

Sep98

# Air

# Heads



## MINUTES OF THE AUGUST MEETING 1998

The minutes of the July meeting were read and agreed. Matters arising:

**Repacking Evening** This was a success though poorly attended. Thanks are due to Paul Richards for providing the barn, cider and music, Andy Tew and John Fielder for setting it up and Eddie Colfox and Simon Murphy for overseeing the repacking.

**Treasurers Report** Four new members Huw Traylor, James Mallinson, Richard Thorne and Steve Newstead bringing the total to 61. It should really be about 80 as there are still a few pilots still haven't renewed their membership. £860 in the bank.

**Safety Report** Nigel Winchester, after flying in marginal conditions at Branscombe, took off again at Jacobs Ladder and slammed into the cliffs, breaking his ankle. Phil read the latest safety bulletin from the BHPA regarding paramotors. Phil has smashed up the Mosquito again.

### Sites

**Branscombe** Simon Murphy reminded members that even if other people are already flying at Branscombe, you must still ask the Whites for permission to fly.

**North Hill** Jim McMackin took off from North Hill flew to Countisbury and got back again. So it is possible (on an Exxtacy!)

**Competitions** Report elsewhere in the newsletter.

**25th Anniversary Bash** Tickets for the bash have been pushed hard with our tele sales team doing better than double glazing salesmen. If insufficient tickets are sold prior to the event we may have to cut back on expenditure to avoid catching a cold, if the weather turns bad. A rosta will be produced for manning the gate during the day and evening.

**Holidays** As many members will be away in France in the second half of August, there won't be any winching or towing until September.

**Eddie's trip** to the Sierra Nevada is still on from 15-30 October. Steve Ham and Steve Goodall as Guides/Mentors. £275 + flight. Anyone interested contact Eddie on 01297 489351.

There being no further business, the meeting closed so that **Beata Monostori** could show her films of flying in Hungary.

**John Milner**

The deadline for Airheads has been flexible for the last 18 months. Unfortunately this can no longer continue as Robert will be going to Cardiff University later this month. This will mean that I have to do some work. The magazine will be finished at the weekend before the club meeting or it won't be done at all. All contributors **MUST** get their copy in to me by the last friday in the month. If the copy is not coming by email or on a disc. I want it by the last wednesday as I will have to copy type it. This is the last Airheads that will be produced under the old system. I will also have less time to write rubbish to fill it up. More contributions are needed. Many of you have produced nothing. It's time to have a go. Give me a ring if you want to sound me out about an idea. **John Fielder**

**25th Bash at Smeatharpe  
THIS WEEKEND  
Be there!**

**Anyone who has not yet  
volunteered to help phone  
John Milner 01460 240476**

### Stop Press

**Congratulations to Darryl Janaway** who became British Novices Accuracy Champion last weekend. More news about this next month.

The French holiday proved eventful. A full report will follow next month but read Phil's Chaiman's Chat for a flavour of the trip. Our best wishes to **Robin Campbell** for a quick recovery and fresh opportunity to practise his landings. He is at present still filling in his claim forms and wondering if he can trust anyone with his car again.

Congratulations to **Mark Aplin**, who has made the Nationals, joining Eddie and Guy. He has qualified through the BPC. This is all provisional and provided they don't change the rules as well as the results.

As we go into the winter, many of the sites need more work on them, North Hill especially. Volunteers will be required.

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# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



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Chairman's Chat, (or 'Babes' and 'Crazy Man' go to France!)

I'm sat here trying to compose the CC for this month only a day before the meeting! John will be pleased...

First I must thank Andy Tew for giving me the most wonderful cold, drove back from France, getting back in the early hours with a splitting headache, and all the other symptoms! It had better be gone before Saturday or else..

This months CC is mainly concerned with the holiday as it took up half the month. I suppose I had better just mention that I managed to worry John F just a little! By putting the Flame into a spiral dive low over Bossington carpark. I took the toy to try at Bossington when the wrinklies/smoothies comp was on. Having seen some of our better pilots doing some entertaining landings at Smeatharpe, in the light and hot conditions I decided that this might be the best option.

Even better, Martin Howe and Brett brought canopies out to try, where will it end? Will there be any pure hanglider pilots left?

Cut to the main plot; The Holiday

Jeff in his usual efficient way had sorted out bookings etc, B&B in Dover on Friday night, then drive across France to camp at the usual place. Gerry ('Babes') turned up, early, so caught me out completely. Eventually left for uneventful trip to Dover and a sound B&B, met Robin and Merlin in the morning and the rest of the group on the ferry.

