

AirHeads



www.dscondors.co.uk

May/June 2003

Hotel California 2003

Sat-

Our longed for holiday date finally arrived, the weather forecast actually looking promising for the next week. Fingers crossed, our intrepid group met at Bristol Airport at the ungodly hour of 4am. Viv, Me, Jeff, Chris, John, Lyn, Martin, Andy, Richard, Hedley, Lester and Tony managed to get through the airport bleary eyed and onto the plane. No flight problems, arriving at Malaga mid morning, to glorious sunshine, picked up hire cars, and Hotel C by mid-day. Quick sandwich and off to Otivar for a quick warm up flight, only 'cloud on the horizon' was the chance that the weather would be too stable and seriously inverted. Everyone had a leisurely flight down to blow away the cobwebs. Off to the coast, for the chance of an evening sea breeze flight. Arrived at La Herradura to find a number of canopies in the air, all quickly joined them for a pleasant hour of ridge/thermal floating around the bay, landing on the beach rounded off the first day.

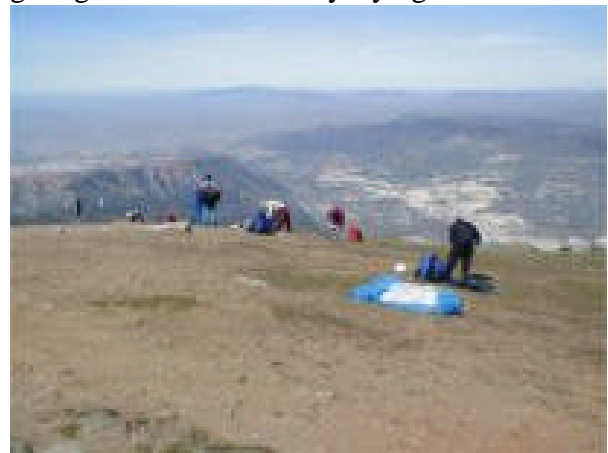


Sun-

A repeat of yesterday with some weak thermal, then off to the coast, not so good, just weak ridge lift and very busy. Not everyone inspired, those who flew didn't for long. Dodging tower cranes and a sky full of gliders does not inspire.

Mon-

Off to a new site, Cenes de la Vega, in the Sierras near Granada, not inspiring, landing was on a rubbish tip and the inversion looked like it was building. We all had a flight down which was depressingly smooth. Jeff, Chris and Martin decided to can it and go up to the ski resort. As usual this was all that was needed - one sacrifice is good, but two had to work - as the sun moved overhead it managed to heat the valley sufficiently to allow thermals to break through, giving us some nice lively flying.



Tue-

Off to Cenes again, but change of plan, due to the inversion, divert to La Sabinas, a higher beautiful site, above the snow line. So hot that we were all walking around in the snow, in our shorts - obligatory snowball fight - Tail wind to start, but soon came on. Landing field on plateau below with the option of an xc to previous site (Cenes) 11km away. Jeff having gone to the market with Chris, was late and missed the change of plan - just a little stressed- For my sins I forgot my boots and had to fly in my sandals, ideal for the snow! Ski socks and sandals, what the trendy English pilot is wearing this year, not. Everyone got ready and launched, some finding lift, the less experienced ending up in the plateau landing field. The oldies waiting

till last to fly, hoping for some improvement as the sun came overhead. The van retrieved the others from the plateau as we finally took off into some pleasant thermal. Strong enough to climb above take off then head out to have a stab at the xc, really quite good lift in places, but corresponding patches of sink. Once you got higher it was much less hassle, and still pleasantly lifty. Had to land on top, en route, for a call of nature then on down to the landing field. Andy, Martin, Me, Jeff and Lyn made it. Others had a second flight from Cenes.

Wed-

High cloud, knocking out the thermals, so off for a couple of high ttbs first at Orgiva 3,500' appx. Valley and take off wind in opposite directions, with shear in the middle. also likely to change at short notice, so careful assessment of each pilot/glider before launch. OK for the higher performance wings, but wiser for slower wings not to fly. Into the bar for a coffee then on to Los Tablones for some ridge/ thermal soaring. Scenery in the mountains was lovely, shame that some of the landings were so grotty, shades of Wales! Landing on this site was in a dried up river bed, which also housed loads of 'travellers' living in their customary squalor. Vehicle signs and plates indicating that they were from Yeovil area! Found the local bar for a well deserved beer.

