

May99

Air

Heads



MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING 1999

In the absence of the Chairman Phil Fouracre due to backache the chair was taken by the secretary.

Two new prospective members were welcomed John Taylor (P.G.) and John Hughes (H.G.). They both heard about the club through Harriet's articles in the County Gazette.

The minutes of the AGM and March meeting were read and agreed.

Matters arising:

National Sites Guide

The members present, having all read and digested (I don't think) the details of the Internet National Sites Guide as set out in the March edition of Airheads, discussed the finer points. It was generally agreed that it would be better to have control of the entries than stick our heads in the sand and then complain when visitors used our sites and did not adhere to the site rules. Once it was established that we would have exclusive control of our entries by way of a password there was little or no real opposition (John Fielder isn't considered real). The acting Chairman then proposed a motion that the Club should have our sites in the guide and it was carried unanimously. Phil Tilson naively volunteered to control our entries, however it was emphasised that the meatspace sites guide (to non-nerds this means the 'real' sites guide) is brought up to date as soon as possible so that our entries are accurate.

Safety

There were two trips to Spain during the month, Eddie Colfox's to Andalucia passed off successfully and without injury, whilst the other to Piedrahita was not so lucky. Phil Fouracre cracked two vertebrae whilst landing in the palace gardens trying to emulate my landing in Highgrove, the wing tip of his paraglider caught in a tree making him pendulum into the ground. His injuries would have been much more severe had it not been for his back protector which broke on impact. He never-the-less went onto fly the next day for an hour in true head banger fashion.

Kath Cotton got a compound fracture of her leg but at the time of writing she is still in hospital in Spain and the details haven't emerged. Lastly Mark Langley bruised his ankle and has been hobbling round trying to obtain sympathy - with no joy.

Derek Sadler emphasised the point made to him that when flying P.G.s in unfamiliar hot mountain conditions the need to maintain full flying speed with no brake before flaring so that your wing has enough kinetic energy to convert into the flare.

Treasurers Report

31 members have now renewed. 4 new members Mike and Mary Oldham (PG) Les Lloyd, Guy Mitchell (PG 15 hrs) and John Panter (PG 160 hrs)

Sites

John Owen-Jones has been looking at the possibility of a new site at Sutton Thorne (S.W direction) more details to follow.

Competitions

The South Devon competition was non-existent. The SW towing competition scheduled for 3/4 July will be changed so as not to conflict with the All-Out.

Telephone Mailbox

Mark Bridges suggested that we set up a telephone mailbox system so that pilots can ring up and find out the sites members are going to use for the day. However it needs a computer left permanently on to do this. Phil Tilson

Telephone Mailbox

Mark Bridges suggested that we set up a telephone mailbox system so that pilots can ring up and find out the sites members are going to use for the day. However it needs a computer left permanently on to do this. Phil Tilson once again offered his expertise and they will both look into the possibility of setting this up.

Low Airtime Pilots

Mark also suggested that a list be drawn up of low airtime pilots so that they could co-ordinate their flying more easily. John Fielder agreed to asterisk the members list accordingly.

Annecy

Anyone contemplating going to Annecy with the Club for the first two weeks in August should contact Mark Langley for his latest cut-price deals.

Stolen Equipment

Jeff Rogers has had his wing stolen from Crook Peak (details elsewhere in the newsletter), members are reminded not to let up on security unless of course their wing has gone porous.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.10 hrs

John Milner

If you have not paid your subscription, this is your last Airheads until you do.

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



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Where the hell do I start?? As you probably already know this month's chat might just have some mention of a sunny country just south of France. It's taken me a while to summon up the enthusiasm to type this, in fact I was inspired this morning after Viv showed me a Readers Digest promo leaflet for an atlas. Guess what? the country shown in graphic detail was Spain!!

Before the proverbial **** hit the fan we were all being ultra positive, I even had the perfect title for this article, "Condors in space", this changed to "Condors in Spain", finally revised to "Condors in pain!!" Where to start the epic saga? I still think Mark put the hex on it all, keeping on about going to the April meeting to show off our flying prowess (meaning, winding John up!)

Two groups set off for Piedrahita, the intelligent ones, who flew to Madrid, (Mark, Cath and Gordon) and the daft ones, Mark and me, (drive to Plymouth, 24 hours on the ferry, 6 hours driving the other side) Nothing wrong so far, weather and company great. Accommodation sorted out, basic but ok. All keen and ready to go, interesting village, everyone's so laid back they're horizontal. (worse than France for veggies! tortillas and more bloody tortillas!!)

Unwinding well, all ready for the comp, everyone really positive, briefing eventually sorted out, maps distributed and off we go! Beautiful scenery, amazing to be hot in the village wearing shorts, then going to take off to find we're above the snow line. Looking behind as we climb above take off to see miles of snow capped mountains was beautiful.