Final group consisted of Myself and Gerry, Jeff and Chris, Robin and Merlin, Andy, Theresa and Adrian, Mark, Julie and Loxi, Graham, Karen and Trouble! Angie and Chris turned up at the site later.

Boring and uneventful trip, always takes longer than you expect, arrived in the evening, Ah! well that's the worst bit over, time to settle down to the holiday.

The weather promised to be surprisingly good, I had had my doubts, going so late in the year, but the first day erased them, (6,360' on the Flame!)

I knew there was a reason for keeping a log book, I'm having trouble remembering what everyone did already!

Day 1, we all set off for T/O, most of us Paragliding, only Gerry and Robin flying stiffies. This trend seems to be well established now in France, very little Hangliding, probably 10% of flyers at best. Gerry and Robin had no problems with the ramp take off. The rest of us flew from the higher PG T/O, being last to go I had the luxury of being able to cock up the T/O as much as I wanted, which of course I did. A quick down flight at Bossington does not prepare you for flying in thermic mountain conditions! On a new wing, I'm glad only Chris witnessed my attempts. She even asked if I wanted the bag back to carry down! No way, I only managed to ensnare members of the audience a few times!! Got it sorted at last and had a great flight, thermalling up to 6,360' above the camp site, entered cloud in tee shirt and shorts!, it was 36C on the ground, but bloody cold in cloud. Most of us managed to land back at the camp site, which is one of the perks of the place. No problems, a nice day had by all. No real conflict between PG's and HG's although Mark thinks Gerry needs glasses, usual speed, perception problems? Takes some getting used to, flying canopies in busy thermals.

Conditions continued ok, but not so good, for the next few days. We had to land with thunderstorms rattling around the valley more than once, "discretion being the better part of valour". A change of scenery was decided upon, so we set off for La Saleve, on the Swiss border. Didn't look great when we arrived, so wandered around for a while, always a give away when there are no locals around. Flyers arrived in the afternoon, reasonable wind so us oldies opted for the stiffies, a decision justified for me when Merlin had a spectacular collapse just in front of T/O. Another great day, marred only by the 1,000' ceiling over T/O, Jeff was getting stressed over the radio, after we both had to abandon good thermals half a dozen times when we reached the

ceiling. I even had one that took 300' to level out and pull the bar in drop below the ceiling. Angie had problems on take off, air fairly lively. All landed safely in paragliding field, Gerry only just made it, almost on the road!

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One slight problem arose on take off, time to put my Victor Meldrew hat on and moan about the Avon Club, assuming John doesn't censor it! Talking to a French pilot we were told that four pilots flying the previous day had upset the locals with their arrogant and rude attitude. So much so that they wanted nothing to do with any more English pilots, absolutely great!! We had four of them staying on the campsite who were flying at Saleve on the day in question, enough said, courtesy costs sod all! We managed to placate all concerned and hopefully repair any damage.

Continued flying at Forclaz next day, different flight across lake to another mountain ridge, and run along that, Jeff and I thoroughly enjoyed it, canopies again, funny how you feel more adventurous when you can land more easily. In hindsight we should have completed the triangle, (measured on the map it would have scored appx 64k) it would have been possible, but of course when I tried it later in the week conditions weren't so good, what a surprise.

One tactical error we made was to go to Seythenex on a poor looking day for a 4,000' top to bottom. Launched Merlin and Mark into deteriorating conditions, but stopped Graham as the cloud closed in, amazingly he wasn't happy about it, yet, within seconds we were in the most amazing thunderstorm, rain, hail, the works. Robins glider makes a wonderful umbrella! Packed up in record time when the rain stopped, all got soaked on the chair lift down. Merlin and Mark had hit turbulence on the way down, but were ok, salutary lesson!

The radios were proving to be a real bonus, especially when everyone was so far apart or when less confident pilots wanted information on approach to landing etc. Talking about landings, this is probably as good a time as any to mention the major disaster of the holiday, Robins accident. We had started to use the morning takeoff above the camp site, it proved to be very nice yielding flights of half to three quarters of an hour in quite pleasant early morning thermals.



