

AirHeads



www.dscondors.co.uk

January/February 2003

Heated Gloves

After a recent injury I have had problems with keeping the two fingers on my left hand warm. Having the first third missing has reduced the circulation and they do not generate their own warmth. For months now I have been buying gloves trying to find a pair to keep my fingers warm. My wife is convinced I have a glove fetish. This means that flying in the winter is very difficult, as often my fingers are cold before I start and this has limited my flying time.

So a couple of weeks ago sat at the computer I typed in Heated Gloves and found a few sites. On further investigation I found a pair of inner gloves with the fingers wired and decided to try them. The gloves came with a battery holder c/w belt pouch and a car cigarette lighter adapter. So then I tried them in the car and was surprised how warm they were.

On the 31-1-03 I had the chance to try them at Bossington with the outside temp 1 to 2 Deg. This was using the battery pack, which is 9.6v (8 x 1.2v rechargeables) instead of the 12v off the car giving less power. Ensuring there was no metal items in my harness pocket where I was placing the battery pack as I did not want to go up in flames and moving my drink bag to another pocket I was ready. I waited for a few minutes to allow the gloves to warm up and I was off.

I had a 45-minute flight with warm hands; normally I would have landed long before this going through the pain barrier as I warmed my hands up.

So a great success and for anyone interested all the details are below. The only drawback is the large battery pack 8 x D cells with a weight of 2lb 12oz (1.25kg) using 7000mah Rechargeables. Power Draw, Pair – 1.25 A @ 12 VDC, 15 Watts.

Gloves from – www.extremecomfort.com (from the USA)
Cost - \$59.95 plus £6.55vat (UK Customs) and £3.85 UK postal charge.

Batteries from – www.eurobatteries.com 8 x 7000mah rechargeables £40.

Euro batteries are based in Glos and have a wide range of batteries ie Phone, DIY tool, RC at very reasonable prices and an efficient turn around on orders.

I have also found a site with DIY glove details – www.ibmwr.org/otech/heatedclothing.html

Other heated clothing sites-
www.horseboots.com/srx3.html &
www.calamander.co.uk/heated/glovesandgrips/gloveandgrips.html

What next heated socks and a small generator?



Andy Tew

Editor's Comment

Not often we have a picture of the Editor up to his neck in gorse, but this time we did!

(North Hill - many thanks to Dinks for being very quick off the mark with the camera – V!)



Well, we managed to get the first Airheads, under new management, out without too much trauma, apart from keeping Bryon from his bed on the evening we put it together. Notice how easy it is to slip into the royal 'we'! Bryon and Viv did all the technical stuff, I just wrote all the waffle, then again, what's new? If I say so myself it looked rather good, the problem is going to be maintaining the momentum! We had plenty of material to work with, this month less so, mainly due to the winter drop off in flying generally, I hope. As we only have to produce six copies over the year I would like to spread out the material so that we don't get great variations in content and volume from month to month.

I know I'm going to be repeating this for a while, but we do need contributions on a regular basis and from as many people as possible. As I said in the last issue, it doesn't matter how they are written, as long as I can decipher them. Subject matter can be anything, preferably related to flying ie sites, gliders, personal experiences, but not necessarily. I don't intend to censor comments or opinions put forward unless they are seriously libellous or obscene!! send it in anyway, I can always put it in anonymously or edit to suit.

Next month, we should hopefully have a decent article from Paul Hook on his Mexican adventure, and also our flying experiences in Spain, both with plenty of pictures. Remember – if you do have access to a computer and can download and read the magazine you get to see all the pics which we can't reproduce for you in the hard copy.

Phil

Email: Phil4acre@aol.com as an attached Word doc. if possible (saves me having to retype)

Fax: 01823 490724 or Snailmail: Rockhill Farm, Wrantage, Taunton TA3 6DL or even hand your contribution to me on the hill.

Deadline two weeks prior to publication

Chairmans Chat

Robin says he wrote this months, but he forgot to attach it, well he was half right anyway! He was going to tell us about our contribution towards the purchase of Bell Hill by Wessex.

robinc@eurobell.co.uk

John's Flying Diary

Sat 28th Dec Chilcombe

At long last, feet off the ground, not very high, but at least clear of the ground. Myself and Keith had around half hour at Chilcombe (small local site) in the morning, before it blew out completely. As we don't have zaggi's we flew kites instead until mid afternoon then another short bumpy flight. **Jon**

Fri 3rd Jan Batcombe

Definitely a Batters day! JM
Too right - a corking day at Batters - if a bit on the chilly side. 2 hours air time and up to 450ft ATO - Mike got to 630ft F*\$£% &*)()...**Stephen**

Fri 3rd Woolacombe

The early birds used all the air at Wolly today. It was fun till it dropped off. Still 45 mins is better than none!

