

Apr99

Air

Heads



MINUTES OF THE AGM 1999

The minutes of the February meeting were read and agreed.

Matters arising:

Touching Cloudbase Video: This has been obtained by Guy Backhouse and is available through Somerset County Library Service. (Order it if you are in their area. - ed)

AGM

Apologies: No apologies had been received.

Chairman's Report

Phil Fouracre thanked the existing committee for their superb performance over the past year.

Membership

The membership currently stands at 75.

Weather

The weather during the year has been mostly diabolical but nevertheless some good flights have been achieved.

25th Anniversary Celebration

This was a success despite the awful weather.

Club Holidays

The usual holidays to Wales at Whitsun and Annecy in July have been organised and are open to anyone in the Club and their families.

Treasurers Report

At present there is £300 in the bank, in reality when the final bills for the year have been paid there will be about £100. As this is cutting it a bit fine and some of annual site subscriptions have been increased, Andy Tew proposed that the membership fee should be increased to £20.00. This was agreed.

Election of Officers

There were no nominations for new officers, apart from Steve Newstead, helped by Martin Howe on the H.G. side to take over from Harriet Pottinger as Competitions Organiser. This was carried without opposition. (*Supine lot! -ed*) Harriet was thanked for her unstinting efforts and enthusiasm during her time in the role.

Proposals for 1999

Membership fees will increase on April 1st. Airheads will cease after the May edition for those members who haven't renewed their membership. Mark Aplin suggested we send out a separate renewal form with the April edition.

Training

Harriet went through the proposals by the BHPA for Clubs to carry out the final pilot conversion tasks and sought the opinion of the Club.

National Sites Guide

The Club was also encouraged to read and voice an opinion on the proposals for a National Sites Guide on the Internet, which has been circulated with the February edition of Airheads.

Trophies

The trophies for the year were then presented to this years winners. Results elsewhere in the newsletter.

Competitions

Airwave Challenge

The Club will enter 2 teams anyone interested should contact Mark Aplin.

Brass Monkey Competition

This will take place on 20/21 March. (*It didn't. -ed*)

John Milner

Treasurers Report:-

There are now - 28 Paid up members of the Club for 1999/2000.

Bank balance @ 26/4/99 - £617.79
(- bash profit)

New members :- 4 PG - 0 HG
Michael Oldham, Les Lloyd, Garry Mitchell, John Panter.

**Paid Your Subscription?
If Not, Next Month you will
receive your last Airheads.**

Inside

Chairmans Chat	2
Letters 1 & 2	3/4
Results 1998 / New Sites!	5
Comp News / Flying Diary	6
Romania with Airtopia	7/8
Steve N's Rant	9/10
HG XC League	11
Bits & Pieces	12

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



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Hope you've all paid your membership, saving the vast sum of two pounds! It is £20.00 from April

First weekend after the meeting, some of us flew both days, now there's a surprise!

All the old hang gliders out on Saturday, Bossington on a very windy day, but not unpleasant, except back at the car park, where it was just a little lively. Even had John out for his first dual flight, trouble was the el nino effect came into play and it was too strong for the dual. Well that's what Jeff said anyway! I reckon it was just the thought of flying with John. We couldn't decide who was the most nervous. It was definitely strong, been a long time since my feet have left the ground while being helped to take off with a nose and two wing men! Same old crowd ended up back at the car park, Martyn H, Mark H, Roger S, Harriet and me, where was everyone else? Why ask.

Sunday turned out to be a surprise, initially the plan was to go to East Hill and fly the paragliders. Too late, El no no! arrived and it was blown out. John and Mark set off for another grand tour of the south west!! Harriet trying to persuade me to fly, while the other oldies just stood around talking about it. When did I last fly here? must literally have been years ago. It didn't look too bad, some clouds around, Jeff checked the conditions, not a good idea, with his model. After he had looped and rolled a few times, claiming it was all intentional, I was none the wiser. Ended up with just the two of us having a very pleasant flight. It wasn't as lively as I had expected, with some reasonable, if broken, lift around. Jeff apparently watched us from his place, while he was washing his car! What is the world coming too?? Only ended up in the top landing field an hour or so later, but did quite enjoy it. Looks like I will reassess flying there this year, depending on what it looks like when the trees are in leaf.

All go this month, don't know how, but I've been persuaded to go to Piedrahita

but I've been persuaded to go to Piedrahita with the two (pg) Marks! Looks like it could be quite nice, according to Jockys bumpf. Should just be back in time for the meeting. Mark L is hoping that it will be great so he can sit and grin at everyone, especially John. Talking of which, is it me? or is he getting even more bitter and twisted. Just 'cos he was sat on the winch while we all went xc, its no reason to get crabby. Another good weekend, tugging for the first time this year, on Saturday. Just a little rough on the front, Jeff suggested it would be less so on the back, so tried it, yes, he was right. Spring thermals are definitely harder on the tug pilot, perhaps I'm just getting old (perhaps not, Mark gave up after two!)