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Some of us had taken off and were in the air when Robin flew, I didn't see the flight, only the approach to landing, which even from where I was (quarter of a mile away at 900') looked wrong. Put simply he was approaching down wind, overshot and hit a post and barbed wire fence, breaking his left arm above the elbow and lacerating his leg on the wire. As with all these things there were long discussions as to the causes, two giving concern were that he perhaps was not as aware as he could have been, that the wind blew up slope during the day and down slope later in the day. Having said that there were three windsocks around the field! I also wonder whether the general holiday atmosphere lulls some people into a false sense of security, everyone is more relaxed and laid back about everything than they would perhaps be at home. Most worrying of all, to me, was the revelation that he had previously mentioned that once he had decided on his approach he stuck to it irrespective of any change in conditions. However you look at it this is a flawed and very dangerous perception, you need to be one hell of a psychologist to work that one out. If

we can learn anything from this for the future it must be that you can never assume that you know what is going on in someone's mind. I haven't actually had chance to discuss anything with Robin yet, but I hope it won't put him off flying in the future. To rub further salt into the wound, while he was in hospital a British hanglider pilot crashed into his car, breaking the windscreen and damaging the roof and wing. He was ok, walking away unhurt, yet he probably hit harder than Robin, potentially a nastier accident. Merlin had a job persuading Robin that he wasn't being wound up when he told him.

Just to prove that it isn't always stiffies that have accidents, we witnessed the most amazing performance by a floppy pilot. The wind was picking up, the clouds overdeveloping, so he decides to top land where there isn't one. Turning in big ears he couldn't hold them in, rocketed up and surged forwards, major tuck, collapse, stall and crash into the (tall) pine trees. All appeared ok and surprisingly the canopy was retrieved within the hour, they're obviously used to it.

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ok and surprisingly the canopy was retrieved within the hour, they're obviously used to it.

No other problems, everyone seemed to enjoy their holiday, as usual flying took precedence over everything, although we did manage to get out on the lake one morning, and swim occasionally. Most evenings spent boring the non fliers with our exploits, Mark in particular entertained us by getting blinding drunk on Andy's Jack Daniels. Angie was very subdued, in fact we hardly saw her in the evenings, not like previous holidays. Gerry is taking over from Martin K in the getting drunk and cussing at all and sundry stakes. Everyone else behaved reasonably well, and the time just flashed by, Jeff as usual muttering about staying longer. All good things must come to an end, so we packed up and returned on Saturday. Mark and I squeezed in one last flight on the Friday, both having interesting landings, he got drilled on his canopy and I had a somewhat lively approach in the freshening wind, coming from all directions. A somewhat depleted party sat down in the evening, as Merlin and Robin had set off early, with Graham and Karen not far behind. Settled the bill in the morning and said farewell to the lovely Nicole and off we set. I don't think the van wanted to come home cos we even managed to get it wrong leaving Annecy. I can't decide whether the drive is longer coming home or not!, although doing the best part of 800miles in a day is a pain.

Bear with me if this has rambled on a bit, but I'm still suffering with this damn cold, and the computer keeps crashing and losing random bits of text. I've probably forgotten lots, no doubt someone will point this out in the next issue! It was a very pleasant holiday, even Gerry enjoyed himself once he had got over the excitement of being allowed out on his own. He's got to earn a hell of a lot of brownie points now to catch up, "liberte fini"

See you all at the bash

Phil

## Safety Bulletin

### Hang Glider Cross-Tube/Centre Bolts

On Saturday 1st August 1998, a pilot was about to take off for his second flight of the day on his kingpostless hang glider, when he decided to stop and investigate a clonking noise from the centre box area. He found that the set screws which locate the right hand cross tube swivel pin had come loose and the swivel pin had already started to migrate out of position. Loss of this swivel pin during flight would have resulted in a catastrophic structural failure. Subsequent investigation indicated that these set screws had not been Loctited, whilst those on the left hand cross tube (which were still tight) had.

All hang glider pilots are reminded of the need to thoroughly inspect their gliders before flight, and that this inspection must include the security of the various centre box bolts.

If for any reason a glider or part is dismantled, then the manufacturer's designated locking system must be employed during re-assembly. In through bolted applications this is normally achieved through the use of (new) nylon nuts, or castellated nuts plus split rings or split pins. In blind bolted locations a thread locking compound should normally be used. Check with the glider manufacturer, if in any doubt.