Dinks

Nah, you just needed to be the early bird. I made it 860 ft ATO. **Jeff**

Sat 4th North Hill VF PF DH AT JH MH TD MP SR RC SM G? JOJ BD MA (that's all I can remember)

Well 2 out of 2 after a reasonable North hill day with 2 flights. The first was very lifty but bloody freezing so had to bottom land after 25 mins After the walk up I was well warm so took off again well I was still glowing. It was a bit lighter but still good thermals coming off the sea and got to fly right off the end over Minehead, as it was getting lighter and I was getting cold headed back to take off and got in just before the wind dropped completely. so with today and wolly yesterday no complaints from me! **Dinks**
Very nice day had by all! Guaranteed really as Mr Glum not available! Never had -6c on the vario before! **Phil**

The hang gliding spot landing competition which was unofficially held in the bottom landing field was won by Robin Campbell for his splendid approach. The spot was the entire field and Robin, Mark Aplin, Steve Rigby & me all managed to hit it, some of us harder than others. So why cant hang glider pilots land properly then? An hour & a quarter of sea thermal fun & 905 ft ATO. **Mark**

Sat 4th Monksdown

Forecast for the east of the region seemed to suggest that Sat would be ok at Monksdown <Shaftesbury>. Arrived around 10am and couple of wings in the air, plus 4 Hangies. Flew for around half hour then Mike Penny and Phil Anning arrived. Conditions 12/15mph, bumpy, but flyable still. Mike flew for hour and 40mins in one go, and eventually came down when wind increased, and all 6 Hangies launched. Two flights and hour and half airtime, Paul Browning arrived but wind too strong by this time. **Jon**

Fri 10th North Hill PF, VF, JH, JM, LM, JOJ, TD, PW, DS, Dinks, HP, MK, MH, and JF

North Hill to start, wind backing? Lets try Selworthy, not flown there for years, just right, straight into the bowl. First flight interesting, quite lively, roughest sea thermals I've flown in for a long time. Climbing to just below a grand, lovely winter sunshine. Nice to see a dozen PGs in the air. All flew back to the car-park, to pack up. Paul still in the air, joined by two more!! Looks like some had taken off from North Hill while we were at Selworthy, sneaky! Lets have another look at North Hill on the way home. Looked very nice, so some of the sadder ones flew again, can't cope with all these hours. Still off to the North but perfectly flyable. Took off and flew down to the coastguard station in beautiful smooth lift. Circling leisurely at 1,100' at looking back over Exmoor with the setting sun reflecting off the snow - glorious.

Landed as it was getting dark. Luvly Jubbly **Phil**
A bit of a funny day for me flew north hill first managed to get 300ft below take off just scratch back to TO. went to Selworthy took off, got mashed and side landed having got very little lift, tried again no lift for me, side landed??? What's going on. 3rd time lucky got to 450ft went to go for car park saw every one going for it so waited (mistake) lost 200ft. scratched back to 300ft and went. Got back half way. Ho Hum Went to North hill flew to coast guard station and back, great flying. Now that was more like it, landed back on TO a good end to a bit of a strange day. **Dinks**

Sat 11th Smeatharpe

HP, JH, MRH, PP, AT, JM, LM, RS and RC.
1st winching day of 2003 went pretty smoothly. Early problems with the starting the car, but with the Condors answer to the AA, namely Andy, and we were soon on our way. Smooth tows to around 1000 ft were made by all. I got persuaded to have a go on marks Booster (Powered hang Glider), no problem despite huge reservations and Knocking Knees. Lyn continued with her endorsement despite a break of around 18 months. Three flights today had her towing to 1000 ft on the last tow. The last few flights made in moonlight. **Jeff**

Sun 12th Collard Hill

Took a gamble and went to Collard Hill. After waiting around an hour had best part of an hour doing lots of short flights and hops along the hill always managing to get back on to the take off areas. Thirsty work so retired in search of clod beer. **Dinks**

Thu 16th West Bay

Forecast - 10mph SW - so arrived early 9,30am, only to find nil wind, but it did eventually pick up. but direction some twenty plus degrees off to west. Stephen Corben first off then myself, others waiting Derek Sadler, Adrian Coombe, Tony Davie. Flew to Eype and found loads of strong steady lift, which promised good flying. Unfortunately

wind strength was increasing and at one time ground speed was reverse, so flew inland to land near the main road. Walked back to see DS take off with AC already flying, and then eventually beach landing. **Jon**

Thu 23rd Bossington

Just Simon and me on HGs at Bossy. Windy enough in the carpark when we arrived but it had dropped a bit by the time we got to take off. Unfortunately not enough to get us high enough to fly back to the carpark, but soarable for over an hour. Eventually so light that we couldn't top land at all and ended up going down, but a lovely day anyway. Bit of a slog walking back up the hill to take-off to collect the trolley en route back to the carpark though, while Simon derigged the gliders. **Harriet**