Thur-

Otivar looked promising, bright and hot, thermals starting to work. Jeff in his customary fashion set off for the coast. The rest of us enjoyed some good thermals, with strong climbs, becoming rougher with height. Martin had his first significant collapse on his Booster, I was right behind him at the time circling in a good thermal, the body language said it all, everyone had a great day. Viv and Lyn decided

to have an argument with the Armco and Richard with the ground.



Fri-

Off to Otivar again, low cloudbase, 200' ato, not looking promising, turned out to be quite buoyant, but dropping all the time, ended up landing and adjourning for coffee. Returned later, but no better, some of us sadder ones had another flight, and Tony decided to have an argument with the bushes.

Sat-

Last day, everyone winding down! Otivar again! Still low cloud, but no other options available, some sunshine and weak lift below cloud, nothing exciting, except Lesters attempt to collect some pine cones to take home with him. Finally off to the coast, nobody was interested in flying, so down to the beach for a final coffee. Everyone subdued as we collected our gear and headed back to the airport. Uneventful trip back, landing at Bristol late in the evening.

Great holiday, good weather, company, food, and every day flyable, is this a record? Nobody had any real problems, apart from a few bruises. Some of us booked for next year before we left, is that sad?

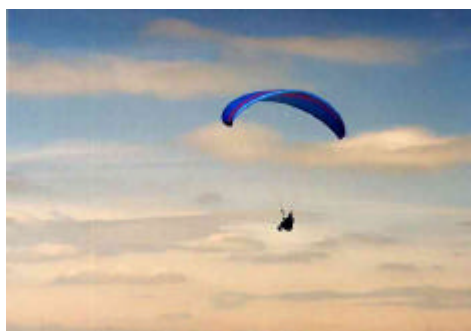
Back home again from an amazing trip to Spain, having enjoyed good weather, good food, good flights, and yet something doesn't seem right!

Phil

"Perhaps it was a dream and not real at all. Does one really have eight days in which one flies every day?"

I feel sorry for those pilots who have nothing tangible to remember their holiday by, those without bruises & scratches. For them it must be hell getting to grips with reality once more!....."

Tony Davie



Mexico 2003

As always too late but around the same time every year, just when the British flying season comes to a depressing end, I finally start daydreaming about January's flying destination. Always made harder by waiting for the first frost to come, before competing with the rest of the nation for the earliest possible flights out of Britain after New Year and the hotel closing (usually I am leaving before our last guest).

Stuck with the next problem of where to go for the best flying and after meeting many people in Australia the previous trip, all talk was of Brazil 2003. All very well however, travelling alone would not be the same as an organised tour. So a quick ring around the Jockey and Bob sky gods of this world who came back with, come with us but not till February. Not prepared to risk tackling father to take February off, I decided to do it alone. Another problem with travelling January, you have to travel so dam far to get to a paragliding destination in the middle of its flying season. Still, I guess five weeks away more than makes up for any long journey.

With all this in mind I didn't want to go back to countries I had previously visited, what with the fear of being recognised from any flying scares I may have caused or been a part of!, so I decided on Brazil.



Although flights were scarce, I was getting everything sorted and all was going to plan until I received a call from a friend Dave Morris from Boston who promptly informs me, great place, easy and cheap everything and I think he meant everything but it will be wet in January so you'd best make it February. I was just about to come

out with so I'll leave the paraglider behind then, when he suggests I come with him and 20 friends from the New England paragliding club to Valle De Bravo – GREAT – all sounds very civilised again. Dave is also a weather forecaster with access to satellite info from all over the world, so seemed like the last person to argue with – Mexico it is then. So after much pleading with Trailfinders, my flights are changed to Mexico City.

Transport, accommodation and all arrangements are all taken over by my new adopted New England paragliding club. After an 11 hour flight to Mexico City via Washington DC, I was met by Mandril, an exceptionally good Mexican Acro Pilot who runs a large and really relaxed pilot house, where pilots from all over come and go on a daily basis. This was followed by a terrifying street race through the heart of Mexico City, all to get to Valle De Bravo in time for a tandem flight that he was giving that day. Watching him later purposely full stall his tandem passenger made me decide that I might have been the better passenger. Later that night I met up with Dave and what I thought were all his American buddies. How wrong could I be as it appears that everyone flying around Boston is a selection of German, Swiss and English, all just out there for the U.S. dollar.