Sunday was even better, less wind, not quite so lively, arranged it just right, got a tug from Graham, up to Jeff and Mark who looked like they were enjoying some very pleasant clouds. Why can't I get it right? Managed to hang on behind Graham, through some pretty lively stuff, released almost next to Jeff, great, here we go, first xc this year. Looked down at the bar after releasing, Oh no! I'd only forgotten to put my ***** vario on, would you believe it, what a *****! Too late now, even without it I managed to climb for a while, the three of us cruising around was great. We drifted off towards Chard, trouble was after we left the stronger stuff I found it difficult to decide what was working After loosing it a couple of time I got stropky and decided to head back towards the airfield. Who says it's relaxing, was I pissed off when I landed at Coombe St Nicholas. My own stupid fault. The joys of even a short xc! Took me three lifts and about three miles walking to get back, aargh! Packing up the glider a guy I know who flies balloons pulled up, had a chat, then went off to fly. Driving home I saw him again and thought I'd have a wander over for a closer look. It turns out he now works for Lindstrand, and was testing a new balloon. Would I help, silly question, very impressive bit of kit, apparently some new fangled system of opening and closing top vent, looked like a circus tent inside, more string than a floppy!! Second silly question as we're being dragged around the field, would I like a ride? What did he think I was, stupid. Seconds later we were climbing away at an impressive rate. Amazing what you can do with a few hundred kilowatts worth of liquid petroleum gas at 90psi, anyone for a curly perm! Heading towards home, so I knew the area, actually an ideal afternoon for it, the wind having dropped, ground speed only 8-10mph. Very impressive

I was, stupid. Seconds later we were climbing away at an impressive rate. Amazing what you can do with a few hundred kilowatts worth of liquid petroleum gas at 90psi, anyone for a curly perm! Heading towards home, so I knew the area, actually an ideal afternoon for it, the wind having dropped, ground speed only 8-10mph. Very impressive low level flying, literally a couple of feet off the deck as we crossed Ilton runway! It's amazing how finely they can judge it, following the exact contour of the land. Shame about the tree we hit, bloody good job I wasn't driving, serves him right for showing off, we thought **we** were mad!

The end of a very pleasant day really, best of all he's very keen to do a drop for me, something I've wanted to do for years. Looks like it could be a real promo' event. Provisionally they're talking about filming it from a second balloon, willing to go as high as possible. Look out later this year. Totally shattered when I eventually got home, having promised to be early. Looks like the next couple of weekends will be pre-booked for earning brownie point, don't I need them. Then its off to Piedrahita, not quite sure about a twenty four hour ferry trip! Although Mark L is well keen. Flying sounds like it could be good, no doubt one of us will tell you all about it at the meeting. *(I'm not going - ed)*

Looks like Harriet is definitely on a power trip, first the BHPA now the Somerset County Gazette, where will it end? If I'd known a month before, she could have been chairman as well. Having said that it was a good piece of publicity, I've already had some stick from some of my customers, so people obviously read it. I missed flying last weekend, some flew at East Hill and worst of all the other team members for Spain had some sneaky practise at Bell. Believe it or not El no! no! flew, vastly altering his flying hours to miles travelled ratio. *(Hoorah!- ed)* On that cheerful note I'd better send this off to John in case I don't have chance to write anything else before I go!

Phil

STOP PRESS: I have just heard that Phil has damaged a vertebra hitting a tree and is hospitalised. Hopefully not too serious. News on net will follow. Mark Langley has also damaged an ankle.



From Eddie Colfox

I received my copy of Airheads last night, knowing it would be such a good read, and having consumed the fine ales of the Wrantage hostelry, selling at only £1.30/pt that night, forced on me more time than usual for such indulgences. S*itting on my throne I was shocked into thinking of standing, because of the apparent misunderstanding of big ears by some club members.

Essentially with big ears you decrease the surface area of the canopy and thus increase the wing loading. As you imagine/know, if you continue to increase the wingloading the wing will eventually stall. You also limit the speed range of the paraglider, with most modern gliders, making the brakes up position slower, and the stall speed significantly faster than it normally is. This effect is often exaggerated further because the angle of attack of the central section of the wing is often sharper than at the tips. This effect can be exaggerated still further when a pilots flying from horizontally flowing air to more lifting air simply because of the corresponding affect of the angle of attack on the wing.(ie top landing, air behind the ridge, in front of the ridge). So using the brakes to exit from big ears is potentially dangerous.

Most gliders will simply exit b/e by releasing the 'a' lines, touching the brakes not being necessary. An EQUAL stab at the brakes is the next move, if this doesn't work and you still have enough height stab them equally again. If they are still there, don't worry, land with them in, not worrying so much about the flare because your airspeed will be down anyway. The landing may be a little heavier, do you remember your PLF? An unequal stab on the brakes puts you in danger of spinning the glider. Think of the altered angle of attack. In the past it was often suggested if landing in particularly turbulent air, land in big ears because the increased internal pressure would make you less likely to suffer a tuck, this is still true. But because of improved wing profiles you now need to worry about stalling in b/e, so now it is often suggested that one should fly with a little speed bar when doing this. The speed bar may also help when exiting from b/e and is strongly recommended when in huge ears (more than recommended in the manual) whilst running from/avoiding large clouds.