Some seriously good pilots in attendance, don't believe anyone at these comps who says they're no good, (except me of course). I think it started as it meant to continue, with our team leader bombing out straight after take off. I'm sure Cath said she hadn't heard Mark use language like that before on the radio. It didn't help when the rest of us climbed out after taking off.

Conditions were definitely interesting, as we were warned, the technique was always to fly out if you were losing height, to try and pick up something in the valley, and it worked. It just didn't feel natural as I think Mark I

Conditions were definitely interesting, as we were warned, the technique was always to fly out if you were losing height, to try and pick up something in the valley, and it worked. It just didn't feel natural, as I think Mark L will agree! It took some getting used to! A bit soul destroying as you're struggling, to hear all those hot shot pilots disappearing up the valley, ah well! As Viv keeps telling me, I'm not competitive, perhaps I should have listened to her after all! Having worked a little way up the valley I wasn't inspired so headed back, then across to the other side, picking up some nice thermals over a couple of villages. Played about for an hour or so with another glider, then we both landed, no competitive spirit. Mark A had bombed out, Mark L got nowhere, Cath a little further than me and Gordon in the lead, as he was to be throughout. (he came second overall)

Back up for an evening flight, again very pleasant, floating around the valley. Heading out to the landing field, pilots landing in a variety of fields, most in the Palace gardens. Looked tight but ok. Do not change your approach after you are committed, this mistake cost me very dearly. Approaching fine, crowd of kids decide to come charging across the field to watch. Make major mistake, put in another turn to drop short, should have stuck to original plan, too low, cleared boundary hedge but as I turned through a gap, caught an outer A line high up on the tip of a branch, and got seriously dropped onto my backside! Knocked the wind out of me, and didn't it bloody well hurt. Mr macho, gets up, yeah! I'm ok, no problem. Dave's actual summing up was that, "You were ***** lucky to walk away from that" Gordon landed later and we packed up the canopies and headed back to the Palace.

Next day, off to fly again, back aching like hell! Conditions looking good, everyone takes off ok. As I sat back into the seat there was a loud crack, I'd only broken the seat the day before. Flying around for a while was difficult as my back hurt and the seat was twisting me to one side. After an hour I gave up in disgust and headed out into the valley to play, then land. Flew over a purple canopy in a crap field, thought I hope that's not Mark, it was, and he'd hurt his foot!

Two down, two to go! Decided that the pain in my back was getting no better the following day, although Mark was getting all the sympathy! I'm sure he was exaggerating his limp, so drove Mark and Cath's car to retrieve, bouncing up and down assorted tracks! Weather great, rest of team doing ok. Cath had problems with her take off, disappearing over the edge in a heap of canopy. Mark was more interested in getting off the ground himself. ("don't be daft she's OK")

Driving to goal, got there just in time to see Gordon win the task, congratulations definitely in order. There were some interesting approaches, from high level sive to very low ground skimming. What with the heat and the driving I decided to go to the hospital the next day and have my back checked, Cath very kindly offered to take me, despite some resistance from Mark! We eventually found a hospital, where she left me, to go back and continue flying. After some confusion managed to get xray sorted, with the help of my phrase book got three words out of the Doctor, "no problem, broken" that's all I got, if that's not a contradiction in terms I don't know what the hell is. They put me on my back and told me not to move, great, this is where it seriously started to go down hill.

Thank God for mobile phones and Airsports insurance, don't go abroad without either. Got a message back to let everyone know what the situation was, only to find that Cath had landed awkwardly and broken her leg! What else could go wrong?? Mark L and Gordon packed up my stuff and dropped it off en route to Mark catching the train to Santander, to catch the ferry, etc, etc (they should have been at the prize-giving for Gordon to get his second place, what a man). On my own in a Spanish hospital, great! don't anyone knock the NHS within my earshot. Five days was enough to drive you crazy, as I said, was I glad of the mobile, to sort out insurance etc and just get calls in English. Visit from Jocky, Damien, Dave and Cameron, who all thought it was great fun. Believe it or not even Gordon didn't get away scot free, he was stopped for not wearing a seatbelt and fined pt15000!

CC / Five Intrepid Condors



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The start of a very painful, frustrating and actually quite worrying five days for me, everyone gone home, except Cath who was miles away in another hospital, we couldn't even comiserate with each other. After some delay the medical rescue people were sorted out and I was counting the hours until they arrived. What else is there to do when you can't speak a word to anyone? I was just lying there getting more and more worried about what I might have done. Friday evening, and my saviour, a guy called Andy Lennon from CEGA arrived, Never been so pleased to see a complete stranger in my life. Cock ups all down the line, he had been told I was in plaster, wrong. The hospital staff were very unhelpful, quite why I don't know, perhaps they didn't like anyone muscling in on their territory. He arranged to come back early the following morning, as the flight was at 09.00, this meant leaving the hospital at 05.00, wonderful.