Our Hungarian visitor, **Beata Monostori**, flew at Sandy Bay at the weekend. 2.5 hours gentle soaring, when, at times, others could not stay up. (The editor, of course, never stay up at this site as he gets far more pleasure fighting up the brambles or mud.) Beata is selling her Voodoo. This is a small canopy (55-75 kg), in very good condition. It certainly works well, but it could also be that Beata is a really good pilot. She isn't too impressed with our weather. Three flights in nearly three summer months! At least she will be back home soon to enjoy some more consistent weather.

# Harriet's Column



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Overheard passing Mark L: " He sees himself as a legend in his own mind". To whom can he have been referring?

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



**From Rich Harding (Avon Sites Officer)**

**Overcrowding & General Behaviour on Avon Sites**

Concern was expressed at the recent committee meeting regarding increasingly crowded skies at our sites, with particular respect to Selsley and Westbury, especially in the light of recent tragic events elsewhere. Whilst no-one wants to see the introduction of rules such as flying windows (no, not the screensaver!), limited numbers in the air at any one time, etc. these steps may become necessary if a little more common sense is not made to prevail. This also applies to behaviour on the ground - on Westbury, in particular, far too many pilots, of both disciplines, are setting up on or just behind launch and then just sitting there obstructing take-offs and landings.

We wish to reinforce the authority of pilots experienced at any particular site to request other pilots to modify their behaviour, not just in respect of Site Rules, but also in terms of common-sense and courtesy towards other pilots. It was further suggested that we identify these pilots more specifically, perhaps by issuing such stalwarts with helmet stickers in order that visiting pilots in particular know that they are 'qualified' to offer advice or instruction. This suggestion will be actively pursued. In the meantime, we would like to forewarn all pilots flying our sites that, where necessary, they may be asked to amend their behaviour in some way and that the committee will take a very dim view of anyone refusing to comply with a reasonable instruction.

If this reinforcement of current informal arrangements has no effect the club will be forced to take more authoritative action before the results of the inconsideration of some pilots causes a major incident. Thank You

**From Brett Janaway**

Darryl entered a Parascending Accuracy competition mid month against, amongst others, myself. This was Darryl's first time in a parascending harness, let alone his first ever tows. We did two training flights for him in the morning, then let him loose. The competition started well, with me scoring 9cm on my first round and Darryl scoring about 2metres. Unfortunately I started showing off on the next round, pulling a full stall as soon as I came off the tow. I posted a 5 metre, not good. Darryl scored about 1.5 m. Third round saw me pull back with another 9cm, Darryl collecting a 44cm. That

not good. Darryl scored about 1.5 m. Third round saw me pull back with another 9cm, Darryl collecting a 44cm. That was the first day over with. The second day was similar, Darryl posting 1-2 metres each time, me pulling myself back. Then I messed up big time, I had to post a 10cm or better to get ahead of Darryl again, though my competition placing was blown big time. It shouldn't have been a problem. I blew it.... Another 5 metre score (mutters of high winds affecting my approach were laughed off by others, I swear it was the wind though, not me)..

The moral.... don't let little bro' in, and if you do, don't give him quite so much advice, and concentrate on your own flying. Still, it wasn't all bad, Darryl came 17th and would have won the 'Newcomers' cup except there wasn't a newcomers cup to be awarded on this day. I came 20th, (I expected to be around 6th-7th), but took the 3rd team trophy thanks to the excellent scores posted by my two team mates.

If I have time, I'll let you know how we get on this weekend, 29-31st. I am competing in the British Nationals and European Grand Prix for Accuracy. Darryl is competing in the British Novice Championship. Darryl will be flying against about twenty, but I would give him odds of 3-1 based on his performance the other week. (Good judgement Brett- ed)

My chances are not so good, but you never know. The finals of the Grand Prix are in Holland on the 5th-6th Sept., too late for any deadlines I suspect. Maybe next month.

**From Robin Brown (Airtopia)**

There will be no bottom landing at **Selsley** for the next three months. The farmer has decided to reseed the field. Given how crowded it can become, especially at the weekends, an alternative site may be a better choice in light conditions.

**Overheard passing Mark L:** " He sees himself as a legend in his own mind". To whom can he have been referring? Those who wish to bare their souls please write in.

**From Harriet Pottinger**

One or two people have mumbled (grumbled?) about wanting to make certain changes to the Condors Hang Gliding XC League rules regarding the aerotow. It seems that this comes up every year or so and I want to get it decided once and for all. As the new league season starts on November 1st, could you please put into the September Airheads that we will discuss and clarify the rules at the October meeting for the following year, so that if anyone has any particular views on it they will know in advance to come to that meeting. I'm hoping that the discussion won't take long, by the way!

