

Jan97

Air

Heads



MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER MEETING 1997

Minutes of the December meeting

The minutes of the November meeting were read and approved.

Matters arising:

Strimmer

The strimmer and branch cutter have been purchased and have already been in use on North Hill.

Club Coaches

The fees for the Club Coaches course at Upottery will be subsidised as usual by Club funds to the tune of 50% or £8.20 per participant. This is because it is of general benefit to the Club to have as many Club Coaches as possible.

Plaques

John Fielder produced the plaques for Charmouth and Branscombe which were very pretty. It was suggested that they should be fixed with anti-theft screws.

Xmas Present List

Phil went through the list of landowners that would be given their usual bottle of whisky and box of chocolates. The only exceptions were the owners of Bampton Quarry, Raddon Hill, Ham Hill and Telegraph Hill, who will receive cards. Lisa Tuck will also be added to the list for all her help with Charmouth.

Safety Report

Greg Twist gave us a blow by blow account of his crash at

Smeatharpe, which went something like this: Flared too early - Let go of uprights - Hit ground - Banged elbow on bottom bar.

A general discussion developed about water landings and once again it was reiterated that **WATER LANDINGS ARE NOT AN OPTION.**

Treasurers Report

Loadsamoney lessabit for trophies and Xmas.

Xmas Do

Phil had a bit of a rant about not enough support for the Do. He's quite right. All those who didn't come are tossers/xxxxxxx. (I will be happy to print any rejections of our Sec's opinions - ed)

Avon Agreement

This is now through, so we can fly all their sites but NOT UBLEY. Anyone wanting a sites guide should contact young Fielder.

Blorange

We have been contacted by the S.E. Wales Club, who are trying to buy the Blorange. They are asking for contributions on a sale or return basis. It was proposed that the Condors should contribute £500 to this fund.

There was general agreement at the meeting, but a final decision would be made at the January meeting once all the membership had had notice of the proposal and a chance to air their views.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

John Milner

Chairman's Chat

What lousy weather, apart from the day of the last meeting, when a few of us flew at North Hill the weather has been awful.

The Christmas do! I thoroughly enjoyed, hopefully so did everybody else, I'm not even going to mention the turnout. In fact my New Year's resolution is going to be never to mention the lack of support from members for anything the club does. Having had long discussions with other hard core members I have decided to support whatever the keen pilots want and if others aren't interested.....!!!

I would like to thank the Microlight club on behalf of our members who did attend. Not only did we have lots of prizes to present, we even wiped the floor with them at their party games!! Craig excelled at the bottles, and we won't mention my contribution, its amazing what you can do with a handful of 20p pieces!! It's not an application that immediately springs to mind.

Inside	
Chairman's Chat	2-3
A Few Thoughts	4
Crossword 11	5
Bits & Pieces	6

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT CONT..



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97

I think I must be slowing down. Harriet suggested inviting Lisa Tuck to the do, but having not met her I was a bit slow on the uptake. When it was too late and I was delivering prezies I met her and wished I'd been more decisive. Someone remind me next year, she is a very attractive lady!!

Towing the other weekend was extreme to say the least, the high point being Graham Phipps demonstrating the Mosquito, who wanted a paramotor, not me any more!! This is definitely what I want next year, when he gets some units in. I'm not sure about hacksawing the keel off my Extralite, but then again it can't be any worse than trying to wreck it at Triscombe.

The low points were Mark Nichol trying to wipe out himself, the tug and an inexperienced pilot. Nick got so angry he decided to try and wipe himself out as well.

If that doesn't make sense " what happened was" Mark was returning with the trike, in a world of his own, having dropped Roger Slaney off at 7'000. Burning off height, he flew across in front of the winch line, managed to drag the tow line across it and even hooked the clip on the line. Luckily the weak links and release worked and all was OK, lucky or what!!

Nick then had a bad flight, if you can call it that. From where I was standing he looked like he dropped onto the tarmac on take off, then shot towards me with his right wingtip low, then recovered, climbed to the left, across the wake of the tug, then released, stalled and dived into the tarmac.

All in all not very good from a safety point of view.

I missed the pre Christmas weekend, trying to catch up with work, I gather there were few takers for towing.