I was unceremoniously bundled out of the ward at about 04.00 by very unfriendly staff, with all my gear and left in the corridor. This is all no joke when you are in serious pain and haven't got a clue what's happening. When Andrew turned up he got lot of aggro, especially as he needed me back in bed to transfer me to his air vacuum mattress. Dressed and transferred, then they refused to hand over the xrays, property of the hospital, but totally worthless to them. Would not part with them despite offers of money, return, copying or anything. OK, accept defeat on that one, now we have "the doctor hasn't signed the release/fit to fly papers" no doctor available, Two orderlies and a very aggressive staff nurse storm off to do God knows what. Crunch time as Andrew said, time to decide, hang on to see what happens, or leg it! I can laugh about it now, but at the time... So there we were legging it, well I wasn't, down the corridor to the private ambulance, with my luggage and paraglider piled on me on the stretcher in a vacuum pack stretcher, like a b***** giant salami. Off the trolley, into the ambulance and off to Madrid airport.

A couple of cold, bouncy hours later we're at the airport, hoping the hospital haven't rung to cause any problems. The plane was an hour late,

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A couple of cold, bouncy hours later we're at the airport, hoping the hospital haven't rung to cause any problems. The plane was an hour late, Iberian, what a surprise. Got on board eventually, and off we go, thankfully they were so inefficient that they didn't ask for any paperwork until it was too late. Andrew did a great job, "hospital papers? they must be here somewhere, looks like I must have left them behind, I'll send them on later." What a relief to land at Heathrow, two ambulance guys waiting ready with a very posh ambulance to take me to Musgrove Park Hospital.

All getting a bit much by the time we get there, twelve hours of aggro, bouncing about, and pain were beginning to get to me. Even the guys doing an ER type dramatic entry onto the ward carrying the PG, luggage and pushing me, didn't help much! So glad to get into bed, you wouldn't believe. The nurses said they'd never had anyone so pleased to be there. Spent a few days on my back, then fitted with a fibreglass spinal jacket and sent home. Hopefully after six weeks this will come off and that will be the end of the saga.

I hope nobody else has any problems on this scale, wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. Thanks very much to all the visitors, and the cards, very much appreciated, even English hospitals can get boring.

Safe flying,

Phil

Treasurers Report:-

There are now - 51 Paid up members of the Club for 1999/2000.

Bank balance @ 30/4/99 £1008,29 (- bash profit)

Bossington Lease is now paid. £141

New members :- 2 PG - 1 HG

Lawrence Pidsley - From Middlesex -HG (old member). Gary Thompson - From Taunton -PG. Peter Martin - from Milton Keynes - PG

Five intrepid Condors

Five intrepid Condors
Set off for sunny Spain,
To jump off snowy mountains
And fly across the plain.

The day was blue with fluffy clouds,
They all leapt off with glee,
some flew like birds, some like bricks,
Phil crashed in a tree.

Four intrepid Condors
Set off for their second spree,
Three flew up, Mark plummeted down
And squashed his foot with his knee.

Three intrepid Condors
Leapt off the hill in the rain.
One got to goal, Two halfway there,
And none scraped off the plain

Three Condors getting braver,
Marked goal on their trusty map,
On take-off no one wavered,
But on landing Kath's leg went snap.

Two intrepid Condors
Circling up in a whirl,
The goal was tempting, but duty was calling,
Mark landed to scrape up his girl.

One heroic Condor
Was second across the line.
But lying in wait for Gordon,
Were the Spanish police with a fine.

Our team of injured Condors
Now lie in hospital beds.
They get visitors when it's raining,
And contribute to Airheads.

Kath Cotton

"I don't know what's the matter with these people, you can land a paraglider anywhere." Phil on the first day at Piedrahita.



In a little Spanish town



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Well, quite a big Spanish town, actually, called Algodonales, which was to be the base for three weeks of courses run by the combined efforts of Adrenaline Sports and Flying Frenzy.

My interest in the course had first been sparked by Eddie Colfox who assured me that it was definitely the best way to get my CP after months of dreary weather since attaining my EP last August. The cost was a somewhat daunting £400, which did not include flights, food, beer or any other excitement that one still felt able to enjoy after a day's flying! However, my wife, having got me into this lark in the first place by giving me a "taster weekend" for my fiftieth birthday last year, said I should go – and who am I to argue....?

I had agreed with Harry Dyke, a fellow EP at Flying Frenzy, to share a hire car in Spain. Unfortunately, whilst I had been able to get a flight to Seville, he was travelling to Malaga the following day! So it was that I arrived at Seville in the evening of the 26th March, drove to Algodonales for an overnight stay in a hotel (at my expense) ready for a trip to Malaga the following morning to pick up Harry.

