 in the UK, we should have all the replacement bits he needs available from stock! SPOOKY! Is Phil psychic?)

CHARLY INSIDERS. We keep getting big shipments in, and they whistle right out again. Last Friday we got a delivery which means we have about fifty to choose from, but what is the betting that we haven't got the colour/size you want? Insiders are incredible value for money. To quote Martyn Howe when he collected his, "It's too good to be true!"

RENSCHLER INSTRUMENTS. Haven't got ANY. Still haven't got one for Brett. Still haven't got one for Jeff. Still can't fulfill the 40-or-so outstanding order received in the last three weeks. Demand is quite extraordinary, and very, very welcome! Uwe Renschler has promised to get us up to date this week - but if you are interested, don't wait! Get your order in right away. Hey, but don't worry about me. I'm OK. I've got a new Insider, and new Renschler Sol 5, and a choice of Moyes and Firebird wings.

So that's alright, then.

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# 1997 HG SCOTTISH OPEN



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Part of a telephone conversation between myself and Simon M, on the evening of Sunday, August 3rd:

H. Guess what.

S. *What?*

H. I came fourth.

S. *(in total disbelief) What? Fourth? Not fourth overall?*

H. *(a bit indignant) Yes, fourth overall.*

S. *(a bit surprised at first, then oozing cynicism) Really? Ah, but how many were flying? Six?*

H. *(getting more indignant) No! About 40, actually.*

S. *(sounding suitably impressed, at last) Cor! Well done!*

So, have you heard the one about the Englishman, the Scotsman and the Irishman...?

as the dates for the Scottish Open were set for the weekend I had hoped to fly up in the Highlands anyway, and they were promoting it with novices in mind by combining the event with training with Gustav Fischnaller, I thought, what the hell, if the competition's too much I can always switch to the training option, and entered.

## DAY ONE, AUGUST 2

In the run-up to the competition, it became more and more obvious it was going to be flyable. The weather in the rest of the British Isles was c\*\*p, and Scotland was the place to be, the Highlands in particular, so there was no getting away with it. Approaching the mountains it was warm, sunny and promising.

However, once into the mountains proper, it clouded over, and at Glenshee there was 100% cloud cover at around 4,000'asl (900'ato) and it was cold. (Having started the day at 7.00am in shorts and a T-shirt, I was now glad that I had heeded Simon's advice to take longjohns!) The forecast still promised that this would clear and that there would be sunny spells - they lied, of course.

Al MacNeish, the organiser, gave the briefing, the task being a route XC to within 2nm of Carnoustie railway station, via Mount Blair, Kirriemuir and Forfar. Anyone landing more than 1km from a tarmacked road would be disqualified (mountain rescue is an expensive business), as would anyone landing within a 2km radius of the Spittal of Glenshee, although this latter exclusion zone was due to disgruntled farmers rather than retrieve problems or airspace restrictions.

## THE CHAIRLIFT

I had been dreading this bit, as it just didn't seem possible to carry a hang glider and harness on a chairlift. I can't say it was anything less than a totally nerve-racking experience and I was very glad it wasn't windy. It was, however, a far better option than having to carry up, but without another pilot primed to take my glider off me when I reached the top each day, I might still be on the continuous loop of the lift!

## THE SITE

After the chairlift you have to carry up a short, steep, stony slope to the summit,

and then there are not enough grassy patches for 40 or so pilots to rig their gliders without some having to make do on the stones. However, the payoff is a 1,600' top to bottom, takeoffs in all directions bar north, and spectacular surrounding scenery, almost all of which is flyable.

## THE FLYING

There was a lot of hanging about waiting for conditions to improve, which they didn't much. Takeoff on the northwest side of the Cairnwell goes against all better judgement. You take off into the aptly named 'Washing Machine', a deep, steep sided bowl with only two exits: south and up. I never did see the bottom of this pit, as I forgot to look down far enough, but from takeoff it looked very dark and menacing. However, with Dave Holbrook (a friendly league pilot) casting encouraging noises from behind, I threw caution to what little wind there was and launched. A few others had already tried and gone down, but two had recently headed off down the valley having reached cloudbase above takeoff first. Not entirely to my surprise, as there had been a faintly noticeable cycle establishing itself, I did manage to reach cloudbase fairly quickly, and once I was in the wispy bits there was nothing else for it but to start to glide off down the valley, hoping to find more lift along the way. As the drift was northwesterly I kept pretty much to the east side of the valley, but the best I got was enough to maintain height in places, and sink only slowly in others.