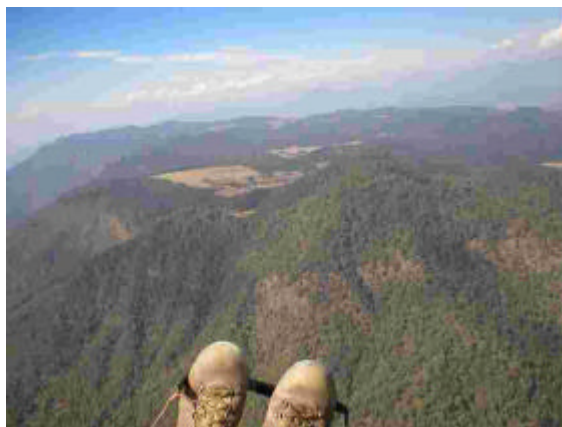
First impressions of Valle De Bravo were very different to that of the Mexico I had imagined. It's a town grown up around a large lake, which accounts for half of Mexico City's drinking water. Looked more like a slurry pit for three headed fish, but every house was equipped with it's own private swimming pool and tennis court and all the other mod cons associated with Western life. This was a retreat town for the Mexican City business high flyers, not the miles of squalor previously experienced travelling through its capital. Later taken to Madril's house to get settled, a lovely laid back house on the outskirts of town, with different rooms, ranging from bunk dorms to double enuites, all for the price of a campsite back home.



The next morning, we were all briefed around the breakfast table about flying by our now guru Madril. Our bus would pick us up each morning and drive us to El Pinnion take off, about 20 miles over a mountain range to the South. This with its south-facing slope, would become soarable by 10:47 each morning.

The usual route was to get high over take off, along with the 50 other pilots during the week and many more with the inclusion of Mexicans at the weekend. This was made all that much more interesting by the foreigners deciding to change directions on alternate days, with Mexicans refusing anything but clockwise, it did get rather heated at times.

From there it was a glide to Alpinion itself, a spectacular lump of granite about a 1000' high, completely sheer on all four sides. A good glide would bring you into it about half way up on the sunny side, it was like swimming next to a super tanker. Constantly weight shifting and opposite turn away from the rock face with the first incline



of any collapse. It was a gradual climb out, made very easy by all the circling eagles. No sooner did you get to the top, a small plateau, about the size of a football pitch and you would be blasted by the lift coming off all four sides off each wall for a teeth clenching rocket ride to cloud base. From there it was a glide towards the mountain range between take off and town, with a few little hillocks on route in case of getting low. You didn't want to go down as this meant a huge walk out or an expensive truck ride from the hill farmers, who seemed to be making much more out of any paragliders than any of their crops and insist on payment in U.S. dollars – WELCOME TO MEXICO!!!. From there if you're approaching around midday the mountains are working so well that the wind will be getting drawn in from the cold lake meeting with the wind from the

south. Everything is in convergence, nicely sign posted for you with the newly formed cloud streets. From here you generally have two options, a turn to the left and play on the loads of spurs that all seems to run south facing, as if god willed. When getting tired of that, it's a climb up to cloud base and a cross wind glide out over the lake with usually 3 grand to spare where Mexicans are usually found doing all sorts of crazy S**T, down to or often into the water. Alternatively, a right turn following the convergence until the lake plays no part and head off on a one-way trip towards an active volcanic range, which creeps up to a plateau and Toluca, Mexico's highest city at 12000'. Meanwhile, back at the lake the aim is to land before the herds start arriving, as this now turns into a spectator sport. It is often feasible that 90% of those who took off will land back at the lake over 20 miles away, but the fun comes when paragliders of all experience come to land on a small patch of grass no bigger than East Hill take off. When the water is low sometimes 3 abreast, area surrounded on 3 sides by the lake and the other by a beer tent full off Valle De Bravo screaming (Agua) every time anyone comes even remotely close to the lake.

The main thing to be said about flying Mexico, it certainly is consistent. Some how you just seem to go to bed knowing you will be back on the hill the next day. The first 2 weeks were all totally flyable days, after which there was a tearful mass exodus of New Englanders. Followed the very same day by an influx of 50 Norwegians, with a reputation that they have built from their previous 7 annual trips. I got to know a few of them well, including Ronnie their national coach, whose constant aim was to improve peoples skills and setting the days task insisting we all flew together.