I met up with Eddie, Martin Edwards and Steve Goodall from Adrenaline, Michel Carreras (a local flyer assisting on the course) and the other students in a local bar at about 10.30 pm. Most of this last group, of course, were about to depart on the Saturday, and a pretty glum lot they were. Not surprising, really, as they had had an entire week of torrential rain and high winds. Some of them had not flown once and were understandably p****d off!

Saturday morning dawned bright but very windy – far too windy for flying – but I had to go to Malaga anyway. I collected Harry from his flight and we made our way back to Algodonales across country, taking in some of the superb scenery of the area. It was still very windy when we got back – to find that some people were staying on an extra day, and that we would have to spend another night in the hotel. At least we didn't have to pay for this one!

Sunday morning – and still too windy. In a pattern that we were to get very familiar with, there was a general meeting at the Instructors' house at 10:30 am at which the wise heads decided what to do and where to go for the day. Flying was definitely off, so a theory session was set up for 12 noon at one of the (bigger) apartment houses in which we were staying. The session was on principles of flight and very useful, if somewhat informal. During the afternoon it looked as though the wind might be dropping, so the kit was piled into the Adrenaline van and the hire cars, and we set off

where to go for the day. Flying was definitely off, so a theory session was set up for 12 noon at one of the (bigger) apartment houses in which we were staying. The session was on principles of flight and very useful, if somewhat informal. During the afternoon it looked as though the wind might be dropping, so the kit was piled into the Adrenaline van and the hire cars, and we set off for one of the sites near Ronda.

We drove to the top of the hill... we waited around... the wind was still too strong to fly – sound familiar? As a diversion while we waited to see if the wind would drop, a group of us set off to see the remains of a Roman amphitheatre built right on the top of the mountain. Obviously the local authorities had started to renovate this at some time, but had only got so far. Maybe they will continue the work in years to come. Back at the take-off it was decided that Eddie would take one of the more junior students for a tandem flight, but that it was still too windy for the rest of us. Ho hum, back to the apartment.

Monday, and we flew! Having only experienced the joys of Quarr and Swire in the past, the prospect of taking off from nearly 3,000 feet and heading for a landing site 3.5 km away was somewhat daunting but, in the event, absolutely bloody marvellous! Like almost everybody else, I landed a little short of the designated landing area, but I didn't give a hoot – Adrenaline certainly picked themselves a good name!

Back to the top and a second flight. By now it was quite late and there was too little lift to get anywhere near the landing site. But we all had smooth, enjoyable flights and waited for the pickup vehicle by the track.

Tuesday, and the first flights from the Algodonales mountain. Just over 3,000 ft at take-off, this offers spectacular possibilities for soaring and thermalling. This was my first real go at thermalling, and making thirty or forty 360s was an exciting new experience, even though I didn't gain much height. Perhaps it is appropriate to point out at this time that the control of students by the instructors was excellent. Radios were mandatory, and every student was watched carefully and guided from start to finish. This could be a little frustrating at times when you were called back just after finding that magic thermal, but very confidence-inspiring, nonetheless. That flight lasted about 25 minutes – almost doubling my total air-time at a stroke!

We had two more flights that day, from the same mountain but a different take-off and I managed to complete some of the tasks I needed for my CP – big ears and the asymmetric collapse. The weather conditions in the area are quite complex, as there is a vast, flat plain to the west, below Seville, and the winds rush in across the plain and get funneled up the valleys. Some of these have blind ends, which introduce interesting effects into the wind speed and direction. Generally we relied on the thermal winds which came onto the mountain as the sun heated up the face. This meant moving round from south-west to north-west as the day progressed.

Wednesday, and the wind was too strong again. Someone suggested that it might be possible to fly the sea breezes at Almuñecar, some two hours away, so we all piled into the vehicles and set off. But, as is the way with this sport, it was not to be. Too gusty on the top, and not enough wind down below to do anything useful. Still, the weather was fine and sunny, and quite warm and we had struck up an acquaintance with a German girl, Chris, who was in Algodonales on her own. She latched on to our party and, as she had her own car, it was convenient to all concerned as it made retrieves that much more efficient.

In a fit of enthusiasm I suggested that rather than waste the day, we peel off and check out the Med. My son seems to think that everything is "cool" these days, and that certainly summed up the sea! However, it was bracing and I enjoyed the company!

Thursday and – oh dear – too windy again. I began to get a bit downhearted. After the joys of the early part of the week, would we ever get any more flying? Harry and I decided to visit Ronda, half an hour away, to do a bit of sightseeing. It's a stunning place, the town being built on both sides of a 200 foot deep ravine, spanned by a remarkable bridge. Apparently the architect of this edifice stood at the side to admire his newly completed work when the wind took hold of his hat. Grabbing for it, the poor man lost his footing and fell to his death below. Should have had a reserve...