This is information I have picked up from talking directly to various people, including Bruce Goldsmith and Jocky Sanderson who have both written excellent articles on the subject in 'cross country', and also from 1st hand experience landing in areas of strong

manual) whilst running from/avoiding large clouds.

This is information I have picked up from talking directly to various people, including Bruce Goldsmith and Jocky Sanderson who have both written excellent articles on the subject in 'Cross Country', and also from 1st hand experience landing in areas of strong lift and running in front of strong weather.

This is still a constantly and rapidly evolving sport and therefore it is all the more important to keep in touch with those who don't do it solely in their leisure time. If you are still uncertain please don't hesitate to contact me, by phone (01297 489351) please I am a slow typist. I do strongly recommend that all pg pilots go to the talk that Jocky does, please tell me when it is?

All the best and many more happy landings to you.

From Mark Aplin

When Kath & I visited Dennis Trott last year he had us practicing rapids descent techniques. He is particularly keen on the use of big ears + speed bar to escape cloud suck & had us practising this & noting the descent rate achieved. If you know the descent rate then you can work out if you are ascending too fast when thermalling towards cloudbase & start to move into weaker lift.

If you b-line to escape clouds you have no forward velocity & thus remain in the lift you have just flown up in.

With spiral dives you again stay in the lifting air, most pilots can't stand that many revolutions anyway!

If you use big ears + speed bar you descend & have velocity to fly out of the lift. The key to using big ears is practice: -

- a) You should know whether your glider flies slower or faster with the ears in, try it in smooth air & you should be able to feel any difference. You could try (carefully!) pulling ears on one side to see which way you turn - this will indicate if the glider is slower or faster with the ears in.
- b) Again in smooth air try the ears & speed bar & see what descent rate you get, if you can pull more than 1 A line on your glider try this and again check descent rates.

c) Practice exiting from the ears. Does your glider come out on its own or does it need pumping out?

Eddie might like to comment on whether people should practice spiral dives/ b lines?

Does your glider come out on its own or does it need pumping out?

Eddie might like to comment on whether people should practice spiral dives/ b lines? Big ears is a very important technique for the UK pilot who will often be flying in ridge lift & therefore need to maintain forward speed whilst increasing descent rate.

If you have not practiced how can you expect to be able to use a technique in an emergency?

From Eddie Colfox

I fully endorse Marks comments and advocate practising b/e, however be careful letting them out with too deep a brake movement, particularly when top landing even more so if doing this unevenly. They are great for maintaining airspeed as already said. Both Spiral dives and 'B' lines I suggest individual pilots consult someone such as myself person to person. Summarised:-

Spiral dives can be great fun, be aware of this as they can disorientate you v.easily and there is a lot of speed to dampen off particularly if one exits from one, abruptly by letting of the brake too suddenly.

'B' lines cause you to have no or very little airspeed and can be awkward to exit from, and requires more info than I can easily type.

If Mark is suggesting that b/e with speed bar is the most effective descent method, I'd have to agree with him simply because it maintains some airspeed whilst getting a good descent rate. Spiral Dives and BLines are faster but airspeed is also essential in some horrible situations the most important think is to look for sink. Hang gliders might say push on the bar so should we.

It's the same old adage try to prevent the emergency by being aware of what's going on around you and practise under the right conditions with the right information for when you've been caught out. Nature will win.

LETTERS 2



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From Mark Langley

Having read both Mark and Eddie's emails, I must wholeheartedly agree with the practising and getting to know your own wing and its capabilities. On good smooth coastal days at Bossington and Woolacombe, I was able to practice b/e's in varying wind strengths from light conditions to blown out landings with the ears in. This was worth its weight in gold when the times arose, to remove myself from cloud at Hay Bluff with ears and speed bar on, and to enable forward movement when pinned over powerlines as coming in to land at Annecy. Both occasions would I feel sure have ended rather messily but for the practising that cuts down the thinking pause time that could exaggerate these types of situation and allows you to confidently take action knowing how the wing will react. Good, safe flying everyone.