The remainder of the trip we flew consistently for a further 3 weeks, missing only 1 day due to the weather.

So returned back to good old England after a very enjoyable months stay, which will make it very hard to choose somewhere different next year.

If anyone is tempted to try this paragliders wonderland, unfortunately I am not sure if Madril's is still an option for a base, as I was recently very saddened to hear that Madril lost his leg in a motor cycling accident.

Paul Hook

STOP PRESS – More Mexican Adventures from Paul at the June meeting in Sidmouth – so save your questions up for him!

John's Flying Diary

Sun 2nd March. Batcombe

Well, the forecasters managed to get it right today. Cath and I arrived at Telegraph Hill around 1030 and though straight on w/s 20 aver, 25 max, so went for a walk. On returning to the carpark found Harry, and James Lynch (red ribbon), so went to t/o, and now well flyable - 15 mph average. All flew for ages in lifty conditions and as these calmed down, others arrived, Stuart Martin, Guy Anderson, Adrian Coombes, and Stephen Corben. Conditions were cyclic, so either everybody flying, or grounded. Enjoyable afternoon had by all, and flyable from around midday till 4pm. **Jon**

Sun 2nd Woolacombe

Went to wollys (16c) - sunny, wind off to south, but flyable bit of thermal coming through. Flyable for a couple of hours until the wind picked up and went more south. I had just over an hour in all with four flights. Also flying were Jay, young Derek & very old Derek, Nigel + several other North Devon Pilots. **Dinks**

Sun 2nd East Hill

Super afternoon at East Hill. Gentle thermals one after another to around 600 ft. Old Derek, Paul and Craig flying until wind eventually eased off. Richard Yea arrived too late to fly and Harriet left 10 minutes too early. Our Sidmouth John Jones also paid a visit but hasn't had delivery of his new Z one so couldn't fly. **DP**

Sun 2nd Bossington

Strong (18-24mph) on arrival (2.30pm) - but it eased and I was joined by Brett(!) and COURTNEY!!!! Lovely afternoon, an introduction to a new harness and the re-acquaintance of Paul's old Proton in gentle conditions. Very pleasant to see the others out again. We flew until the wind dropped at about 5.15. **JF**

Sun 2nd Selsley

Now I live in the netherworld of Bristol, I had a wonderful day at Selsley. Cloudbase was 3500. Thermals of 2m/s, quite rough and nasty on the hill, but the Hornet SP and me handled it fine. Wish I'd checked my map pocket before I left the house, as I ended up leaving a cloudstreet and landing after 20km, whilst trying to avoid non-existent airspace! The thermal seasons begun. Whahey!! **Eddie**

Sun 16th Coney's Castle

Well Coneys came on mid afternoon, sort of! Initially very much SE and more but around 3pm came on but very light and scratchy, though occasionally it did pick up to gain height to 200 ft ato. These cyclic conditions lasted till around 4pm then died. Waited just in case, then 5ish it worked straight on around 12/15 and so Keith and myself flew until sundown, getting to some 500 ft. Pilots HD, JH and KB. Lovely way to end an unflyable forecast, again! **Jon**

Sun 16th Pandy

We called into a couple of pubs en route home for sustenance after a very pleasant day at Pandy. so were a bit late getting home. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, JH, MRH, JF, PF, VF, MA, PP, MP, AB and RN all flew, although the hangies struggled and ended up in the landing field. Lyn, Riley and Cath enjoyed the walking. All the PGs had enjoyable flights in the glorious sunshine and interesting thermic conditions. **Phil**

The HG's struggled - You're right we did - Struggled to get out of bed, struggled to drag the gliders up the hill, & then struggled to stay up - One of us even managed to struggle to land without bending aluminium. After 5 weeks of no flying - my 20 mins felt marvellous. **Mark P.**

Mon 17th Coney's Castle

Several of us at Coneys from mid morning till about 2ish before it dropped off and went round to the south: Derek S, Martyn H and I had the best of it with about half an hour or so at around 400-600ft ato. Others there included Jeff H, Tony D, Paul H, Richard ? (lives in Membury?), Derek P, JOJ. **Harriet**