The weekend after Christmas, again very few takers. On the Sunday it was glorious at Charmouth, although the wind was well off to the west. I managed a pleasant flight on my canopy, assuming Andy Tew was going to follow me off I flew back to see him, John and Jeff struggling to get his canopy out of the brambles. The wind had picked up just after I took off! None of the other canopies managed to fly as the wind was picking up and way off.

Mark, Harriet and Simon managed to fly from the seat just below the stile which should be cleared by the time you read this. Ask Harriet about her landing, she swears that not only the take off is falling into the sea, but so is the landing. She managed to just overshoot the grass and drop onto the beach head first.

Monday was a complete waste of time, are we desperate or what? I rang Jeff as usual, lousy forecast, waste of time etc., half an hour later he rings back, " it's brightening up, how about it?"

There's no fool like an old fool, and that's me I'm talking about. En route to Charmouth, Jerry rings, "you cannot be serious! the weather's crap". Arrive at Charmouth, grey, overcast, looking ominously like chucking it down, wind at the bottom take off gusting 30mph + so we do the obvious, get the gliders out and rig.

John arrives, still wearing his shorts, that makes three sad old gits. We watch as Harriet arrives, wrestles with the temptation to copy us, then discovers that its too windy to even get the glider off the roof!! so gives up, sensible girl. A sudden rush to get off as we both realise that we are going to be short of assistance to launch, Jeff sneakily gets into the lead, having said he would watch me launch first. Tactics at Charmouth! It's already starting to drizzle. Three of us launch him into a gale, then its my turn, this is just the right time to turn the brain right off. It's starting to rain, there aren't enough wire men, the wind is off to the east, but no, Jeff is in the air, that's all that matters! John's on the nose, Harriet sensibly having refused, is on the side wire.

No left wing man, we struggle to the edge, Harriet saying she has a lot of pressure, stupidly don't listen, Release!! Execute a nifty 90 degree left turn, I doubt if the left wing was even flying, and end up on the grass slope below take off, what a w****. Jeff landed, he said it was to see if I was OK, the fact that it was ***** down had absolutely nothing to do with it!! No harm done apart from the ego, pack up in the rain, Jerry arrives and refuses to believe our story. I have a sneaking suspicion Harriet was getting her own back, only joking.

Re; parking at Charmouth, Mr & Mrs Phillips have sold the car park, so don't forget to pay.

Forecast looks lousy, what a start to the new year, wet and windy, to cap it all we're going skiing in ten days and there's no snow and it's 7 degrees in the northern Alps.

DECEMBER DREAMING



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97

I saw a really appropriate cartoon at a customers house the other day, I will have to get a copy, two panels of Asterix the first with him looking skyward saying "Why me?", the second with a balloon coming out from the clouds with "Why not?" Oh so appropriate.

Happy New Year

Phil

PS Just when I thought I'd finished we have more fun at Charmouth. Having arranged to clear a new takeoff a few of us turned up on Tuesday, I forgot the disc for John so can add this before sending it off. As usual it was the keen pilots, Andy, me, John, Jeff and Chris, Mark, Harriet, Simon and Nick. When Andy and myself arrived we tried to fly but the wind was already picking up so it was no go on the canopies. Jerry then arrived and carried to the top hoping to fly, the glider did, but without him! Too windy for gliders as well!. Bob Haydon had turned up to fly and opted for the bottom take off. Disaster struck with amazing speed, having opted for a point higher up the bowl from where I took off before, we carried forward, Mark on the nose and Harriet on the left wing wire. Before we were even right on the edge, with one wing flying and the other probably not, Bob shouted release, the look on Mark's face was a picture! When the pilot says release, you release! I have never seen a glider do such a spectacular loop from takeoff so fast. It climbed steeply to the left and cartwheeled over the back, breaking the cross tube, upright and rear cables. I really thought Bob was going to be badly hurt, he seemed OK but was limping and thought he had damaged his knee.

Hope there was no major damage. We finished the clearing up, it looks like the best takeoff we have ever had at Charmouth for canopies and hang gliders, can't wait to try it. After all the excitement we retired to the pub for a well earned drink. If anyone wants to eat after flying Charmouth I can highly recommend the Pilot Boat in Lyme, the food is great, superb selection of veggie food. That's definitely all now!! I can't cope with all this excitement.