# 1997 HG SCOTTISH OPEN 2



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The crossing of the saddle through the hills to the next valley was a bit tense - I was beginning to think about unzipping my harness - but there was always an escape route if needed, albeit into the DSQ area surrounding the hotel. The first glider (local Scot, George Watt) to have left the Cairnwell area was enjoying a second thermal above the high point on the north side of this saddle, but he was the only one to do so. Out into the second, wider valley, but still no more lift, so it was all down to extending the glide as far as possible, and I managed to land in the same field as Eddie Redmond. George had already gone further, and not long after I landed Dave passed overhead. But that was it. Tactics hadn't seemed difficult (Dave and I agreed later that they went along the lines of 'er... well... I tried to fly in the lify bits and... er... well... then I just drifted along in the general direction we were supposed to go... and... er... well... it was good for me... how was it for you...?'), so where was everyone else? Mostly in the bottom landing field, that's where (no competitive spirit!), with a few scattered at various intervals along the valley floor (at least they went for it). So the upshot of all this was that at the end of day one, George Watt (Scotland) was in first place, Dave Holbrook (England) in second, and Eddie Redmond (Eire) and myself in joint third. No-one made anywhere near goal, which was a shame, as it looked on the map like a good run, and quite achievable in half decent conditions.

Colin Lark was very unimpressed by being beaten by a woman, especially me, (he was in fifth place at this stage) and spent the evening muttering threats of glider sabotage. He was also intent upon delights of the night with my (female) roommate at the B&B, but neither plan came to fruition. A man who doesn't know that his flies are wide open is difficult to take seriously.

## DAY TWO, AUGUST 3

I was no more confident about the chairlift than the day before, and in my anxiety I totally forgot to get a ticket from the cafe. Public humiliation ensued with a chorus of "Oh, Harriet!" when I had nothing to give to the lift operator except embarrassed apologies. A kind and chivalrous soul (?) bailed me out by selling me his girlfriend's ticket and sending her back to buy another, as she was further back in the queue. (That's the Scots for you!) The wind was a nearly non-existent south easterly and this time cloudcover was 110%. The task was an into-wind flight to goal at Knock of Formal, about 23km away, via Mount Blair and Dykends Junction. As check-in time was 4.15pm, in person, at Comp. HQ (Gustav Fischnaller's B&B at Spittal), takeoff couldn't be much later than 1.30pm. I waited, clipped-in, for around half an hour, vainly willing the sun to shine or a faint breeze to blow. Dave Holbrook and Simon Headford had taken off about half an hour before me, but I wasn't in a position to follow them straight off the hill, which was a pity, as they were the only two to get much above takeoff height the whole day.

I headed over to the west side of the valley this time, as if there was any lift it should have been that side.

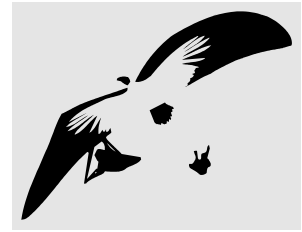
No luck. Again it was down to stretching out the glide as far as possible. (The speed to fly option on the vario helped a lot on both days.) Dave, Simon and George Watt had already flown as far as they could and landed - in fact Dave had had to wind off a bit of height in order to avoid landing within the 2km Spittal exclusion zone. He and Simon landed together to make first place for the day, George was 400m short of them and I landed about 300m short of George. About 10 minutes after I landed another wing flew low over me, and as I recognised Eddie's wing I shook my fist and cursed at him, to which he responded sweetly with a regal wave as he flew into third place overall by landing 100m further on than George, leaving me in fourth. A tape measure might have made more accurate distance assessment than grid references, but the overall result was indisputable. No great distances flown, but a nail biting finish nonetheless. As with the day before, the majority landed in the bottom landing field.

The prize-giving was an informal affair, despite the enormous size of the silverware presented.

**Overall Winner: Dave Holbrook** (the Englishman) Laminar ST  
**Second:** and Best Scottish Pilot **George Watt** (the Scotsman) Airwave Klassic  
**Third: Eddie Redmond** (the Irishman) Solar Rush  
**Fourth: Yours Truly** (and I was more surprised at the result than anyone else, believe me!)

glider: Moyes SX2

# 1997 HG SCOTTISH OPEN 3



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Al MacNeish and his helpers, and Gustav Fischnaller did a wonderful job organising the whole thing, and without their efficiency and hospitality the weekend simply would not have happened. The whole event was really well run and great fun.

Incidentally, although conditions were hardly epic, I believe this was the first time the Scottish HG Open has actually been flown for some years. I believe you had a spot of bother with a little bit of rain round about that time, and that for once I was in the right place at the right time!