From John Fielder

Getting a reaction to anything in Airheads is amazing. Eddie's response to my rambling in last month's Bits and Pieces has made me think for once. I must be more careful about vague burlblings to fill up the newsletter. Eddie must be right as his flying knowledge and experience is extensive. Obviously with a higher wing loading, stall speeds go up. Those of us who fly loaded up in the Fat Bastard category are aware of this. I think there may be a considerable difference in what Eddie and I mean by a BIG input. I am a pilot who only uses the big input when I need it (rare!). I still find the concept of stalling easily, on coming out of Big Ears, a difficult one. Using B/E in strong winds I have only noticed a small decrease in speed from a hands off position. The gliders, that I've flown, have all come out quickly, either on their own or with a little brake pressure. I don't do much jabbing. I have no doubt that deep application will cause a stall, but any rapid or violent action can cause unexpected consequences to the unwary pilot. *(Phil at Bossie!!)*

The points made about use of the ears and the bar are well made. I have really needed them a couple of times. It works well if you have also allowed yourself a safety margin. I suggest we all take their comments to heart and go to Jocky's talk, when it is organised. *[Phil is trying but he still has not pinned Jocky down to a date.]*

From James Orton (message from Oz)

As I had 24 messages over the weekend from various people I guess the flying is getting better. My flying activity has definitely got better only 15 min, but that's 15min more than the last 6 months.

On Friday evening I left Melbourne with 2 friends to head off up to Bright in the Victorian Alps. We camped there that night and in the morning we hired some Gliders and went up the hill. It's about a 1500ft top to bottom. We all decided to do a sled run so that I could see the bottom landing and this was the first time the others had flown out of a school. The flight was okay not much happening, but there were a few weak thermals to piss about in, and I had a bit of fun. There is a shuttle service there \$5 to get back up the hill, beats the 3 mile walk.

When we got back to the top the wind had picked up a bit and someone was above take off. The others were keen to practise their reverse launches, so I talked them through it and helped them. Rob went first and launched nicely. I watched him for a bit and soon he was above take off. I was keen to fly, so I turned my attention to getting Sion off. I was checking him over when Karma hit. I looked round and noticed that there was one less glider in the sky than and then heard someone say "A Green Glider's Flown into a tree". It was Rob. I ran down to where he was, on the way someone shouted to me from the air that he was okay, but he needed a hand getting the glider out.

We spent the next 3 and half hours getting the glider out, with me 12ft up a tree pulling on lines and breaking branches. In the end we resorted to getting a chainsaw and cutting the tree down. Amazingly the Glider was fine. *(So was your Ritmo. Every time!! -ed)*

After returning the glider and the chainsaw, and then a quick swim, we drove back to Melbourne where on Sunday I went to the Grand Prix. But that wasn't the end to my weekend flying, as it was Labour day in the State of Victoria on Monday, and I found someone else to go flying with. This time I got up at 6.30am and went round to Rob+Lawrys Rob had to work but Larry, Sion and I met up with Steve, who drove us up to Sorento, a Coastal site, about one and a half hours from Melbourne. Steve learnt to fly on the Isle of Wight about 5 years ago. He has his own Glider (it's a Voodoo, in amazing condition), he's flown in France, Spain and Norway, but hasn't really flown in the last 3 years.

When we got to Sorento the wind was blowing over the back. We decided to wait for it to sea breeze. While we waited we checked out the other side of the peninsular, to see if we could fly there. After a walk a look round a fort and a swim we found a place that could be flown, however there was too many things against it, the wind wasn't constant, the bottom landing was a small stretch of beach that we could have got out of with a glider but it wasn't easy to do, Steve had hurt his ankles jumping off a wall and it was a spine back ridge, Steve was keen to Fly but I persuaded him not to as it had to many possibilities of things going wrong, especially as none of us were current.

We headed back into town and got some lunch and checked out a diving shop. We then went back up to the take off, but it was still blowing over the back. So went down to the beach where I did some rock hopping and found a load of caves and blowholes. Walking back along the beach we noticed a change in wind direction, THE SEA BREEZE HAD KICKED IN. We got the glider from the car and headed back to take off. Steve had a 5 min flight, then I flew for 10mins then landed to let Steve fly again, and he flew for half an hour then landed to let Sion fly. The hassles of sharing a glider. At about 7pm the wind dropped off and we headed back to Melbourne, and that was the end of my flying weekend.

Mum and Dad are coming out on Wednesday and they are bringing my glider and apparently there's only 2 months a year when you can't fly, so I'll see what happens.

Catch you later James.

down to the beach where I did some rock hopping and found a load of caves and blowholes. As we walked back a long the beach we notice a change in wind direction, THE SEA BREEZE HAD KICKED IN. We got the glider from the car and headed back to take off. Steve had a 5 min flight, then I flew for 10mins then landed to let Steve fly again, and he flew for half an hour then landed to let Sion fly. The hassles of sharing a glider. At about 7pm the wind dropped off and we headed back to Melbourne, and that



MEMBERSHIP FORM



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Results 1998 / New Sites



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Hang Gliding Trophies

Condors Sites XC League: Somerset Aerials Trophy

1st Harriet Pottinger
2nd Brett Wright
3rd Jeff Hoer
Club total distance 224.69 miles

All UK sites XC League: Simon Murphy's Flying Circus Trophy

1st Harriet Pottinger
2nd Brett Wright
3rd Jeff Hoer
Club total distance 322.41 miles

Winter XC League:

1st Harriet Pottinger
Joint 2nd Jeff Hoer, Brett Wright
Club total distance 44.76 miles