December

How many of you left work before Xmas and looked forward to getting in a couple of days flying before you returned to work? Dreamers.

December started well with an excellent day at North Hill at the beginning of the month. Phil, John M, Kath, Tim and the Janaways all had good flights in light conditions. Gerry acted as ground crew and was nearly splatted by Phil homing in on him in the gloaming (dusk). One of us got 500 ato and 180 bto in the same flight. I went back the next day and had 20 minutes just before dark. My ventimeter could not register any wind but I could just feel a breath. I lobbed off and got to 120 ato.

Then followed a short flight at Selsley and a frustrating weekend finishing with a t/bot at Bratton Ball with Daryl, Mark Kath and Andy T. A first for all of us. We had an excellent day winching at Smeatharpe on 21st. Brian D. started his endorsement without any problems. Roger S. enjoyed himself above the clouds as usual. Harrogate rushed about enthusiastically. Mark H. , Jeff and Vince did the winching and tugging.

I had my highest tow to 1450ft and then Jeff ripped Andy T. up to 1550ft. Where were the rest of you? Xmas shopping, no doubt.

The year finished gardening and watching hg pilots trying to commit hara kiri at Charmouth. At last on New Year's eve we flew. Jeff was first off the new take off. I struggled with a new Flame, the wind, the gardening debris and my own incompetence. Eventually Eddie took pity, landed and with the combined efforts of Jeff and John M. threw me off. A great flight watching an approaching storm, but with no speed bar and 400ft above the landing I left it too late. Gently essing above the path the hail hit me at about 150ft and at 80ft I started going backwards fast. The ears were a long way away as I went over the hedge. Concentrate on landing. No problem. Whoops!

The mud took my feet and I gambolled across the field spraying slime in all directions. I put my glasses in my pocket and trudged back to the hilarity of the others. Eddie and Tom Mayne cavorted about on the lowest t/o, while John and I returned the new one. On landing after an enjoyable flight an old lady came up to chat but suddenly veered away. I realised why when I took my glasses off. I had only cleaned the right lens and it gleamed out of a sea of mud. A frightening sight!

JF

GRAHAM'S XWORD 11



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97

A Happy New Year to you all

I am still keen to publish a regular flying diary. Can anyone actually doing any flying let me know. Dates, where, with whom and what it was like?? I can be contacted by telephone, fax or e-mail. You can even tell me on the hill.

Eddie (Mad Dog) Colfox is off to India for a month, so all will be peaceful on D&S sites for a time. Eddie has promised to write about it and I am making sure he can't back out.

I hope that Derek Sadler is back in action by the time you read this and we saw Greg at Charmouth, still in a sling. Nick limped doggedly through the clearing at Charmouth. Get well soon.

Mark Aplin will be looking for keen PG pilots for this year's Airwave Challenge. Get into training and contact him (01275 871988). How is the schedule going Joe?

JF

JUST A FEW THOUGHTS



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97

On the rather stormy Sunday that has just gone past I decided to switch on my vario, and see what sort of readings it took. Within a few seconds of switching on it automatically switched on the flight recorder, having identified a suitable change in altitude (pressure) to indicate that it had taken off.

I left it switched on for almost an hour, during which time it recorded a variation in altitude of 77 feet, with maximum lift of 460 fpm and sink of 280fpm. The temperature varied between 12.2 and 14.1 Celsius. The Renschler Sol series will switch themselves off if they think they have been on the ground for fifteen minutes, but on Sunday mine was convinced it was in the air throughout.

All this took place in the snug (cold) confines of my office. If it convinces you not to set too much store by your instrumentation, that is a good thing. But Sunday was a remarkable day. At around 14.00hours I was just getting lunch ready when a very bright flash passed directly across the room, being placed somewhere between my face and my hands. I thought it must have been a strange electrical phenomena to do with the house wiring. But the generators were switched off! My next thought was that it must have been thunder - but there hadn't been any. Almost as the thought crossed my mind there was a gigantic crash of thunder immediately above the house. I told my brother what had happened, and he had had the identical experience two rooms away.

That was the only thunder or lightning during daylight, and was unlike anything I have experienced before. It must have been extremely close, but there was no physical sensation, nor any sign of damage. Wow! And I'll bet, at that very moment, John Fielder was standing on take-off at Bossington, ventimeter held high.