Every hour we telephoned Eddie's mobile to see what the conditions were like. He was waiting at the Ronda hill but by 5pm it still wasn't ideal. We decided to drive back via





In a little Spanish town 2

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One after another we took off until there were about a dozen of us in the sky, soaring the ridge. This was the first time I had really done ridge soaring, and also the first time I had been in the air with a number of other people. It was also here that I learned a great lesson about airmanship, though I wasn't aware of what I had done until the debrief later on. As we sat around the table in the tapas bar, Martin asked if anyone wanted to own up to a faux pas. We all looked at each other wondering what had happened. Eventually Luke (a chef by training who had so successfully assisted in the development of a chain of pubs that he was now retired at 38!) said that he thought Martin might be referring to my forcing him into avoiding action.

Every hour we telephoned Eddie's mobile to see what the conditions were like. He was waiting at the Ronda hill, but by 5pm it still wasn't ideal. We decided to drive back via the hill anyway and, by the time we got there, the wind had come on to the south-west take-off. The only way to get to that take-off was to walk up a pretty steep hill, and by the time we reached the top I was muttering about what I would do to people if it turned out we couldn't fly. But it was perfect!

I was taken aback, but this was exactly what Martin was talking about. We had been soaring the ridge at about the same height, Luke with the ridge on his left, me flying towards him with the ridge on my right. We were quite some way apart but I got a little nervous and thought "nah, I'll just bottle out and fly out away from the hill rather than risk bumping into him". Luke, of course, was quite reasonably expecting me to move right and was already moving out himself according to air law. Oblivious to the problems I was causing, I made my left turn and floated off towards the valley, while Luke had to take rapid avoiding action as this pillock cut straight across the front of him! An embarrassing debrief, but a lesson soundly learned. These rules are obviously there for a purpose!

Friday, and another new site, Montellano. This is a very nice site, easily soarable, but with a pretty small take-off area. And it was Good Friday. And every flyer in Spain had converged on the site – or so it seemed, anyway! We had an entertaining time watching a number of Spanish flyers trying to commit suicide while the wind played its games, but then decided to use the time more productively by taking the written CP exam. Why is it that all those things you've read a hundred times in all the books just seem to disappear into thin air when you have an exam paper to fill in?

Around 6pm the wind was perfect so we (and the other few thousand pilots) decided it was time to take off. Some of the take-offs were pretty scrappy as the instructors grabbed at every available slot to get us into the air before the next Spaniard, and hassled us off the face of the hill. Once up the conditions were perfect, and I managed to get about 150 feet above take-off, the first time I'd actually been higher than when I started! We managed to get three flights in before the light began to fail. A very satisfying afternoon.

Saturday, and we were reduced to a rump of four students, as most of the others had planes to catch. We flew from Algodonales once more, and what a morning it was! This was real thermalling at last and on my first flight I made over 700 feet above take off. I just couldn't lose as I kept finding the lifting air and getting higher and higher. If Eddie hadn't called me back, since I was getting somewhat downwind of take-off, I think I would still have been up there! And, as a bonus, I completed my second top-landing – another task in the bag.

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The second flight was even better – same max altitude but I stayed up for over 50 minutes. Now I knew why I had taken up this sport! All those who fly regularly will know the elation you feel after a really good flight, and that's how I felt as I landed around lunch time. The wind had moved round by now, and we set out for Ronda to try to get a couple more flights in, but the curious weather patterns were against us and the wind was actually coming from behind the hill it was supposed to be blowing onto! We decided that we had finished on a high note, and should call it a day rather than risk spoiling the moment.

So back to Algodonales, get all the packing done, another excellent, inexpensive meal and we were off back to grey, rainy Britain – but with one helluva suntan!

So was it all worth it? That's easy to answer – definitely, yes! However, there were a few things that could have made things better and easier, and I have already spoken informally to the instructors about these. In terms of pre-course administration there is certainly room for improvement. Having received the very creditable promotional leaflet, I sent off my deposit ... and heard nothing. At Eddie's prompting I sent off my final payment ... and heard nothing, not a peep. A few days before I knew they were all about to leave I



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there is certainly room for improvement. Having received the very creditable promotional leaflet, I sent off my deposit ... and heard nothing. At Eddie's prompting I sent off my final payment ... and heard nothing, not a peep. A few days before I knew they were all about to leave I phoned Martin and asked if there were any joining instructions. He e-mailed me a briefing sheet which helped a bit, but I would have liked to have known where we were going, how to get there, what the accommodation was, what we needed to bring etc, well in advance.