Aerotow XC League: Brian Wright Trophy

1st Brett Wright
Joint 2nd Mark Hoer, Craig Parker
Club total distance
122.18 miles

Team XC League: Manufacturer's prizes -thanks to Moyes Delta Gliders (Aus) and Airwave Gliders (UK)

1st The Sharks (Moyes Gliders)
Harriet Pottinger, Brett Wright, Jeff Hoer - 269.16 miles

2nd The Winglets (Airwave Gliders)
Mark Hoer, Martyn Howe, Craig Parker - 72.46 miles

Longest ever XC from a condors site: The Condors Trophy

Simon Murphy 80.4 miles from East Hill in 1989

Longest XC of the year: Bob Bridge Trophy

Harriet Pottinger triangle from Hay Bluff 1998 28.05 miles

Longest Coastal Out and Return Flight in pairs: Brian Miller Trophy

Simon Murphy and Harriet Pottinger, Beer Head to Ladram Bay
16.98 miles

Furthest inland flight from a coastal site: Mary Glanville Trophy

Martyn Howe, Vault Bay 9.94 miles

Finally in respect of **Jeff Hoer's** continued contributions to the Club and his unstinting efforts to support all flying activities -**Life Membership.**

Paragliding Trophies

Condors Paragliding XC League, all UK sites

1st Eddie Colfox
2nd Mark Aplin
3rd Angie Weir
Club total distance 394 km

Best Novice 1998

Nigel Winchester

Wonderclamp Trophy: 1st thermal flight over 5 miles

Andy Tew

Rosie Bowl: Longest XC flight from the winch

Angie Weir, PG 23 km

Rocket Ron: Trophy for contribution to the Club

Phil Fouracre and John Milner for organisation of 25th Anniversary celebration

New Sites

It was clagged in and windy today (Easter Monday) so Nigel Winchester & I went site prospecting and have visited the farmers and have obtained renewed permission to fly at Cookshayes Farm, Mrs Grabham and Stockers Farm, Mr Dymond, who farm the ridge overlooking the Offwell Brook. ST215980 for South Westerly and ST216976 (Sutton Thorn) for West by South. Both were extremely friendly and helpful - but please consider their stock particularly when the heifers are fresh into the fields after the winter, they may be a bit frisky. They thought that previous hang glider pilots had considered the lift poor, but it looks quite fair for PGs with the advantage that it is not so tree ridden as East Hill, quite like Farway.

John Owen -Jones

New Branscombe PG Record

On Good Friday we were bumbling about at Branscombe, at 1545. 3 of us were downed on the beach at Weston, though I did make Branscombe to Sidmouth before losing it on the return. Back at Branscombe TO at 1700 it seemed no worse, so took off and was soon over 1000ft. Did Beer Head to Sidmouth and topped out above the orographic at 1540 asl. It seemed so good that I returned to Beer Head and with 1100 asl, flew to the cliffs east of Seaton then on to Allhallows College. We think this is a first, certainly for PGs. Derek Posta also got across but had to land east of the River Axe, not quite able to soar the cliffs. I ought to have tried for Lyme Regis but at 1830 I was afraid the lift would cut off and the terrain NE of Allhallows looked a bit daunting and I had flown off my 50000 map.

Can't really understand the Met. conditions. The lift was totally smooth 2 up from TO to 1400 ft then tapering off to O's at 1500ft which corresponded to the top of the orographic which extended inland as far as I could see. Wind at TO was only 7 - 10 but at altitude I guess 20+, I really zoomed across the bay from Beer Head.

That's twice we have flown well when the HG's rigged but didn't take off- maybe I won't convert after all.

John Owen-Jones

When will the tough Northern Boot Boys strike back? Why do we spend all the time sitting on our backsides while the Sidmouth Sybarites do all the flying and even have time to find new sites? Congratulations to John. He, Nigel, Derek and Paul are showing us the way. - ed



BITS & PIECES



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Tim Crundwell & his wife Chris, are proud parents for the second time. Dan, a brother for Jack, was born on Friday 26th March. Will this increase Tim's opportunities to fly ??????

For Sale: Magic IV incl Speed bar, bag, Manual. S4 Racer (Spares/Decoration?). Parascending Canopy. All enquiries or offers to **Jamie Lee-Smith** (01643 706438).

Some of you will remember **James Orton's** fascination landing on trees and bushes. It was marvellous to read that he is seeing the other side of this activity. At last!

Paramotoring is an excellent spectator sport! Those, who were at Smeatharpe, won't forget the sight of Jeff legging it across the grass, jumping into the air and struggling up to 10ft under full throttle like a gorged blow-fly. Mark H & Brett W were only marginally less amusing as they at least managed to get some altitude.(50ft!) I have asked Jeff to advertise his next outing. Phil has already bid for the hot dog franchise.

Chris Jones is interested in selling his aerotow share. As Angie is just aerotow qualified, what is going on?