Harriet was very kind in her report of our flying at Bossy. She didn't mention that I had a "funny" day - left my vario and GPS just outside the back door at home....which I had left unlocked! Not my day? Well at least two carriers left parcels, and nobody nicked the instruments, so it probably was my day. Also, anyone who saw my landing approach and "arrival" would have thought so - hit the field just off dead centre, but didn't break or bend anything. Very untidy. Harriet's landing was immaculate. **Simon**

Thu 23rd Batcombe

Batcombe today was a bit gusty and strong at first but turned into a very nice day. also JH RS SC MR & Andy + school **Dinks**

Thu 23rd East Hill

There's me at East Hill thinking I was missing all the fun and grumbling that after 1/2 hour the wind and thermals died- it wasn't really that good but at least I was soaring.

JOJ

Fri 24th Collard Hill

It got too strong at Collard Hill and I only got a 1/4 of an hour soaring flight. Funny old day. **Dinks**

Fri 24th West Bay

West Bay blown out at 10AM, 20/25mph at the bench on the footpath, so went with Dinks to Chilcombe, About 1 1/2 miles inland and 10mph max but too far off to fly. Later JH phoned and said he'd had airtime at Charmouth, having previously visited West Bay just after we had departed. The wind is fickle, West Bay blownout, Chilcombe insufficient, Charmouth flyable somewhat, within 5 mile distance. **Jon**

Sat 25th Woolacombe JH, MRH, RC,SR,MP,RS,MK,BA,MA,MD,CJ,AH,PF,TJ and a couple I didn't know

Strange day today at Woolacombe. Mark, Robin and I arrived at take off after wading through the fields of mud to see Phil going upwards and backwards after taking off from the bowl. The wind on TO must have been around 26 when we took off. Into the thin orographic and then soon above it.

Views were spectacular but the wind at 500+ ft were around 45. Radioed down to Phil who said there was not enough on the dunes to stay up!. Had an hour. Second flight was definitely less wind and very enjoyable, finally landing back by the cars. **Jeff** Strange day! say that again. strange day! eventually the wind arrived on the dunes for about an hour. I had 35mins out of that having lost the lift on first flight and landed on the beach. On the dunes were me PF VF JF Jay Nigel & 3 of the N Devon crew. It was a beautiful day and nice to have some fun at the end of it(roller coaster style) **Dinks**

Fri 31st Bossington

The late afternoon shift a Bossington. Turned up at 3.30 to find JH,PF,VF,DS,RN in the car park all flown out. Met TD on his way back. Got out to the front 8 - 10 mph , took off and found some fabulous sea thermals . Reached 850 ABT and could fly anywhere with the light wind and had the place to myself. Wind and thermals dropped off about 4-45 and played between 150 & 250 for a while, but I had missed to chance to fly back to the car park.Land 5-15 and walked back in the dark. **Andy**

Fri 31st Batcombe, Jon H, Mike R, Richard S, Harry D, Steve Cuddihay, Paul Browning, Andrew P plus students

I didn't believe the forecast last night which suggested 8/10 mph northerly Midday checked xc weather ,and 10 mph northerly <Yeovilton>. so met up others there, for a couple of hours flying. Conditions varied from very light to just hanging there, heights to 600ft obtained. plus students. An unexpected, cold good afternoon was had by all. **Jon**

Gusty and a distinctly cool NW breeze that encouraged no one to stay up for very long. Still it was interestingly challenging on take off and as I drifted back low towards the trees I wished I had set my speed bar more accurately, toes stretched I was pleased for once to land at the bottom. No mud though the ground was still frozen solid. A joy to be out and up again. **HD**

Sat 1st Feb Woolacombe

Woolacombe plays ball as usual Glorious weather, superb hours' flying. Condors 6 - rest of the world 0 (JF, MH, PF, VF, JH and RS) Even Mark H flying the dunes, see, all the best pilots want to do it now!!! **Phil**

Wed 5th Batcombe

Batcombe was the venue, flying was the game. We all got to fly though the middle of the afternoon was for the insane! SC RS PA JL &SC **Dinks**

Sun 9th Woolacombe

Wonderful Woollers! Does it again. Phone call to JH at Batcombe - flying the Zagi - too strong, but he'd just had a call from Roger Slaney at Woolacombe 'where is everyone? I'm just going to take off'.