Once there the accommodation seemed a bit haphazard, hence my second night in the hotel. The apartments themselves were quite reasonable, but you can imagine what the place looked like in the third week of six guys at a time sharing a house! The only other suggestion that I would make is that there should be some sort of planned "wet-weather" programme. It is disappointing enough to wake up and find it raining, or too windy to fly; it is even more depressing when nobody seems to have a clue what we're going to do instead!

On the plus side, the location is excellent and the living cheap and very good. The instruction, particularly in the air, was first class, and the control exercised by the instructors was clear and reassuring. Above all, I learned an enormous amount in the week – far more than even Eddie at his best could have taught me on the hills of Dorset. Some valuable lessons in airmanship, really long top-to-bottoms, some great thermalling, including some quite bumpy air as I nudged the inversion layer, soaring some superb ridges and cliffs – and I'm bloody lightning at packing my wing away now!

Many thanks to Martin, Steve, Eddie and Michel – it was a brilliant week and, if I can afford it, I'll be there again next year!

Phil Tilson (PG CP – just!)

Phil will be co-ordinating our entires on the National Sites guide when we have finished the guide. (ed)

Low Air Time Pilots

Mark Bridges (01392 861441) has kindly volunteered to co-ordinate the activities of low air time pilots. If you want to fly at the weekends, give him a ring. I suggest that you do not leave it until saturday mornings. (ed)

From John Owen-Jones

It was clagged in and windy today (5/4/99) 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.

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 but you may know better. 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.

Injury List Update

Mike Glanvill has had a triple bypass operation and at present is recovering well. Best wishes from us to him, Mary and the family.

Kath Cotton is now back home with her leg pinned and able to get about on her crutches or with Mark driving her wheelchair. He has discovered you can ride on the back. There is always Kath's leg stuck out in front to use as a crumple-zone. (Not all of it's going to crumple, Mark!)

Phil Fouracre has been seen round Taunton smiling bravely in his barrel. I bet all his clients thought that they had heard all the plumber's excuses from him. He's moved onto a new level.

Mark Langley is still not back in action. What a skiver! He blows his foot up like a balloon every morning just for a little sympathy and the visit to get signed off. I'm going to the meeting tonight with a pin.

Simon Bell has been seen on East Hill! No, not flying. He would only be able to spiral. A little unbalancing, all that plaster on one side. I know that HG pilots like a little aluminium to hold onto but maybe bikes have a bit too much metal.

BITS & PIECES



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Read **John Owen-Jones'** account of his Good Friday flight at Branscombe. It shows that orographic indicates conditions that may present glorious opportunities to the bold but careful. John's flying on the winch is bold but not careful. Wonderful but worrying entertainment!

Smeatharpe has also presented some excellent XC flying this year. **Brett Wright** did 27miles and **Martin Kellaway** about 15 off the aerotow on Monday. The aerotow has already given over 180 miles this year. Let's hope somebody soon does a big one. The winch also gave a couple of XC flights, but nothing like Martyn Howe's 21 miler from earlier in the year.

Phil Foreacre will continue to try prove his theory that paragliders are able to land anywhere. The barrel may become a permanent feature of the hillside. I believe that **Mark Aplin** has challenged him to a wheelchair v barrel rolling contest on a hill of his choice. (What was that, Kath?)

It looks like **Robin Brown** (Airtopia) & **Steve Milsom** (Axis) have found a gem in Wales. They have been training on the Skirrid (the big lump on the right on the way to Pandy). Over the weekend they had perfect conditions. Three Club Pilots passed out. Students at 1000ato. Evening convection making landing difficult - just couldn't persuade them to come down. On Friday, while they flew, they watched loads of canopies sat on the hill at Pandy. 600' walk up could keep a few away!

A load of pilots from the Paramania weekend went to **Tal y Bont** in the Brecons. Big exciting conditions, a huge cu-nimmy thing overhead all day. Off the clock suck up. One pilot dropped out of the cloud by pulling in one A riser, collapsing that side and spiralling until he could use more conventional methods. A even bigger walk up, but it sounds as if you could have been sucked straight out of the car park.

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**MIDWEEK FLYING
PHONE 0800 515544**

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.

Fantasy and Reality



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From Jeff Hoer

Today 23/04/99. Sometimes it just works out!! It didn't seem like it due to the necessity to get up early (6:00 am) and write a method statement and risk assessment for one of my projects I'm currently working on, and then get to Plymouth for a meeting at 09:00 hrs. Off then to Liskeard then across to Barnstaple. It was raining when I managed to set off at 07:30 so the Flame sitting on the back seat seemed a waste of time. A couple of meetings later and the sky breaking, there was the slim chance that I could get to Woolacombe and get an hour or two in.