I got a postcard from Jeff on Saturday - seems they had a good holiday with lots of flying (up to cloudbase every day, 8,000ft asl) but some incidents also - Andy Tew's trailer disconnected itself from the car on the French motorway, Julie (Mark Langley's other half) lost all her credit cards, bikes were stolen but later found, Robin broke his arm landing downwind into a fence, despite three windsocks and Graham Rainey shouting at him, and Gerry McCann underwent a Jekyll & Hyde personality change when drunk... twice apparently. Should be some juicy tittle tattle for the next newsletter from someone with any luck! (I am willing to print almost anything so get those pencils out - ed)

Martyn Howe went to North Hill on Saturday but didn't fly - NE 1mph. However, he said he saw an adder in the carpark, so maybe a word of warning should be printed just to make people aware that there really are snakes in the grass.

**Struddick Farm** This South Devon site has been sold and there is at present no permission to fly. Please phone John Owen-Jones if you need the latest information.

# FLYING DIARY AUGUST



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1st Sourton EC KC & MA . EC goes over the back. MA gets to base  
Smeatharpe AW AT GM RC off winch. GM goes XC (11k). RS off the tug.

2nd Codden Most of club activists assemble. Mill about for a couple of hours and depart leaving GM to take off on the south side!  
Woolacombe AW light & thermic  
King Tor KC struggles to reach bottom - MA fails to get off- wind ?? off  
North Hill DJ does t/b

4th Smeatharpe Winchman training with hg's flying in strong wind

5th East Hill JOJ has an unpleasant bumpy flight. ML JF fly later in light thermic conditions.  
Mere MA KC bump around scratching the hill

7th Woolacombe ML AT BS PS all fly in light conditions- MH arrives late.(Not Mark or Martin - Mandy.)

8th Bossington ML JO PF JF scratch . Sea breeze 17.15. BW MH first pg flights as valley lifts.

9th Malverns AW & CJ soar in 20mph wind then the valley lifts. Meanwhile at..  
Pandy ML BD JO JF arrive too late - miss it all - cloudbase & the Hercules. hear Angie on radio at Malverns...

10th Bossington BJ takes off thro' Orographic - flies on instruments (guesswork) - lands in b/- TC get after him!

11th Bossington RS BW Robin & his mob. Scratchy . short late sea breeze. Valley lifts then wind picks up.

12th Bossington SM HP waft about.

13th Woolacombe JF at the top end of speed range

15th Bossington HP SM SC in perfect strong lift  
Hay Bluff MA JO JF - very strong - MA & JF go xc - both about 14-15k.  
Sourton SN on a typical lifty day

16th East Hill MA JF GM - MA does 6k xc.  
Smeatharpe NA MH MK ?? on the winch  
Peak Hill DP PH JOJ - have a good day  
?????????? DJ goes to first accuracy comp.  
Ask BJ why he doesn't want to talk about it. (Read BJ'S report - this

issue)

19th Draycott (alt) JF couple of short flights & watch Tim Brunskill trashed in gusting wind.

24th Bossington GR has 30 mins - Has this doubled his airtime this year?

29th Hay Bluff JO has short flight after 7 hours on the hill pushed out of lift by usual selfish HB flying.

Branscombe PH DP & CM (SD) had their usual toddle up and down.

30th Sandy Bay JH MH BH ex hg pilots fly pg's. Beata flies for 2.5 hours! At last. JF visits the beach again. Most of the knarled old SD pg pilots also there.

## BPC in the Peaks

Saturday at Cats Tor - I have mixed memories of Cats as it is where I had my first soaring flights (50mins total) on a Hilite but also where I broke my collar bone. We sat on the hill all day in very light wind under grey skies - saw the sun twice - nothing happening - I flew twice but made only 2 right & 1 left turn!