Confirmed this and left home at 1.30pm - bit late but might be worth it! Strong on the dunes and off to the north. PP, MP and RS flying Hangies facing Morthoe. PF off - not much fun and v. little lift. Wind dropping so up to the top and off at 4.50pm for one whole glorious hour of passable lift with the occasional thermal passing by. Landed on the green at 5.50pm in the dark (well nearly!) and off to the Red Barn for a beer. PG's - PF, VF, PW and Andy and Annie from N Devon. **Viv**
PP + MP (+loads of others arriving from below). Arrived very late after much dithering + squelched out to front. Wind originally very strong, later moderated. Lift not looking that strong, but decided it would only get worse, so we both launched, with help & advice from Chris Gardner. My first on K2 (on trial from Simon). Surprisingly good air, in wonderful sunshine! Good enough to take another later, by which time very light so expecting to go down, but still seemed worth it! Air now full of PGs having a ball. After a while, surprised at being able to squeeze back in on top (thanks to warm air off beach?). Now getting really dark, but PG pilots are all determined to squeeze the last out of the day -- while we are frantically packing before it gets too dark to see anything. Trudge back through oceans mud, well pleased! No huge flights but a very beautiful day + great end to a long run of no-fly! Apologies to everyone I didn't stop to chat with (Phil+Viv): I was very keyed up! **Patrick**

Sun 9th Walton

Rather than drive a couple of hours to Woolacombe, I decided to stay local (2.5 miles to t/o). Blowing 18-27mph. I wait. Difficult site to get into the lift - very easy to fall into the Bristol Channel. 10 or so flights and not a lot of airtime. I try from the top, creep forward into the lift and away. Glorious weather, great views from the two bridges to Cardiff and Brean Down. The lift slowly died at about 4.30pm. Nearly an hour and a half altogether, 350'ato and drinking tea at home 10 minutes after packing up! **JF**

Thu 13th Coney's Castle

Coney's Castle came up trumps today. Jon and I spent a lovely afternoon flying this non site. I managed 260' ATO as best, but never any risk of going down. Finally flew Coney's after many, many visits. **Jeff**

Fri 14th Coney's Castle

Coney's Castle, midday direction good though gusty at times varying 12/16 mph, Dave Tewson lives Bridport, working Sidmouth, lunch at Cones,< sad or Keen> Mike Richards and Jon, good until it blew out, so clearing a large area of dead scrub for a T/O and Landing area. Mid afternoon Mike and myself went to Cotters Hill Bridport> small N/E site,< named pilots only by request of land owner> for around an hour, then again joined by Dave T and Charles Forsey who had around 40 mins until sunset.

Jon

Sat 15th Bickleigh

No one joined me at Bickleigh, just as well given the very scratchy conditions, 6 - 9 mph NE. Still I managed 50ft ato (once) and the rest of the time just managed to stay up and top land - lots of TO and landing practice. Where was the 18 - 20 mph forecast ? **JOJ**

Sat 15th Farway JH,AB,TD,DS,LG,MRH,KR,(AT busy helping KR) and HR

The second visit of the day certainly paid off. Conditions were excellent with light thermals to 250 ft. At one time there were five Gliders in the air. Even Mark was back on the PG. **Jeff**

Sun 16th Coney's Castle

Thoroughly enjoyable day at Cones Castle, never been inspired to fly there before, not any more. Bit breezy when we arrived, Mark flew his HG, no problems, top landed behind road. Waited for a while as the wind was 16-19mph, felt more as it was -2c plus wind chill. Flew when it dropped to 15mph good conditions with thermals coming through regularly. Jeff, Mark, Viv, Me, Paul, and Alan, Derek arriving later. everyone flying from around midday till about 4pm. Packed up 'cos we were all knackered. Definitely the place to go in an easterly. **Phil** What more can I say! Phil has summed it up just right!. The Condors now have a good Easterly. **Jeff**

Mon 17th Coney's Castle MR SCu HD

Word finally got to Dorset that Coney's wasn't just for ground bound rabbits and after an initial lone hesitation Steve and Mike joined me for a calm of the evening cruise among the holly trees and burrows., two ten minute flights; cold but astoundingly beautiful views, especially over the back. **Harry D**

Fri 21st Sandy Bay

A mixed bag at Sandy Bay today. First to light and sunny then to windy and cloudy followed by broken cloud and flyable! for a while any way as it dropped off and ended up on the beach. Had another go ended up on beach again. tried again this time soarable but wind off to east now so limited to the right of take off, still the sun was out and the flying was most pleasant, also flying DS TD JH & later PH DP **Dinks** I managed to arrive at Sandy Bay just as everyone was leaving. within a few minutes the fog drifted in AND the wind was still off so it was only possible to fly from TO to the corner. Two things were different from usual. 1 - I easily managed to inflate just back from the cliff edge of TO, previously there was usually too much low level rotor to inflate without assistance, maybe the slips and loss of scrub help. 2 - I found rotor at 30 ft as I landed on the rough grass between the main cut path and the front - no problem , just different. The wind didn't go round properly to the SE , as forecast, by the time I gave up at 1715. **JOJ**

Fri 21st Folly Hill.