## EPILOGUE

After the Open I went to stay for a couple of days with Robin Craig, a veteran hang glider pilot from Edinburgh who Simon said I had to visit and inject with some renewed enthusiasm for flying. Well, you know I don't argue with Simon - he's bigger than me - so I duly invited myself to stay with Robin, who was a little surprised to find himself as host. He rose to the occasion magnificently, however. Unfortunately, although it was very flyable both days I was with him, the wind was easterly and the Edinburgh area has no easterly sites. What a surprise! Not to be put off by this minor setback, Robin took it upon himself to be my tour (sites) guide and we visited 6 sites south of the city, and climbed 4, over the two days. We climbed a total of 2,600ft the first day! You do need to be fairly fit, as only two of these sites has (4wd) access and the others you have to carry up, but they are big and cover every wind direction except for easterly. (In order to fly, we should have stayed on at Glenshee, of course.)

So if you're considering heading north of the border at any time, don't miss the chance of flying some brilliant sites - take your glider with you!

I carried on south, stopping for another two nights with Tony and Sue Delaney (Airborne) near Halifax, and had one flight in the Dales at Whernside - a two mile, 1,000ft top-to-bottom ridge with a carry-up from hell. Imagine the distance from the carpark to the cairn at Bossington, only rougher and rollier, and climbing about two to three hundred feet, and then going straight up the front of Bossington, but over stony terrain. Luckily (?) it was windy enough to take off from a shoulder about 200ft below the top, but even so, the last bit was steeper than most staircases. I admit it - I gave up. I was with Andy Lumb (Pennine HG School) and a student of his, who had a dual Discovery and a couple of light harnesses between them, whilst I had my SX and Keller, and they carried my glider the last 50 yards, while I staggered up on all fours (yes, it was that steep) with my harness! Still, after I had recovered enough to rig my glider, I had a very pleasant hour and a half's evening flight, albeit ridge lift only, as it had been too windy earlier in the day and by the time we flew all the thermals had died. It's often a good site for wave, too, but we didn't get any.

The next day I came home, and it's been hot and sunny ever since! One flight at Bossington and the rest of the time I've been on the beach with the kids.

What's your summer been like?

Harriet.

## DIARY

### Air Experience Days

September 6/7

There will be more experience days at Smeatharpe, with dual hang gliding flights starting at 11am. All donations are to go to Devon Air Ambulance (who need our support so they are still there if we need them.....again!) Microlight flights will also be available at Dunkeswell at £20 for 20 minutes. A barbecue will start at Dunkeswell at 6pm. (Bring your own food).

Angie

### Club Coach Course

November 29/30

This course is to be held at the Sidmouth Arms, Upottery, and will cost £20 each plus a small amount for coffees and teas. The club will pay 50% for a few pilots on a first come first served basis. John Fielder and I are already booked on the course. Brian Smith, Andy Tew and Simon Murphy have already indicated interest. Would anyone who would like to book, please give me a ring.

Harriet

### Club Xmas Dinner

Date & venue to be arranged

# BITS & PIECES



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**FOR SALE.** Upottery Towing Club syndicate share. For details of aerotow share please contact Charlie Gottlieb on 01392 216425. All offers considered.

## Treasurers Report

There are now 68 full members of the club. Bank balance @ 27/8/97, a very healthy - £1,877.11.

New members this month are : Mark Bridges (HG), Mandy Hawkins (PG), Katherine Cotton (PG) and Bridget Jasper (PG).

## Andy Tew

How many pilots in the club have and USE their radios? At present we use 143.50 for flying and 143.60 for winching. Some people seem to fly without switching them on. It would be nice to receive information on conditions, retrieves would be easier and at Bossington HG pilots might even be able to get their trollies taken back to the car park!

There are a number of low air time pilots, both PG and HG, in the club. Would anyone like any activities specifically for you? Have you any ideas that may help other pilots to improve their skills?

I've done no Hang gliding for two months in the hope of getting in some amazing Paragliding. One great Sunday at a deserted Pandy; a nice ridge run, a short XC and a 12k walk back out of the Black Mountains to Mrs Clayton's. The rest was all Bossington but nothing special. One frustrating day at Smeatharpe was saved by Jeff giving both James and I short flights on the tug. James was so impressed that he has already had his first microlight lesson at Shobdon.