Tue 18th Coney's Castle

Arriving around 0930 to find many buzzards soaring the site, wind straight on and 12/15 average, but cold. Flew in bumpy conditions, for around an hour, with c/b around 600ft, but as the sun started to break through wind lightened and cyclic, until 3ish when sea breeze set in. Visited Charmouth but only 4mph so called it a day. JH, MR, DT, RS, and TB. **Jon**

Tue 18th Sandy Bay

Set off for Coneys but PH said wind had gone S so backtracked to Sandy Bay. At 1300 it was ESE 10 -12 and I got beyond the main cliff but couldn't get to the top. A hasty run back to the corner and a safe top landing, then as the others arrived the wind veered and dropped and that was it, apart from an abortive try later which resulted in a beach landing - nice weather for it though. **JOJ**

Thu 20th Bossington

Smack on at 8-10mph, perfect. Visibility poor with strong inversion at about 1000ft asl. Very good lift to about 200-300ft ato, but even the very large bonfire the far side of the Porlock valley couldn't break through the inversion, with the smoke just billowing out at 1000ft. I had two very nice PG flights - best of all they were totally uneventful (makes a change). No-one else there except a couple of model glider flyers, and the occasional buzzard, kestrel, etc. **Harriet**

Thu 20th Telegraph Hill (Batcombe)

Arrived early afternoon to find SC, JM, MP already in the air, A good afternoon, mostly cyclic until late when it did

pick up well, others arrived during the afternoon, DTewson, J Lynch, S Martin. and S Cuddihy. **Jon**

Fri 21st Brent Knoll

Brent knoll was a good choice after phoning the fliers on Coney's. Surprisingly smooth for this rough site . Flew with TC (Tim Crundwell, for those who have not seen him for a while). Got above the top easily until the wind went off to the North. **Andy**

Sat 22nd Coney's Castle JH, JJH, MRH, HP, RS, LM, JM, MP, LG, AT, DH, RS, MP, and more

The strength at Smeatharpe was gusting to 15 mph, and I'd had a call from Jon H saying it looked good for Coney's. Eventually got there and everyone was standing around. Mutterings about horizontal air and no lift seemed to be bandied around. However, there were buzzards thermalling. Harriet was soon off and quickly gained height. The wind was around 14 to 16 mph on TO and I soon joined her. After about 5 minutes MRH took off on his new

Booster. Conditions were lively but good. Mark got to the best height 650' and HP was just below. The wind was going off to the south and eventually we all landed. After a while the wind came back on but reached 20+ Roger Slaney flew his HG and enjoyed 30 or so minutes before bottom landing. Goodish day . **Jeff**

Shortly after everyone went home on Saturday the wind dropped back to 15-16mph on TO & smack on. Our Zagis were going up well so I took off on the HG and had the hill to myself. Quite up & downy but thoroughly entertaining. Decided on a bottom landing as RS had offered to come down & pick me up. Ended up wandering around fields with no sign of any roads anywhere whilst Roger was driving around the roads unable to find me. I eventually got to my car & then drove round & round the countryside unable to find my glider for a while & we both ended up back at my glider about an hour later - Thanks Roger for the help & thanks to Nick for the telephone navigation assistance. **Mark P**

Sat 22nd Pandy JF, Jay, PF, VF, Dinks + 25 South Wales Piolets (Must be Welsh! - ed)

Well another great day at Pandy. short flights to begin with, getting longer and higher allowing further travel down the ridge. Retired to pub at 5pm all lown out. **Dinks**

Sun 23rd Bucknowle Farm MRH, JH, MK, JM, LM, HP, PH, CM, PP, DS.

Humble Pie, Grovel Grovel, Non flyable site, Waste of time coming here. But it wasn't at all!!!!. The site we are talking about is **BUCKNOWLE FARM** you know the one! without a hill. It was fantasmagorical today. It needed a couple of sacrifices to get it going, and as soon as they left the wind dropped and the thermals were a popping.

Mark and I were that close to getting away, but the inversion just didn't make it happen. Flew from

around 13:30 to 17:00 in initially good thermic lift to steady ridge lift.