Yes flyable. Arrived early with cloudbase on the hill and light wind. Around 11am c/b lifted, and so with only two of us< MR, and myself> quite a lot of space though light wind still. Sun then broke through and wind picked up, with small thermals kicking off ploughed field, AP arrived as did several Wessex members. Departed 2.30pm as other Condors arrived <DTewson, C Forsey,> but by then wind speed on t/o 15mph min. A good couple of hours flying today.**Jon**

Sun 23rd Brean Down

Beer Head (off to the west), Charmouth (no wind). I decided not to follow the hordes to West Bay and returned to the North. A walk up the horrible steps to the top and it felt perfect. Launched 50' down the front as the compression is considerable and cruised down the peninsula. Good thermals coming down the waterline as the mud released some heat, but also a danger spot as I soon found that there was a strong wind gradient. 400' above the beach and I started to drift backwards. (Not a good idea at Brean Down!) Bar full on, Tippy Toes and Big Ears and I eased out. Staying out, I cruised about enjoying views of the Bristol Channel. After a couple of hours, I landed back on top, in what I thought was a quiet spot, but I was engulfed in enthusiastic spectators, who all wanted me to take off again. The Tea Bag was greatly admired! **JF**

January - Valle de Bravo, Mexico. (While we were all coast bimbling Lord Sidmouth was off on his Annual Hols to Mexico. As usual he made a real meal of it and packed a treasure chest of experiences, both good and bad, into his month. I think he ended up 8th in the Comp - certainly top Brit! Get the full story directly from The Man! Here is a flavour of his trip. - **JF**)

Well as you might of seen competition did not end quite as well as it started. But I was more than happy with the result. I did manage to screw the final day GPS recording up, after making goal in 6th place, which cost me two overall places. Still I know how it works for next time. Had my best day yet on Wednesday, arrived first on hill before Norwegians, Americans and Mexicans. (You can forget them until at least 1pm). I launched into a screamer of a thermal to 6000ft above take-off,, which is at 7200ft and flew onto Toluca, a huge dormant volcano 60 km from take-off. I spent an hour there just circling the crater, wondering why no one had followed me into the air at take off. Later landed with huge grin across my face to awaiting car, back to town, only to hear the driver tell me how I had just missed a huge earthquake. Of all the bloody times to be in the air and miss my first earthquake experience. Still! It would explain what triggered such a great thermal. The day was then spoilt by leaving my flightdeck in the car hitching home. It had my video camera, still camera, brand new vario, GPS and radio in it!!! How good did I feel? But I still had a huge grin right across

my face. I have never been anywhere quite so consistent for flying. You seem to go to bed knowing you will be flying the next day. I missed one day in over twenty and frankly could do with a day off, if only to see something of Mexico from the ground. I worked out that, if it continues until the end of the month, I will have clocked up 100 hours in just one month. (I thought you did this every month from Jacobs! - JF) I should not be saying that as my glider is up for sale. I meant ten hours, Derek. (Watch out, Derek! Remember the G-Sport?) Well the competition was followed by two days fun fly- in and even if I still owned a camera I could not have done it justice. A small bottom landing field, about the size of the old East Hill take-off, surrounded on three sides by water and on the other, by half of Valle de Bravo in the beer tent, shouting "agua!", every time anyone got even remotely close to the lake. Gliders would come down, sometimes five or six at a time, all fighting for their patch of land, some just taking the water option as a crowd pleaser and throwing their reserve, spiralling into the water or some thing just to get their little moment of glory. One ignored both options and landed down wind in the viewing area with screaming Mexicans running everywhere, trying not to spill there "cervesas". I have never seen anything like it, even on a Condor site. This was followed by three paragliders, D bagging out of dragonfly microlights, one of which went badly wrong much to the delight of the now paralytic crowd. Then came the most amazing acro paragliding display I have ever seen. I could have filmed twenty minutes without having to edit a thing and would have had to replay it at half speed, just to get any idea as to what they were actually up to. **Paul**



I believe this pic is just one of Paul's many adventures in Mexico!

JF

Jeff's Coaching, Training & Comps Page



Be aware of the Wind Gradient.

Just a few thoughts on wind gradient, the dangers and the ways of spotting when it is present.

Sunday 23rd Feb 2003.