A full members list is attached to Airheads this month. If I have any details wrong, please let me know. The membership of those who have not paid by the end of September will be considered lapsed and they will be removed from the current membership list. If this applies to **YOU** please pay **NOW!**

## John Fielder

## CONTACT NUMBERS

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Sites	Gerry McCann	Woodstock, High Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1QS	01460 61468
HG Safety & Training	Mark Hoer	Rose Cottage, Hemyock, Devon	01823 681188
PG Safety & Training	Brian Smith	45 Union Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 4BY	01278 431138
HG XC Claims	Harriet Pottinger	Ivydene, Smeatharpe, Honiton, Devon, EX14 9RF	01823 601202
PG XC Claims	Maggie Wilson	Orchard House, Torre, Washford, Watchet, Somerset, TA23 OLA	01984 641220
Mid-week flying			0800 515544
Airheads	John Fielder	43 Highdale Road, Clevedon, N. Somerset, BS21 7LR Email: 100774.1650@compuserve.com	01275 343927 Fax 01275 341241

The Editor after not flying for four days. After a fortnight, avoid him at all costs

- Sub Ed



Articles sent on computer disk are helpful and time saving, Word for Window, Ami Pro, or text format if possible. If not jot it down and sent it in as soon as possible. **THE DEADLINE** for copy is the **LAST FRIDAY** in the month. **LATE ARTICLES** may be moved to the following month.



# HIGH FLYERS



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## HIGH FLYERS

Some time ago Angie Weir asked if anyone fancied risking life and limb, sorry, enjoying a pleasant flight in a microlight. Several people put their names down and the evening was arranged. I persuaded Tanya it was a good idea, and under the mis-apprehension that we were going up in a nice, comfortable, enclosed fixed wing aeroplane, she agreed. This was also on the understanding that we could go shopping in Exeter on the way! Bridesmaid's slippers duly purchased, we set about finding Dunkeswell airfield, with a stop at Sainsburys for barbecue food.

Angie's map was pretty good and we arrived at the entrance gate (nearly) on time. Anyone who knows Tan knows that this is an achievement in itself. We were warned that the perimeter road was a bit bumpy with a few pot holes. Understatement of the Year Award judges are still out on that little phrase. I am not sure that Dunkeswell was a World War Two airfield, but the road looks like it has been bombed and not mended since! Add to that the fact that you had to cross two runways as well and the drive to the hanger was eventful to say the least, but we got there in one piece. We were met by a saddening sight. Only two other people had turned up.

Maureen was in the air as we arrived, and her partner David, although safely back on the ground was still on a high after his flight. Both the microlighting, and the earlier hang-gliding had been in doubt due to the weather, but the wind having died down, both activities were possible.

When Maureen landed, she bounced over, and promptly announced that when she wins the lottery, a microlight is the first thing that she will buy.

Tanya, having seen the microlight for the first time, was feeling a little nervous about going up under little more than a kite, but wasn't going to chicken out. She went with Angie to get a suit and I went into the Portakabin to find a high fashion, functional, yet dashing outfit, in which to take to the skies. I emerged in a puffy red effort with white accessories (helmet), looking and feeling not unlike the Michelin Man. The one consolation was that with the earphones firmly in place, (and, no, they weren't extra large ones), I was unable to hear Tanya's cruel laughter at my appearance. Carrying out a manoeuvre that can only be described as "mounting" the craft, I was then firmly wedged into the rear seat as the pilot got into his. Tanya was also now beyond the point of no return and our two machines trundled out onto the runway. The two craft carried out an impressive formation, take-off, I was reliably informed and I was soon climbing rapidly above the surrounding countryside. The ground fell away surprisingly quickly and we were soon cruising smoothly at 1100ft. Everything was going swimmingly, gently riding along, looking at views stretching from Torbay on one side, to Wales on the other, I cast a glance over to Tan, exchanging waves, when suddenly her craft made a banking turn. I laughed at the surprised look on her face, before realising that whatever Tan did ..... All of a sudden, the earth that had been underneath me, where it should

have been, was beside me. The location of my stomach was a complete mystery. After the initial shock however I soon got used to it and really started to enjoy it as both aircraft banked about and even did some moves not unlike a rollercoaster, but at 1000ft. All too soon, our twenty minutes were up and we came in to land. Having lanky legs I was informed that it would be altogether easier if I hung my feet over the side as we landed. Oh joy thought I, so I chose to survey the airfield instead of concentrating on the rapidly approaching tarmac. It appeared that the hanger was on fire, but no, it was only Angie starting the barbecue. We landed hoping that more people would have turned up, but sadly it was not to be, so we sat and consumed hot, tube-shaped bits of charcoal, drowned in tomato ketchup, watching parachutists glide down. microlighting is great fun, but I'm sorry, jumping out of a perfectly serviceable aeroplane is madness.

All (four) of us who went, would go again at the drop of a hat, and at twenty-quid-to-you-sir, it's great value, so if it's arranged again I'd strongly recommend that you go. And now ladies and gents, I'd like to finish on a song-

"Come fly with me, come fly, come fly, away....."

Richard Burgess

(written for the Inland Revenue in house Magazine - Binliner) After Angie's last Air experience day.