Smeatharpe produced an excellent XC by **Mark Nicol** (SD) to Eaglescott. Let's hope that this season we all get some XC miles off the airfield.

Harriet has done a good job advertising the Club, as those who have seen the local press can testify. Some potential members have been attracted to the next meeting. She has also got the attention of a weird bunch from the Bristol area. The Pink Flamingoes have made a few overtures, but after much internet activity have been rumbled at last. A big welcome to the wrinklies as it was HP's birthday last saturday. Ageing gracefully is an art..... More respect.

CONTACT NUMBERS

Chairman	Phil Fouracre	Rock Hill Farm, Wrantage, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6DL	01823 490724
Secretary & Club Contact	John Milner	Cross Tree House, Lopen, Sth Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5JX	01460 240476
Treasurer	Andy Tew	72 Taunton Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 6AF	01278 458275
Sites	Gerry McCann	Woodstock, High Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1QS	01460 61468
HG Safety & Training	Jamie Lee-Smith	20 Pintail Road, Alcombe, Minehead, Somerset TA24 6UJ	01643 706438
PG Safety & Training	Tim Crundwell	Southerly, Purn Way, Bleadon, Weston-s-mare, N.Somerset BS23 0QF	01934 813279
HG XC Claims	Harriet Pottinger	Ivydene, Smeatharpe, Honiton, Devon, EX14 9RF	01823 601202
PG XC Claims & Airwave Challenge	Mark Aplin	18 Shepherds Mead, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, WILTS, BA13 4DX, Mobile 0966 542172	01373 864918
Competition Sec	Steve Newstead	No 2 The Barn, Westwood, Crediton, Devon EX17 3PE	01363 774245
Airheads	John Fielder	43 Highdale Road, Clevedon, N. Somerset, BS21 7LR	01275 343927
	Mobile 07970 629551	Email: 100774.1650@compuserve.com	Fax 01275 341241

Web Site Address - <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/freelyer/condors.htm>



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.

Comp news



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Would hang glider pilots please remember that it is up to them to send in their coordinates and other flight details to me within one calendar month of any XC flight. Flights submitted after this time will not be included. I will not chase anyone for their flight details.

Pilots must be fully paid up Condors members for flights to count for the All UK Sites League and the Condors League, and fully paid up members of the Upttery Towing Club for flights to count in the Aerotow League.

Pilots are reminded that rules are the same as for the National XC League, with two exceptions:

1. Turnpoints, landing points etc are taken on trust - photos are not required.
2. Club minimum distance for any XC or leg of a defined flight is 2 miles.

As discussed and agreed at the December 1998 meeting and reported in January Airheads, aerotow flights now count in the All UK Sites League, but not in the Condors Sites League. This is because (a) the aerotow is not available to all pilots, and (b) Smeatharpe is not a Condors site. However, winch flights are allowed in the Condors Sites League because the winch is open to all pilots.

Pilots who regularly use the winch are encouraged to buy a share and to become full syndicate members. Anyone wishing to buy an Aerotow share should contact Jeff Hoer on 01404 850489.

There will be no further changes made to the rules this season, but if anyone wishes to introduce new rules for the 1999/2000 season they should bring up the matter at a clubnight BEFORE the next season starts (1/11/99).

Harriet.
01823 601202 e-mail: harriet@eclipse.co.uk

Condors PG XC League

XC's I have heard about are as follows: -

Nigel Winchester	East Hill	28.5 km	6/3/99
Bryon Davies	North Hill*	14 km	20/12/98
Mark Langley	North Hill	14 km	20/12/98
Andy Tew	North Hill	14 km	20/12/98
Pete Stapley	North Hill	14 km	20/12/98
Mark Aplin	Mere (Cowards)	6 km	12/3/99

1998 Condors leading rookie Nigel Winchester has taken a big lead with a superb 29k flight from East Hill - lets hope its the start of a classic season.

Rules for 1999 are as per the "Sky Systems" National PG XC League except minimum distance is 5km and no witnesses or photos are required. To enter you must be a paid up Condors member at the time your flight/flights take place!**

1999 Airwave Challenge Paragliding

We have entered 2 paragliding teams for 1999, if you are interested in having a go please contact me or Mark Langley to register your interest. The comps should start to take place in May - Mark Langley will be sorting things out during May as I will be unavailable.

Any club member with CP rating or more is very welcome to take part - you don't need any competition or XC experience.