A typical flying day, with a forecast of Southerly winds, however, the met forecasts that I had seen varied between **9mph and 22-mph**. Rather a large variation. **(Warning Nr 1)**

Arrived at Beer Head, very fragile from the great party the night before. MRH, MH and SN were already there but the wind was off to the West. **The strength on TO was only 11 ish, but the orographic mist was racing along just a few feet above our heads. (Warning Nr 2)**

Decided it was too far off for Beer Head, so a convoy of probably 8 vehicles set off to WB. Stopped off at Charmouth on the way only to **find almost nil wind in the Car Park. (Warning Nr 3)**

Set off then to WB to find the wind on TO at around 14 mph, a tad off to the west. I was first to get the PG out, but became a little more aware of the possibility of a steep wind gradient when Jon H came up to me and said he measured the wind an hour ago **and it was 10 mph on TO and 22 mph at the top of the cliffs. (Warning Nr 4).**

As expected the following take off the lift was not too great, until you started to work your way up the cliffs. The strong wing became very apparent very soon so I stayed well out and low.

Derek followed me off, and stayed closer to the cliffs, he was soon just above the cliff tops with the bar fully on and appeared to be going nowhere. He recovered the situation with the ears and bar and eventually crept forward and clear of the cliffs.

I landed after a short flight, and soon others flew. It was necessary to be very aware of the gradient and stay low.

On that day there were many warnings of a strong wind gradient. The last one that became apparent was the poor lift in the 14-mph just after TO. This is due to the lack of wind below TO hitting the hill.

So Take Care and read the signs.

Towing.

I am trying to arrange a flying evening from the tow and aerotow at Smeatharpe, one day a week during the summer months. In the past we have run very successful training evenings, but I would like it to be more open for everyone.

As soon as the evenings draw out sufficiently we will get the wheels in motion.

Club Lectures.

We have had requests for a further lecture session aimed primarily at pilots who want to attain Pilot Rating. It will be open to all, so please come along and participate. This time there are several pilots from ND club who want to come along. I will try to select a bad weather day some time in March/April.

If you would like to take the Pilot examination following the Lectures, please let me know and I will arrange the Papers. Remember, your BHPA fees are less if you are Pilot Rated.

Comps.

Still waiting for the ideal day for the Wrinklies comp. Will advise when it is on. The Frostbite continues to be postponed due to the weather, I will advise when that is to be held.

Brass Monkeys is arranged for the 1st and 2nd March. Several members will be away in Spain, but again I will keep you posted

Jeff

Forthcoming Meetings

Maypole Inn, Thurloxton, Nr Taunton (on A38 Taunton/Bridgwater Road – equal distance from M5 Junc. 24 North Petherton and Junc 25 Taunton)

Wednesday 12th March

AGM and presentation of annual awards (sorry – coffee only – we ate the sandwiches by mistake at the last meeting!), followed by one of Jeff's excellent Condors videos. Change of date due to the number of members of the committee away in Spain!

Wednesday 2nd April - Unfortunately Chris Dawes and Judy Leden are cancelled for the April club night instead we have Doug Johnson from the Met Office.

Wednesday 7th May – Speaker to be arranged.



News from other clubs – North Devon

March 15/16 Dartmoor XC Coaching £FREE

Led by John Bate, Nationals runner up 2002, with other XC pilots. All welcome. Classroom clinic at Fox & Hounds, near

April 18/21 Lake District Long W/e

All pilots welcome. Camp, fly, share transport.

May 2nd-5th Mid-Wales British Open

Watch the comp, fly when they've gone. Try their route.... Or ... compete! Camp/B&B, share transport.

July ?? SE Wales Abergavenny/Hay Loads of hills for every wind direction.

Camp/B&B, share transport

June 29th-July 5th Piedrahita, Spain. Brit Open

Competent thermal flyers, flatland flying.

Watch the comp, fly when they've gone. Try their route.... Or ... compete!

Camp, share transport

August ?? Snowdonia Big Hills just 5 hours from home.

August ?? Oludeniz SIV/XC

Over warm water, and golden sand. Beautiful Place, 6800ft hill.

Interested? – Contact Chris

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“FLIGHT, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF AVIATION”

Skyman’s review of Harald Penrose’s autobiography “Flying with Fate” was inspirational. I checked the local library shelves and they had three copies of “Adventures with Fate” however the shelves were empty so the title remains a mystery. He also said “real pilots don’t read books”, an ideal present for the pilot who doesn’t read books (and sad old gits who aren’t real pilots) is the subject of my review “Flight 100 Years of Aviation” by R G Grant. It is a Dorling Kindersley Compendium, lots of pictures, diagrams and photographs interlinked with blocks of text.