14:00 hrs Woolacombe. Light but blue sky and the odd cu goaded me into giving it a try. Soon off but down all the way! I was rewarded with a good landing on the beach!! Carried back to the top, (knackered). PG is supposed to be easier. Wind now 10 mph. Smack on with good looking sky behind. Now airborne for the second time, but still scratching. Getting lively! starting to climb, start circling in what turns out to be a 5 up thermal, work it over the landing field and I'm now at 1200' ATO. Decision time!! Yes, let's keep going, done it before on a stiffy so why not on a floppy? Eventually I make CB at 3400' a mile or so DW of TO. Lift easy to control by just staying at the edge of the cloud, no chance of going up the side but happy to be at CB.

15:30. Still going and now over Chumliegh, I think 18 mile so far! Is this a record from a coastal site on a floppy?. Tiverton in the distance but now I'm down to only 800' and struggling. A light thermal takes me back up to 1200' but then it's gone. Almost down just west of Tiv when a couple of Buzzards help me to a 7 up all the way to base. I stay with this for another 12 mile and I can see Feniton in the distance. Can I make it to home? Really losing out all the way I'm back down to 1500' ATO. Just looking for something to get me the last 5 mile to home. I'll work anything that's not going down. At least with PG's you can work lift to the deck. With Feniton now in the distance, I decide that if I can make it I will land in my back garden. No mean feat as it is very small. Landing now in site, down to 400' I recon I can just make it. Now over the cables and settle to a perfect landing in the back garden. Made it!! Some 52 mile from T.O. Landed at Goal. Well Goal decided when I landed... Chris was home so perfection.

Is this a National record, or was it due to reading the E Mail drivel now on line? One can only dream.

From Harriet Pottinger

Sunday 25/4/99: light to moderate southerly, blue sky, warm, sea breeze at Branscombe to 1500ft ato, flew to Ladram Bay, then back to Beer Head and crossed the gap to Seaton. Edged around the cliffs towards Lyme Regis (wind helpfully veering SW), crossed the town to Black Venn, regained height above golf course, before crossing to Charmouth and on up to Golden Cap and West Bay. Landed just beyond at Burton Beach for fish and chips and icecream. Simon arrived with the car to derig my glider while I had a little paddle to cool off.

From Angie Weir

After my 3 winch flights on 27th March, believe it or not April fools day I did my first hill launch, at Mere. It was fairly windy when we got there after work, but we quickly rigged the Elan and feeling very sick, I wastalked through the launch procedure again about holding the glider at the position where the glider wanted to be, but the pulling the nose down by about 5 degrees. I let myself get lifted off the ground too soon, but it was fine, the soaring was not easy. I had not flown near a hill on a HG before, and wasn't sure how much to be holding the bar in by. As it was, the wind dropped during the flight, and it was very scratchy. I was flying too fast and very near the ground, I lost out and bottom landed. (good Landing).

My next one was at Westbury, we had many days of going to these sights rigging and not flying, but on 11th April I had 2 flights, the first was quite scratchy, I realised that I could fly slower near the hill and push out a bit in thermals, I got a scrappy one and got enough height to TL. The next flight I had a good TO, the bar position was better and I was starting to fly a little smoother when turning, when coming into top land I missed the second upright got turned but got it round again in time to land ok.

17th April I had another couple of flights at Westbury, with some strong thermic lift, but not much ridge lift, the take off's were good, approaches also but both flights I ended up on my belly, not knowing where I had gone wrong. I was ready to run but the glider was in front of me.

Saturday 24th again Westbury, the wind was pretty light and as the day went on it went further off to the West, and increased, there were thermals around, but people were taking off doing OK or losing out and bottom landing. Chris was pretty stressed about the bottom landings.

After witnessing a very bad take off on a Moyes XL, the chap had a gash in his chin and his wallet with a broken leading edge, I took off. The take offs are pretty easy really, and I've stopped feeling sick. I need to crack the landings again, I've gone downhill a bit. I was determined to get it right, this time. I was superstitious when training, and wouldn't wear my red socks as they signify danger and accidents, I wore them as if they were a statement that I was definitely in control, silly !! Anyway I did land on my feet but was another of the ones that went down. There must have been 10 HG's who did the same counting the one who did it twice.

Airtime at today's date solo 6 hours 45 minutes.

STOLEN

Geoff Rogers (Avon) had his Voodoo 2 paraglider stolen from Crook Peak carpark. The glider is purple and green and is complete with a SAS harness with bright yellow X straps. Also a bright green french made vario.