Excellent day.....AFO. The bad news is Coney's is closed for the lambing season. Probably a couple of months..... **Jeff**

Sun 23rd Beesands

Good pg flying at Beesands today. I was the first there, arriving at 1030 and took off in 12 -14 mph ene. Very buoyant air for 2 or 3 hours. My first flight was 2 hours 'till I got a bit cold, and reached at best 429 feet ATO. Several SD and one? Condor turned up most pg's but also 3 hangies. Wind dropped off later to 8 mph and went slightly to south and the only hangie who'd rigged, flew later in the day and landed quite soon after. **Bob Moore**

Sun 23rd Mere

SE forecast, sheep at Coney's so watched rugby and got to Mere bowl at 5pm. HG's flying, PG's waiting. It dropped enough for two Avon PG's to get in the air, they'd had enough by the time I had untangled at 6.15, it was still gusting 10-18mph, but got off easily enough (still impressed by my new Z-ONE's ease of handling on TO). Had 30 minutes of lone flying as the sun set over Alfred's Tower, as close to paradise as anyone could reasonably hope for in March. **Harry D**

Sun 23rd Pandy

Second great day at Pandy, where was everyone?? Can't cope any more, all flown out. Jay, Dinks, Viv, Me and Mr Glum on Saturday. Flew from the time we arrived till we went to the pub, still people in the air at 18.30! 30 plus pilots flying. Only Viv, Mr Glum and Me on Sunday, with appx 15 others flying from 10.00 until 15.30 **Phil**

Mon 24th West Bay

See Safety!

Tue 25th Raddon

Managed to get some air today. Wind smack on but not very strong. Only able to soar a couple of beats before making a b line back to hill for another go. Wind cycling max about 9 mph, but took the advantage of some ground handling practice. Had the whole of Raddon to my self... **(No surprise there then! - ed) Steve Cliff Sparky**

Fri 28th Pandy Jay & Doinks.

15 to 18 on top take off with a bit of north in it. Pulled wing up on A's & D's fine let go of D's and took off (not meaning to) good penetration. flew along ridge side landed then flew back. Landed back on top going slightly backwards. Wind on take off 18 plus. Hung around a while joined by local who came up from bottom take off, had 2 more flights but wind was going more north so hill stopped working so gave up and went home. **Doinks**

Sat 29th Bickleigh

Went to Bickleigh again this afternoon and had 2 hours of good light wind flying. 2 to 5 mph on take off gave me enough to get off. Thanks to the birds, I managed to stay

up. **MH**

Sun 30th Farway

MRH,DH,PF,VF,DP,Dinks,AB,PH,James,JM,MK,MP,G B,and many more

Second day at Farway, but this time vis was good, and there was no break at half time for the wind to pick up. Got to the hill at 09:30 and DH had already flown, it was rough!! Soon PF and VF arrived and it just got better and better. Good to see GB out with his Atos, and also a league pilot turned up with a HG. Both having good flights and top landing. When I left at 17:00 TFO MP arrived from North Hill to fly his HG. DP got away, though many of us declined the chance. **Jeff**

Went for the afternoon shift. You had to time your flight to fit in with the cycles of lifty flyable air and in shifts with other addicts. Great time had by all. Bonus seeing the deer herd in the woods of The Country Park as I flew over them. **Dinks**

Sun 30th Denhay Farm. JH.CH. CF.

Direction NE mid afternoon and seemed ok. One minute light scratchy, and the next, hey rocking and rolling. Interesting to say the least, also using a demo FB wing, rather than my Apco. Around 3/4 hr before wind direction changed to N so packed up. **Jon**

Sun 30th Bossington

Not as much flying as at Farway, but a very nice day out away from the crowds in glorious sunshine on Exmoor. Simon and I went to North Hill (too far off to the east), then Porlock (groundhandling and ground skimming in top field), then back to North Hill, where Brett joined us for alpine launches and nil wind tbs. **Harriet**

Mon 31st Beesands

Good flying at Beesands this afternoon. E'ly 12 -14 mph. Had an hour 'till I got cold. Two other SD members there. **Bob Moore**

Mon 31st Bucknowle Farm DP,PH,LM,JM, and HR

Cracking day, marred only by the profusion of blue and green Sports. Thermals not quite big enough to get away but almost. Flyable all afternoon until Hedley arrived. **JM**

Thu 3rd Farway

Derek Paul Richard Harry Tony and Alan all at Farway today. Strongish wind and thermals but good flying all day. Still working well at 5:00 PM when we left. Looks like another good day tomorrow. **Uncle Derek**