The One Hundred Years takes us from the Wright Brothers, 17 December 1903, first “successful” flight so at the moment it could be called “99 Years of Powered Flight” but it is also very strong on “The Pioneers” and starts with Icarus, various early dreamers and includes Leonardo Da Vinci, Abbasibn-Finas and Octave Chanute. The latter records “a follower of Islam in 1178 jumping off a high building in a copious white robe stiffened with willow sticks ... fell and broke his bones”. There are amazing photographs of pre-1903 machines such as The Bat, the Aerial Steam Transit Company, Chard’s very own William Henson and Otto Lilienthal’s Ornithopters. The latter was of course in our own favourite territory when he gave up trying to flap and stuck to gliding “Lilienthal carried out more than 2,000 flights, the longest covering a distance of 350 metres... he learned that the air could be a treacherous medium to move through”. On 9th August 1896, caught in a sudden gust of wind, he was injured so badly he died the following day. His only control, ever, was weight shifting. It is amazing how he survived his first 1999 flights.

It gives excellently illustrated information about the, Lilienthal inspired, Wright Brothers’ experiments and the steady advances, pre World War One, leading to the great leaps made on the Western Front where British pilots were not allowed parachutes, the War Ministry had decided that parachutes might encourage cowardice. German logic allowed parachutes - to encourage pilots to live and fight another day. For further World War One flying information see “Sagittarius Rising”, C Day Lewis.

To summarise, this great big picture book has 440 pages of aviation interest with thousands of beautiful, mostly colour, photographs containing most of the flying machines of the last hundred years. I am enjoying it, though it is a reference book to dip into rather than a good read. It has the Duxford Imperial War Museum as one of its major contributors. If you haven’t been to Duxford and you are interested in flight it is just 10 miles south of Cambridge and highly recommended. More locally is the helicopter museum at Weston Super Mare. This book has a helicopter section that illustrates the exhibits there, another anorak’s paradise.

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Safety

NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

The following is from an experience at Westbay in January. Try to put yourself in this situation and give an "honest" opinion as to what you would have done. <and without the benefit of hind sight>

The forecast from inshore shipping and from the coastguards, was S/W force 2/3, for most of the day. Do you know the wind speed in mph/kms for force 2 and 3? Over night, it had been cold with a light frost, and currently on the prom the wind was around 1/2 mph variable.<9am>. The sun was bright, with a cloudless blue sky.

A couple of hours later, the wind at sea level was 8/10mph and steady, whilst at T/O wind speed was measured 10/13 mph and around 15 degrees to west of best. No white horses on the sea, Do you know the wind speed to produce these white horses and the significance to us flying the coast?

Stephen C took off, and I decided wind strength ok, to fly, so inflated my wing, turned around and waited for sometime to settle myself etc. A couple of times I was gently lift a few inches before being returned to the ground again. Shortly afterwards, I felt rather more lift so eased the brakes and flew, gaining height slowly around the first "nose" then up to cliff top around halfway towards the campsite. Progress towards Eype's mouth was not to bad with lift in all the usual expected areas. As this was the first time flying on home ground since Sept I took it gently, and at Eype, turned back towards the Bay, and repeated this for several beats. I felt that the wind was solid without being bumpy. Height along the caravan site was around 400 ft asl., <approx 200ft above cliff> and this is where I began to feel things weren't as expected. I was above the sea and still climbing so I employed big ears and used speed bar. I am still wary of using full speed bar, due in part, to other pilots various experiences, and to a greater extent, my own lack of experience.

The vario was still indicating a climb, using big ears and speed bar. I was aware of being unable to make towards Eype, without a rapid ground track towards the cliffs, so turned to steer directly away from the cliff. I was over the sea, but still not descending.,

with ground track indicating that I was going backwards, slowly.

You know the ground behind the cliffs, between the caravan site and take off, descends towards a narrow, deep track, and so will cause rotor, then the ground ascends somewhat, before dropping towards the Bridport bypass.

Now what would you do, knowing that you are going to go inland but still over the sea and only around 200 ft above the ground?

- 1 Release bigears, speed bar, then at your present height, turn around and fly inland as far as you dare, prior to turning into wind and landing.
- 2 Release bigears, speed bar and climb some, then turn and fly inland, etc, allowing you a wider choice of landing fields further back away from rotor.
- 3 Any other suggestions?

All points of view will be read with interest, as I don't think at this time, that there is a correct answer, but I'm open to your thoughts.

Just to add interest only one pilot landed at take off, two landed on Eype beach using big ears and bar, and one crossed the harbour to land on east beach.

Rightly or wrongly, I chose 2 and landing nearer to the bypass than to Westbay.



Jon Harvey

Bell Hill

As you probably know the club has decided to contribute £300 towards the Wessex club's fund for the purchase of Bell Hill. The club has consistently taken the view that it is important to contribute to securing sites when we are able, previously we have contributed to the purchase of the Blorenge and the Long Mynd. Many other local and more distant clubs have also contributed and lots of the Condors have brought raffle tickets as well.