Mark Aplin

** Probably also includes Phil Fouracre (our latest Novice - see the Airtopia Ad), Brett Wright (our flyweight champion) and Simon White (The Phantom Vet).*

*** How about some entries from the Southerners? That should stretch Nigel's lead further.*

Flying Diary

7	Devil's Dyke Bossington	PR flew in circles- hand in pocket (forgot glove) - the half hour rule was almost invoked! CJ DJ had a flight or two.
14	East Hill Charmouth	PF HP flew for an hour at up to 1400' ato. CJ JS PR AP flew at various times. Others came and went!
20	Bossington Bell Hill East Hill	CJ AT SM RC. Strong. Robin gets in the air again. Much launching & landing pg fun! MA ML BD JF. Strong. An excellent day with plenty of gliders in the air. ???????????????????
26	Draycott(alt) East Hill Ham Hill Liddington	AT ML AW. Very gentle conditions JOJ PH NW. Nigel got away to Charmouth 26.5K. The others went down and had to pay!! JM actually flies at his favourite site - thermic as well. BJ gets away - does 10k. (Small Thames Valley site). Brett is happy.
27	Smeatharpe	AT ML JH MH MK HP GM RA RC RS MN DW CP BW AW. A good day.
28	Charmouth Mere	JH MH HP SM VM CP RC - Strong conditions - Most made it to West Bay and back AT JF arrive at dawn. Others too late. CJ & AW find it too strong for her first (HG) hill t/o.

Courtenay's Romanian Experience



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Courtenay James: It was agreed the plan of action was for half of us to meet at Robin's Friday evening, off down the road for a quick pint at his local, followed by everyone sleeping on Robin's floor for some shut eye, before departing for the 6-30 am check in time at Heathrow, where the other remaining five bods would meet us. Actual events were meet Robin in Kings Arms at 9-30 pm ish, thrown out at 12 am, on to the next pub, where Robin said at 1.30 we should leave as one person was arriving at St Agnes, "Robin's" at 1 am.

Robin Brown: *Best start as we mean to go on....in a bar! My local pubs closing times are somewhat flexible, in fact we would probably be there still if we didn't have a plane to catch. Nice to flog a flying suit at 1:30 am...all helps with the beer money.

Back to Robin's for clothes show, I had to try on every flying suit, like you do. then the seven of us left for Heathrow in a camper van to meet the remainder, so much for the shut eye. Checked in luggage with Lufthansa then went to nearest bar for a full English breakfast. Flew to Frankfurt, changed planes then on to Bucharest. No delays, reasonable cabin service, what a good airline! Through passport control, no problems, down to the luggage conveyer belt to wait for our luggage, where someone makes a crack about wouldn't it be a bar steward if our luggage was still in Frankfurt. Forty five minutes later the twelve of us descended on lost luggage to find out it was still in Frankfurt: twelve paragliders and all the luggage. Why didn't I take any hand luggage? They assured us it would be with us on the next flight which was the next day.

*Driving out through the outskirts of Bucharest is a eye-opener. I have seen poverty before but somehow I was not expecting to see it in Europe. Everyone was pretty quite...tired or shocked, who knows. Once up in the mountains things are a lot more affluent although still significantly different from Alpine resorts.

Met Leonard Gregorescu who was our Romanian guide for the week, smallish chap in a shirt and tie who doesn't drink or smoke, spoke impeccable English, and turned out to have an excellent sense of humour, he sure as hell needed it with us. After a two hour journey by minibus, we reached Sinaia in the Capathen mountains and checked into the hotel Sinaia. At least we didn't have to tip the porters for carrying our luggage. Off down to a local restaurant, recommended by Leonard, The dozen of us tasted the delights of Romanian food which overall was pretty excellent and cheap. Most of our three course meals, costed less than £5. The most expensive meal in one of Sinaia's most lavish hotels which consisted of a starter, main course, dessert, coffee and a Romanian brandy, plus drinks of wine and beer still totalled less than £10. Large pizzas were a snip at £1.50, half a litre of beer ranged from 35p in a bar to £1.50 in a topless pole dancer club - not that any of us frequented the place - much. If you have a mixed grill, watch out for things that look like fishcakes in breadcrumbs, they're cows brains. Does anyone know the symptoms for C.J.D what was I talking about?

*1st night was exceptional....having not really slept at all since Thursday evening I finally peaked at around 3am Sunday morning. Despite being surrounded by gorgeous girls (have I just lost ten years and become incredibly handsome?) (NO!- ed) Never made breakfast let alone lunch, still without gliders may as well gather my strength.

Luckily Sunday our first day was blown out anyway so most people just explored the town. One prominent member of our entourage did not surface until the evening meal muttering something about tired from the travelling. Nothing of course to do with his departure from disco Diana, absolutely bladdered on Romanian vodkas at 3 am Sunday morning. Our luggage appeared by courier Sunday night, (another excuse to celebrate with a quick pint). Monday arrived to everyone's disappointment with quite strong winds whistling through the resort. Our guide said there still may be a chance of flying at a remote site calleb "Bunloc" about 1½ hours drive away. It was a lot smaller and lower than the local mountains. The general feeling was doom and gloom and not a bloody chance of flying judging by the speeds of the clouds above. Upon arrival at the site the wind socks were dangling straight down, Leonard got the locals to start the chair lifts with everyone heading up the mountain. Leonard's side kick Rizz was the first to take off. He reversed launched running backwards, turning around whilst still running! as soon as he was airborne a sharp right was needed to miss a dozen or so trees. The general consensus was that it was worth walking an extra ten metres away from the cable car, so that a straight run down the hill could be achieved avoiding all the trees. A runway was soon trodden into the foot deep snow. The thick snow /forward launch did prove troublesome for some with everybody achieving at least one top to bottom flight (1650') if not two. The tailwind later on, left some the chance of a lovely walk down from the top. The chairlift had stopped and staff gone home but for those of us who had managed a second flight, it gave us time in the bar to eat chicken and chips and wash it down with some quick beers.