CHARMOUTH.

I detest gardening of any sort, but the working party at Charmouth was about as pleasant as any such activity could be. I'm told Jeff has used the new take-off and found it very pleasant. It was ironic that the latest in a list of accidents to experienced pilots should take place even as we were clearing. Hopefully there won't be any more - but it will be interesting to see whether anybody will try the old take-offs in preference to a slightly longer walk.

I had to get back home in time to collect the kids, so Harriet and I left a little early. As we approached the bridge I heard somebody say something, and thought it might have been addressed to me. So I looked up from balancing my strimmer, and saw a familiar face. The man was looking at me, but not quite in the way that would suggest that he expected me to talk to him. But I did, anyway, because I hadn't seen him for years, "Roger Surman!"

Roger looked a little surprised, but quickly replied in a familiar Somerset drawl. "Simon! What are you doing here?" (Remember, I was carrying a strimmer!). When I started flying in 1976 Roger "Pervert" Surman (Perv for

short) was similarly inexperienced, and learning to fly apparently under the auspices of John Long, rather than of Brian Wright. I well remember him taking off at Branscombe one day, at a time when I wasn't sufficiently experienced. He wore the familiar expression of terror which we all knew, but on Roger's down-to-earth Somerset farmers face it was even more terrible to behold and assumed greater significance. It was a look which we all preferred not to see, but felt obliged to watch. On this occasion it was understandable, because Perv managed to fly out of the copious lift and down, where he landed in the sea rather than on the beach.

In those days a sea landing was slightly less deadly than it is today, perhaps because the seated harnesses and their tiny wire karabiners made escape (and falling out) slightly easier. Roger got out safely, and by the time he got back to the top of the cliff he had regained his composure - which was never quite the same as anyone else's composure when standing around kites!

Not long after that Perv's affable nature disappeared from the local hilltops, which was a great shame from the social point of view. But in the long term it was surely a good thing, and watching him with his attractive young wife and children by the bridge at Charmouth, I couldn't help feeling it was entirely for the best.

But all is not lost! Perv is learning to fly trikes with Willy Knowles. Perhaps we will see him up at Smeatharpe one day?

Simon Murphy

BITS & PIECES



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97

The Sites Guide

We are planning to completely rewrite the sites guide. Would anyone who particularly wants to be involved, please contact Gerry and let him know. There is a lot of work involved; updating site information, checking details, obtaining information, redrawing the maps, computerising the results and producing the guide. We need at least one volunteer on each site.

Sites Update

North Hill

The launch area has been completely cleared. It is also now apparent that provided that the wind is directly on the hill, North Hill is soarable on a PG in very light winds. If there is anything there, go for it. The walk up is a doddle.

Bossington

We have cleared the front of the rigging area about 20 metres forward. The HG take off has been widened to keep those on the side wires out of the gorse. The NW PG take off has been extended and tidied.

Charmouth

A new take off has been prepared in front of the bench, just before the path goes onto NT land. This has been cleared from the path to launch on a SSW or SW wind. There is a rigging area, but take care there are still some roots that need removal. There is a bramble bush on the edge that needs removal and loose brambles in the small bowl at the front. If you are going to fly how about taking a rake or saw!!!!

East Hill

Take off has been cleared for HG's. More work is needed for the site to be friendly for PG's (other than Andy Pearse). We also need to research the possibility of a bottom landing close to the hill.

If anyone needs site guides for the clubs with whom we are affiliated, let Andy know when you renew your membership and he will send you one.

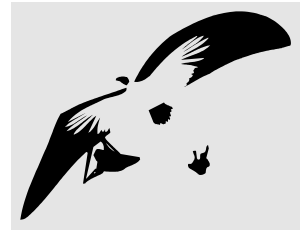
On Sunday while the roof of my shed was shredding, my canoes were blowing around the garden and a massive tree was dropping into the space just vacated by my van, the wind was blowing quite strongly in Wales. I phoned the Bloreng at half past three and was given a gust range of 66-100 mph with an average wind speed of 80mph! (At this point JF decided for the first time in what seems like yarons, that flying was not an option! - Sub Ed.)

JF

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.

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