I have flown Bell a few times over the years, basically its a reasonably high downland site facing North Westerly. XC potential is good, although you will need to work hard cross wind and thread round airspace to break any records - if you do you might find yourself in the seabreeze convergence over Brighton & beyond! If you take a more downwind course distances are restricted by the proximity of the coast, Swanage is about the furthest point.

Local flying is easy, with a long but shallowing ridge to the South, and a shorter bowled section to the North. The site is very PG friendly with lots of take off and side landing space, HG is probably a little more tricky with a small bottom landing and a "seasonal" top landing.

I have two abiding memories of Happy Days at Bell: one great "all day soaring" day in the spring watch

ing young lambs happily gambling in the old bunkers of the golfcourse below; and on another occasion of missing the "only XC thermal of the day" when the local skygod turned left and I tried right!

At present the Bell Hill site is still "members only" this will remain the case at least until the purchase has gone through. We do have a reciprocal agreement with Wessex covering many of their sites. For more details see their website (www.mighty-wessex.co.uk (how pretentious is that?)). If you want to go and fly any other club's sites the onus is on you to ensure you know the current situation and site rules, and that you abide by them ~ best plan is to phone the club contact before hand - for Wessex speak to Adrian Bishop on 01962 842 621 ~ please be responsible ambassadors for the club ~ we want to retain reciprocal rights for everyone's benefit.

Mark Aplin



Not Bell Hill, but fun winter flying at Coney's with Alan Blasdale, Paul Hook and Mark Reader Hoer

Feb Meeting

A good turnout for the first meeting at our new winter venue, for those who weren't there, The Maypole at Thurloxtton (A38 between Taunton and Bridgwater) John as our



excellent social secretary did us proud by organising a talk by Rob Bayly, an extremely eminent balloon pilot. The forty plus audience were well impressed with his exploits, mainly surrounding his 1992 Chrysler Transatlantic Challenge epic with Don Cameron

He introduced himself with a few assorted ballooning exploits such as flying at heights of 10-20.000' and also at night, sounded like great fun. Also his 'long jump' record of 276 miles from Norfolk to Looe.

The story of the Chrysler Challenge accompanied by some very impressive pictures was certainly eye opening. The balloon was helium and hot air, the helium in a sealed sphere at the top of the balloon with air below being heated conventionally. 77.000 cu ft, supporting a 6' x 4' capsule with 8 x 80 litres of propane, makes paragliding sound positively safe!

The five balloons left Bangor, Maine, USA, at 03.12 on September 16th and Bob and Don landed five days later at Figueira da Foz, Portugal on September 21st.

Duration 125 hours and 2,602.5 nautical miles, coming second in the race and breaking the British record. Amazingly, although the speed was slow, over Nova Scotia and Newfoundland only 10kts, with an overall average of only 22kts when they would have liked 50kts, and having all started together, they landed a thousand miles apart.

The flight itself was full of drama, the Germans ditching two days into flight, after heavy rain, as it collected on top of the balloon. The Dutch ditching just off of Cornwall and the Americans missing Europe and landing in Africa, getting the duration record of 6 days, in the process. Five days into the flight Bob and Don had a scare, the balloon sounding like it was going to fail, "it made the same noises we get 'destruction testing' ". They even put their 'chutes on! In the end they decided that it was frozen water in the material creases defrosting. They arrived safely over the coast of Portugal, descended to sea level and used a drag rope dropped in the water to slow them down as they approached the beach. Safely down, they had to cut the balloon to release the helium to stop it re-inflating.

Bertrand Picard won the race by 6 hours and Bob and Don still hold the record for this size of balloon.

The talk finished with plenty of questions and a practical demonstration of hot air balloon basics, followed by coffee and food.

Phil

Trophies – to be awarded at the AGM

The Condors Trophy - longest ever XC from a Condors site Still Simon Murphy - no-one's beaten his 80 miler in 1989!

Brian Miller Trophy - longest coastal o/r in pairs Jeff Hoer & Mark Reader-Hoer 15.94r

Somerset Aerials Trophy - Condors sites XC league winner Robin Campbell & Mark Phillips 36.21

Mary Glanvill Trophy - furthest inland flight from a coastal site No entries this year (trophy held by Jeff Hoer?)

Wonder-Clamp Trophy - 1st XC over 5 miles Robin Campbell & Mark Phillips

Bob Bridge Trophy - longest XC of the year from all UK sites Brett Wright

Rosie Bowl - Longest XC of the year from the Condors winch No entries this year

SMFC Trophy - All UK sites XC league winner Brett Wright 67.93

Winter XC league Trophy - winter XC league winner Jeff Hoer & Mark Reader-Hoer 15.94r

Brian Wright Trophy - aerotow XC league winner Brett Wright 67.93