*With gliders now we head off to the edge of the mountains in the hope that the wind is less...it is, in fact there isn't any! Nice little sitewith a chair lift to the top for 50p. Most folk get at least three good top to bottoms in despite some interesting nil wind launches. Good start lets hope for better tomorrow.

Tuesday's weather was lousy, cloudy with a fresh wind so Leonard drove us to another resort and we hired skis and snowboards for the day.

Wednesday, still blowing quite strong, so it was decided we would try our first site that we flew on Monday(Bunloc). Arrived to find gusty and strong conditions so it was back to Sinaia to do some more exploring

Thursday, what looked like the best day so far had high clouds still briskly moving across the skies, everybody was now desperatè for the flight from Mount Furnica above Sinaia, which would have been a 4,500 top to bottom, so most people took the cable car to the top of the mountain only to find the wind speeds were over 20 mph. Who knows what the windchill was but I was bloody chuffed that I had purchased my new Edel flying suit from Airtopia (I had tried to ring Simon M to look at his suits on the Friday morning but got his normal message of - gone shagging, back on Monday (or was that just how I interpreted it ?, something like that anyhow. WELL, Have you seen our President recently ???). More snowboarding for the fanatics, a trip around the Castle for the less energetic

Airtopia's Romanian Trip 2



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*The weather is bloody awful, the only consolation is that it is better than the very serious weather all the Alps are getting...at least we can Ski/Board. There has been some radical boarding and lots of face/arse landings these last couple of days...I never realised how hard snow was.

Friday, again was being judged as a write off, judging by the moving clouds. A phone call to Bunloc revealed there was wind there. The keener ones had already disappeared to collect their snow boards. Nine of us wanted to judge conditions at Bunloc ourselves. We arrived to find light winds and proceeded to get in at least three flights in very light thermic conditions, until about 4 pm in the afternoon, when the wind picked up. Bugger, I had to pay 50p for the chair lift back down.

Evenings were not only exceptional value, they were also great fun eating out is always a pleasure, the smoked salmon and caviar a must at £1 a portion...Sinaia is a lively little place with a few disco/barsfull of very nice young ladies just dying to meet you. (have I died and gone to heaven) or are they all trying to get out of the country? Normal getting to bed time being around 2-3-4am, depending on stamina

All that was left was last evening meal and a quick check to ensure we hadn't missed anything in any of the four clubs. Can't report anything on the last club as we missed last orders at 4 am and it was shut. Another early night! Generally apart from the lack of flying, everybody still had a good week away. The less experienced flyers gained invaluable help and advice from the more experienced, whilst giving them a chuckle. For a group with such a range of ages, experience and disciplines in life, there was brilliant team spirit and participation from all. A great hols' I thought...we are all so used to going to France/Spain/Italy...we know what to expect. Romania is different, yes it is down at heel and scruffy, but I would go back tomorrow. Why ? Could be the exceptional value, possibly the very obvious flying potential or maybe the very warm welcome, I would not hesitate to recommend it.

Robin's Synopsis: Nice place, sites, people, food, crap roads, money & weather, excellent tottie.

PS I'm sorry I am not allowed to disclose anything about "Robin and the Romanian Pole Dancer", but I'm happy to accept the highest bid for the photos.

PPS One member's suitcase was still in Frankfurt when we arrived back at Heathrow, (shame!)

*Note: If anyone has any old gliders or harnesses etc they are deperate for kit and really cannot afford them. there is no association or training scheme as such. There are only a few pilots in the country but there is a passion for flying that is a pleasure to see.

Nigel's view: Amazingly cheap everything, especially the lovely pair of Salamon trekking boots purchased for a bank busting £25 !! Excellent mountains, most definitely worth a summer visit but NOT via Luthansa or was that Lostbaggage_HA !! Snowboarders paradise, powder, powder everywhere, not good on your glider unless you were lucky enough to have a room to yourself with a spare bed or in my case clothes horse come paraglider drier. Learnt to snowboard in 1.5 days, they don't have much piste snow so unless your a mister powder hound skier a board was easier in waist deep white stuff. It cost 90,000 lei (£4.00 ish) to hire for a day. Also I found it is possible to make your way back down the entire mountain via the lifts at the end of the day by acting dumb & showing the lift guys your radio kept in the same pocket as your magnetic lift card which strangely enough ran out an hour earlier at 3pm. Anyone develop a set of stolen negatives for me ??? - (Yeah, I HAVE! £20 or I'll show them. - Simone)