Sunday at Rushup Edge (back of Lords Seat - along ridge from MamTor). Started grey but the sun broke thro'. Race to goal at Glossop via turnpoint @ east end of ridge. Launched within minutes of window opening - just about everyone in the air. Took me 2 goes to get to Mam Tor - stuck my nose round the corner & "OH NO! PARAGLIDER GRAVEYARD!" - at least 30 gliders already decked short of/around the turnpoint. Spent 30 mins scratching the bowl in front of Mam - very crowded - eventually got to base with Gordon & an XXX - glide to turnpoint GM & XXX got back to base but I was too low & ended up scratching front of ridge again (for about 30 mins) - made no more progress but suspect I could of got up if it had not been for some B\*\*\*\*\*d on a Sabra who just wouldn't circle when the (small) thermals came thro'. Landed in front of Mam Tor.

Considerable controversy over the results. Some who got the turnpoint didn't have it on first set of results. I glider landed near (in?) out of bounds "death valley". "Final" results printed & annouced had me 10th with enough points to pip Simon Oliphants for 3rd place for the year. Results on the net today have me 8th but less points so 4th for the year!

All in all the 98 BPC has been a mix of great flying/crap weather. As far as I know top 10 go into Nationals. Dave Morris (SD) short of turnpoint but thro' to Nationals.Gordon "Top Navigator" Mucklow (SD) spent an hour at base over the turnpoint trying to cross the valley to the next hill which he thought was the turnpoint! "Gutted or what?" fits the bill!

**Mark Aplin**

# BITS & PIECES



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At **Pandy** a hg pilot failed to scratch the ridge in light conditions. It was hot (28+). Making his way to the bottom landing field, he selected the wrong diamond shaped field and organised his landing approach. He landed about 3/4 of the way across the field. There was deep shadow against the hedge. It started moving and out into the sunlight burst a herd of bullocks. The pilot did a quick 180 and started legging it across the field with the bullocks in hot pursuit. They herded him into the corner of the field. The glider started to gyrate, then a hot and angry (frightened?) pilot emerged to shout and chase them. Derigging was a nightmare in the running battle that ensued. There was much hilarity from the Condor pg pilots, watching from the ridge. Pilot believed to be an Avon member.

The **Red Arrows** paid a visit to East Hill on 5th August. John Owen-Jones had just failed to take off and was preparing to launch again when 10 red Hawks flew past at 250'ato and about 300' out from the ridge. All five of us could have been in the air if conditions had been better. Whew!!

**Robin Brown** reports a visit from a huge sailplane to Selsley. Conditons were light and not very thermic. The local pg pilots became more and more interested as the glider scratched lower each beat. Options became limited and then ran out. How and where was the pild going to put it down. A little hatch opened, a propellor emerged, the engine started and the 'glider' roared off leaving everyone gasping!!!!

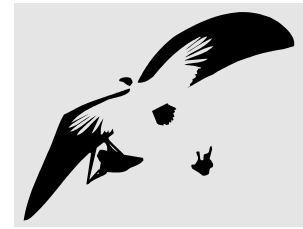
**For Sale** Hang glider, Solar Wings 155 S4 Racer - mylar leading edge - white top surface - red under surface - speed bar - aerofoil uprights - spare upright - tow wheels - XC bag - Zero hours since factory service - low airtime excellent condition - clean cisp sail - Cocoon harness with Mainair Life Pak emergency 'chute - Lindsay Ruddock digital/audio vario with Thommen altimeter - Tow release (harness mounted) - Protec summer flying overalls - Ozee thermal winter flying overalls - GPA flying helmet with R.A.F. visor - Speedbar mounted aerofoil airmap case - Aircrew rigging knife.  
Flare gun (pen type) with magazine - All in excellent condition - £1500 the lot. Contact David Bridge 01243 377496 evenings - 01705 842285 daytime - e-mail bridged@desn.port.ac.uk

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



## WRINKLIES V. SMOOTHIES COMPETITION Saturday August 8th

With winds light and variable, flying from a hill was not going to be a feasible option so we met at Smeatharpe for the Wrinklies v. Smoothies Competition.

Fourteen pilots were present and flying got underway after the briefing at 11.15am. The tasks were: 1) hit a target from the air with a water balloon, 2) spot landing (both to be attempted on your first landing at the airfield), and 3) open distance cross country. No, you couldn't swap gliders half way through the day (for those who wanted to fly their paraglider or skyfloater for task one and two and their performance hang glider for task three - the cheek!). In the heat of the moment I forgot to set a minimum distance.

The first two tasks carried a maximum of 250 points each for dead centre, and the cross country task carried a maximum of 1,000 points for the furthest distance flown, with lesser distances scoring the relevant proportion of that 1,000. The team scoring was calculated by taking the average of everyone's scores, not just the top three, so everybody's score counted.