Thu 3rd Coddan

Arrived at about 2 ish after working a night shift. I went to take off. The wind about 2 to 5 mph, sometimes not even that. Jeff turned up as I was ready to take off. I got into the air and went up for the next 20 or so mins. It was up to about 800 ft and down again. Finally I got in to a big one and off I went heading south towards the Moors. I got

down to about 200 ft agl at one time, but got back up again. I am not sure how far I went, maybe 7 or 8 miles. Thanks for the lift back, Jeff **Martyn**

Bad day really. Work didn't work out as planned, but I was at Lynmouth and free. Looked at Countesbury, but no wind. Headed home over the beautiful Exmoor, and the sky was epic. Dropped in at Bretts for a cup of tea. The sky was still amazing. Spoke to MH and PH both said they were going to Coddan. Despite work calling I was unable to resist the road to Coddan. Light winds but good and thermic. Martyn was soon off and steadily climbed away. I answered the phone a few times (Work!!) trying to hide the wind noise. Eventually took off and struggled as Martyn went over the back. Side landed in the highest dry bracken you have ever seen. Eventually got back in the air and climbed to 500 or so feet. Phone ringing. Crap!!! Top landed and the phone went again. This time it was Martyn. He was down around 12K's away. Aaaaarggg!!!

Packed up and set off to retrieve. Discovered my sunglasses were missing. Shock Horror. Expensive and reasonably new. Picked up Martyn. Went back to TO and found the sunglasses. The day was finally improving. Then the phone started again!!! **Jeff**

Thu 3rd Bossington

V light winds on north coast despite local Minehead forecast of 10mph northerly. Nothing at North Hill or Selworthy but little puffs now and then at Bossington. I had a 10 minute ttb with a couple of beats maintaining at around 100ft below t/o (I even climbed about five feet at one point!) and Simon did the honours on retrieve as a birthday treat. **HP**

Fed up with work on such a good day, and just so happened to have glider in car. So got to Bossy around 4:15. Just me and the rabbits, 12mph smack on and smooth... Had a lovely hour, loads of lift, and then to top it all flew back to car park with 540f abto, last third back was messy again. **Jay**

Thu 3rd Arlington? & Eggerdon

By 11 am the sky looked classic - but alas I was too disorganised and the wind to North East. By 3pm we had climbed the North face of the hill by Arlington, Bridport. The good old wind speed meter read from 6 to 18 mph and the TO is littered with semi mature trees and a slope that looked less steep than the glide angle of my glider. Mike made a half hearted attempt at taking off - so it was my turn up to bat. An "excellent" take off followed by close inspection of the undergrowth, saved by turbulence, a bit of a tuck, more turbulence, a good lurch back, more turbulence and a good view of the hospital. What fun, first flight of the day and I managed to find a grade 7 on the sphincter scale. During a quiet moment managed to big ears down to 100ft above the landing field and bounced around in more turbulence. Mike followed. Packed up and spent a happy hour at Eggerdon and then a few beers. **Stephen**

Fri 4th Draycott Sleights

I was about to launch when a helicopter flew directly over my head at about 75ft-100ft. The helicopter then proceeded to fly circuits each time flying directly over take off at a similar height. He may have been performing touch and goes on the gliding club airstrip behind take off but struggling to gain altitude in the little Robinson? After a while he flew over me once again waving, and flew off into the distance. Then we flew in some excellent soaring conditions for the remaining afternoon, very smooth for this site. I was just packing up when he returned and did another circuit. For future flying here it would be worth checking the gliding club first for helicopter operations prior to launch. The gliding club is aware of us and our 'unofficial' site and are very friendly. **Tim**

Sat 5th Bickleigh

Arrived a bit late, took off into a good one, up to 700ft in no time. I made my way back to the front and landed. It was like that for about an hour, then a nice one came along and up I went over the back, as the ground dropped away behind the hill so did the lift. I was at about 1000ft, there was no cloud and the lift was dying, so decided to land. Never mind, I had to try a new vario anyway. Not a bad day. **Martyn**

Sun 6th April Denhay Farm. JH, CH, MR, CF

Arrived early pm, wind 12mph NE, max 15mph. Soon after speed increased somewhat and also turned more easterly, and bumpy but a happy couple of hours airtime, Unfortunately as this is a very sensitive site and at landowners insistence, only 8 named local pilots are permitted here. Very sorry to everyone else. **Jon**