Let me know if you hear anything about these items. (ed)



About 5 weeks ago my parents came out to visit me and whilst they were here we decided to hire out a 4x4 campervan, and head up to Alice on unsealed roads. We left Melbourne on a Saturday morning and spent the next 2 days going along the Great Ocean Road. We then headed up to Adelaide and on to the wine growing region of South Australia. On the 4th day we hit the unsealed roads and the beginning of the out-back. To start with we traveled through flat farm land, and then just large open spaces. The road stretched on to the horizon seemed to vanish cutting a wedge out of the land where the sun glinted on the road surface. All around the land was dry, rivers no longer ran, and the bushes and trees seemed dead and brittle. There were small plants and grasses that were sharp and crunched beneath your feet. This was a new type of landscape for me. I've seen mountains, jungles, sea and ocean both on the surface and below it but this was now the outback, the desert, a calm sea of land. Before I when there I'd had herd stories of unchanging scenery for miles and miles that it was a bleak and barren place with nothing there. This had enticed me, and I wanted to see what nothing looked like. However in looking for nothing I found so much more. Yes it is bleak and it is barren, but as for there being nothing there I'd disagree. The land is constantly changing, the road changes colour, the land around you changes in colour, there's dry up creeks and small hills, there's tracks and signs (both new and decaying) there are signs of human life everywhere, small towns, ghost towns, a disused railway with its rails, sleepers, bridges and windmill pumping stations. There were Emus running as though they'd just left Monty Python's Ministry for Silly Walks, as they flicked their large feet into the air behind them, with the long necks horizontal, as they reach a good 35kph, with me powering my way through piles of sand on the bumpy 4x4 track. We past through the Flinders range, where the mountains are multi coloured. Vains of brown, oranges, reds and yellow all layed on top of each other, probably once a river bed, rised after millions of years. Here I came across a really weird plant. As we drove through the dry hills, there were gum about and other native trees, non looking particularly green but still living, I saw what seemed to be a couple of tennis balls on green string tied to the ground. I stopped the van for a closer look. It was a Gourd, the tennis ball was it's fruit, which was hard, but bright green. It must have had roots that went a long way down into the earth to find water, it looked almost alien in this environment, but it was just showing how life can adapt itself to its environment. Another form of life that seemed to have no trouble living in the most bleak and barren parts of this wilderness were the flies. They were everywhere the moment you live the verbal you have 30 seconds at the most before you are decended upon by about fifty flies. The Oze wave is quickly learned as you flick them from in front of your face, and I'd recommend a fly net, as although they make you look stupid they do give you a break from the onslaught, another trick I worked out was to shout "FUCK OFFTTTTTT" at them, that gave you a few moments of peace FROM THOSE FUCKING FLY'S. We past a huge dry saltlake (Lake Eriy South), went to the edge of the Simpson desert, and had a flat tyre in the middle of nowhere twice in the same day. On the 4th day of traveling through the outback our last before we got to Alice we got to Lamberts Center, this is the central point of Australia. It was calculated by some guy called Lambert and it took him a while feeding all the data from maps and stuff into a computer, and they've made a 4x4 track through loose red sand and Bushland to it, at the central point there is a flag pole, unfortunately someone's nicked the flag. We stayed in Alice for a night, and headed on to Stanly Casam, nice but to many tourists, the Aboriginal Orca pit, pretty good but not much there and too many flies, but that night we got to Ormiston Gorge which was incredible. There was a pool in the middle of this huge gorge, with Coast Gums all about. All of the rock is jagged, flat with sharp angles. I saw loads of rock wallabies, and was able to get quite close to them, even a mother with a baby in its pouch (I've got the photo). We then got back onto a 4x4 track and came across a huge crater from where a comet landed 142million years ago. We drove into the middle of it, amazing, especially when a plane doing a sinic tour flew over, and there I was standing in the middle of this crater next to the van in what from the air would seem to be an inaccessible place. Carrying on the sky went black and although for a while the road seemed to dodge the huge rain storms that were sweeping across the landscape I eventually had to drive into one. Rain pelted down and my speed dropped to about an 8th of what it had just been. fast running streams ran down the side of the road and inevitably right the way across it. I slammed the van down a gear and went through it with my foot to the floor, water went everywhere and the wipers kicked in just in time and I got safely though Great fun and the best thing was I got to do it again about another 5 times, before getting to Ayres rock later that day.

A friend of mine asked me if I thought Ayres Rock was a spiritual place. Well I wouldn't call Ayres rock spiritual. What I'd say about it is that it's an impressive lump of rock. It's all one piece, and as it's stuck out in the middle of the flat lands, it's an amazing thing to see, especially at sunset when it starts to change colour and faintly glow red. Just as it is great to be by the sea and in the mountains Ayres rock gives you that same ore.

We spent a few days at Ayres rock and the Olga's but it's far to touristy with big bus loads of 'fat old arrogant people' tramping round them and there's a monopoly on accommodation and public transport, a shared minibus from the Ayres Rock Resort to the Rock cost 20 oze bucks each way, for a 15k trip. Someone's making a shed load of money.

After that we were going to go to Sydney, but after a long days drive, Ayres rock to Port Augusta 1200km in about 12hrs I got a call about some work so I headed back to Melbourne, after what had been a mad amazing trip. Catch you later James.

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