With very settled conditions and hardly a breath of wind, it very soon became apparent that the competition was going to rely on tasks one and two for results. Hitting the target gave better scores than in previous years, at least for those whose balloons didn't burst prematurely in flight: Martin Kellaway came armed with plastic cups for the Smoothies, which we mounted onto our uprights with insulation tape, in which to carry our balloons. This required a bit more R&D for full success - one or two balloons fell out on take off, and mine burst against a split in my cup, but the idea definitely has some mileage. Left over balloons were disposed of in the usual way, and Adrian Tew (Andy's son) is still due a soaking! Spot landings were few and far between, with even some of the most experienced pilots looking like novices in the awkward conditions and switching wind direction: bent uprights were collected by Vince McClosky and Simon Murphy. In fact, Robin Campbell, who is one of the newest pilots in the club, deserves a special mention for coming 5th overall.

Wilting in the sweltering heat, a few pilots decided to go home (or to the beach?) mid-afternoon. Mark Hoer (Smoothies) then proceeded to cause a flurry of excitement amongst the remaining competitors when he lucked into the first of only two thermals of the day. Climbing slowly in the weak lift he finally got high enough to contemplate a glide a way from the airfield. Landing only a couple of miles away near Hart Ridge, Mark nevertheless had activated task three, and if none of the remaining pilots got away the Smoothies had it in the bag. In fact, Mark had it in the bag single-handedly, having already scored well on the target and spot landing. His post-marital inability to land on the spot at the Southwest Towing Comp was obviously only a temporary blip.

Simon Murphy, a Wrinkly of long standing, was not going to take this lying down, his strongly competitive spirit spurred on. However, luck was not on his side (and luck was what it was all about on this particular day) and he never got more than 650 feet or so, which is barely enough height to get to the far end of the airfield, let alone with which to consider going cross country.

With time running out, Craig Parker found the only other thermal of the day, climbed with it and flew away. Unfortunately he forgot to check with his airmap and landed a hundred yards or so within Dunkeswell airspace, thus resulting in disqualification. Oops!

FINAL RESULTS: Team: Smoothies 267 points      Wrinklies 131 points

Individual: (S = Smoothy, W=Wrinkly)

Mark Hoer (S)	1,340	-	Jeff Hoer (W)	235	-	Andy Tew (S)	210	-	Simon Murphy (W)	190	-
Robin Campbell (S)	180	-	Vince McClosky (W)	170	-	Craig Parker (S)	160	-	Martin Kellaway (S)	140	-
Martyn Howe (W)	110	-	Steve Newstead (S)	100	-	Roger Allen (W)	80	-	Harriet Pottinger (S)	5	-
0	-	Brett Wright (S)	0	-							

Cor! This business of getting local media coverage really works - this time we've got the whole right hand centre page in the Midweek Herald (E. Devon & W. Dorset free local weekly paper, circulation over 34,000) with four full colour photos and a write-up with full results for the Condors Wrinklies v. Smoothies comp. Not bad, eh?

**Harriet**      (Well Done! -ed)

We (Condors) have been invited for a friendly hang gliding meet on **September 19/20** to the Long Mynd - so it will only be on if it's a W or NW forecast - with the following clubs: Dover & Folkestone - Malverns - Southern - Kernow - Northampton - Mynd.

# NOT THE BLACK MTS.....



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On Friday, Mark and I consulted. It was to be another visit to Hay Bluff. James was woken early and we got to the top in a very light NW wind. There were the usual collection of anxious pilots, who rushed across to check if we thought it was flyable. The wind immediately picked up. Mark went down the front and launched, followed by James and myself. The lift was strong and we then flew up and down the ridge taking the odd small thermal, until James and I went back in one at the north end of the ridge. Mistake!

Turning back into wind, I realised I wasn't going far. My penetration was nil, James was a couple of hundred feet below also going backwards. I eventually landed going back at about 5mph. A buzzing over my left eye(?); a bee was caught in my balaclava. Ripping off my helmet, I was too late. It took revenge on my eyebrow. When we struggled forward to the front. I took a measurement of 28-32mph. The sky cleared as paraglider pilots big eared their way into bottom landing as we watched Mark scrape in front of the Knob and push off to Talgarth. His part of the plan was working.

Down the front it was still strong. The air started to fill with hg's and sailplanes. After another hour, James launched. All seemed well, until he got a little close to the ridge and was sucked over the back and returned down the front in a mass of orange nylon. He then decided he was going off to visit relations prior to his trip next month.

I took off. Gained height quickly, but stayed out in front, just on the edge of the ridge lift. There was a large dark cumulus heading my way. I waited for the lift and flying straight out got to cloudbase at 4000amsl shortly afterwards. Now where? Not back over the ridge. I was sharing this cloud with five hg's and a couple of sailplanes and I don't like sharing my airspace. I headed off cross wind for the Knob and glided down the ridge well out and above two sailplanes, who were scratching just above the top. The phone rang. Mark must have landed. I was getting seriously low, but heading out for another dark CU over Talgarth, I connected with serious lift. My vario was stuck off the scale and I was hooked into the tightest climb I've had. But smooooth.....it took me to base at 4400asml. I could see the Black Mountains looming in front and did not want to repeat a previous walk out. going to make it. I selected a landing field by the road and flew back to a small ridge to see if I could maintain and wait for

There were three or four sailplanes scratching the ridge 1500' feet below and one climbing slowly towards me.

The sky was blueing out rapidly and a decision was needed. I headed for Mynydd Troed but sinking fast, I wasn't going to make it. I selected a landing field by the road and flew back to a small ridge to see if I could maintain and wait for something to come through. I scratched desperately for 20 mins slowly sinking. I was now 100' below the top and the options were running out. The bracken gave way to grass and a track which would eventually lead to the road. Out came the legs. A blip on the vario, I turned out. Flying straight out at 1-2 up, I squeaked in a 360. Going up, a bit scrappy, I kept losing it. 1400' later over the back, I was again heading for the Black Mountains. No way. I turned and glided down the valley, checked my map, selected a couple of baled field by the road and prepared to land. The phone rang again.

At about 200' my vario sang out again. 360'd, centered on it fairly quickly and took a 1300' ride up. Over the top the view of ridges and forest stretched away towards Pandy.

The Black Mountains..... Turning back into the valley progress was not good against the wind and I proceeded to scan the ground for lines and crops. This time the field by the road had grass in it. I landed after 2 hrs in the air.

Phoned Mark. "I've landed". "First mistake", he said, then we were cut off. No signal until I had hitched back to Hay. Mark was back at the Bluff, having landed in ....The Black Mountains. He walked for ages, kept phoning me to pick him up and eventually got a lift up to his car. The evening ridge soaring could have been dangerous with me on such a high. We went home.

Last Thursday I was back at the Bluff. I waited and watched. Light and thermic, the cycles were weak but regular. I launched straight into a thermal and had about an hour of playing with small thermals on the ridge. A strong down cycle came through and everybody slope landed or went down. My side landings being so poor, I scratched desperately down until just below Gospel Pass I heard a beep and started to work a small

small thermal. It improved as I climbed and the ridge came up and dropped away as I went straight over the back. The sky was blue but I was still climbing reasonably and then I lost it. Circling wildly did no good and I eventually landed on the ridge about 5k from take-off.

When I walked back the thermals had switched off and the ridge lift became consistent. After an hour of playing around on the ridge I started to push out to see how low I could get and still get back up. While out in front of Gospel Pass I decided to do something more interesting and at ridge height I went for the Knob. I made it round not far above the road. I was prepared for the walk. No problem. I slowly worked back up to the top and went along the ridge in blazing sunshine. There were one or two walkers on top, but no other gliders in the air. Picking up height I pushed out from Y Das into a blue thermal which took me to 3700asml. What now? The track of my last flight lay before me and there were the Black Mountains..... How about an out and return? I got back to the ridge below the top but picking up a thermal half way back, joined by an Omega, I cruised the ridge to the Knob. I crossed back to the Bluff quite low, but soon picked up height and, after having a stodge about, landed without falling over (incredible!). 2 hrs /15k or. Both flights gave wonderful views over Wales, were very easy and indicated to me that aerial tourism is fun.

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Went to Draycott yesterday. Wind perfect, just south of west at about 15mph. Canopy out at take off, I was joined by a herd of cows, heifers and bull calves. Sitting unhappy on the ground, a large cow wandered up. No, a bullock. NO. This chap has all the tackle. Slowly getting up with my red glider I shuffle to the cliff and position myself on a ledge. Safe! Unless he can jump. (Isn't that their job?) The wind drops. I go home.

JF

# Bad day at Selsley



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