Wed 9th Bickleigh

Left work at 2pm and headed on down to Bickleigh. Wind was about 12 to 15 mph on takeoff, got into the air and was surprised how strong the lift was. I flew around for over an hour in 3 to 6 up lift. I did leave the ridge a couple of times and headed over the back but the lift just died away. I must be doing something wrong! A very lively afternoon flight. **Martyn**

Sat 12th Folly Hill

At first was rather bumpy <late morning> but later mellowed somewhat until late afternoon when it was only just flyable. Several Wessex pilots as well as DT, MR, JH, TB. **Jon**

Sat 12th Sandy Bay TD & JOJ and JP.

At 1330, the wind was 13-16 at TO. Tony's wind streamer at TO showed straight up the face. My TO right at the front was unusually easy apart from dodging the brambles which have grown over the take off since last summer, when laying out (I will take gardening tools next time) Wind, as expected was really off to the E and it wasn't possible to get to the main cliff, but ok to the far end of the firing range. I did a straightforward TL at the cliff edge by TO, feet in the brambles but canopy clear and JP took off, starting near the fence and running thro the rotor, into the air 30ft before the face. He flew to the main cliff,

so something had slightly changed. D tried several spots to TO but couldn't find clean air to inflate. At the cliff side of the mown path, the wind was coming up the slope from the firing range, up to head height, but higher, the wind was all over the place. TD took off from the front where the air was more reliable and I followed him. By 1430 it was easy to get to the main cliff, though my best height of 200 ft above the cliff top was not epic, there was plenty of totally smooth lift everywhere. I decided to land at the front of TO where I hoped the air would be smoothest, after several attempts to position myself, using big ears, I was maintaining my position with about half brake at the front of TO, descended to about 4 ft agl and I stalled in the windshear/rotor about 15 ft behind the cliff edge. No problem, I landed gently on my feet but was rolled over backwards by the force of the canopy. Shortly after, JP landed neatly near and parallel to the fence facing E. The curious thing is that at GL this would have been a down wind landing and his canopy must have missed (or been above) the bad air. TD decided to land on the beach. **JOJ**

Sat 12th Bucknowle Farm

LM,AT,AB,JM,LG,HP,DS,RS and me

Scratchy at first, but it got good later. Dennis Salt turned up with a scrounged glider from Simon, and amused all with his ground handling. Got in the air a couple of times. I landed in Dereks back garden. Good day. **Jeff**

Sat 12th Cwmbran Mountain Air

It was bloody fantastic. Good decision to try Wales, East south east forecast, so tried Pandy but off to the south as we suspected. Off to Cwmbran, arriving to find it off to the east!! One paraglider taking off and climbing out, looking good. Nobody else there! Number one wind dummy took off and scratched around, no real ridge lift but plenty of broken thermal activity, looking very promising, so landed to encourage the others. John got off and bimbled around. Dinks and Viv encouraged to get canopies out, surprisingly didn't look over impressed.

Could be something to do with the fairly large dark clouds and the wind varying from 0-15 mph as the thermals cycled through at appx 6 minute intervals. Took off and scratched around again, bitty, then a reasonable surge, threw in a few 360s, bloody hell that was a quick grand, might as well give this a sniff, just kept winding it up to cloudbase at 4,500' Really impressed with the vario pegged on 9 up, until John came whistling up with me.

Lost sight of the ridge. Watched Dinks and Viv on the ridge big earing down, problem! heading back, called on the radio to be told all ok and why aren't I going xc.

Permission granted off I went, John already out of sight. Back up to 4,500' into cloud, John says 6.200' asl, sounds much better, a bit like kms rather than miles. Now I know why PGs do it like that. So cold at base that I flew out into the sunshine and horrendous sink, what goes up must come down. Lose out, warm up then climb again. Good climb out over Crumlin then on to Tredegar, low over the town absorbed watching the fair, warmed up then climb back up to base, very cold. Head off up into the Brecons, climbing over the ridge so that I could see Talybont

reservoir, hit some horrendous sink over the back and was looking at landing, in the middle of nowhere, with what looked like a large rubbish dump/ disused mine/traveller encampment below, not my ideal choice. Saved again, climbed up and over the south east end of the Brecons easily and headed on to Brecon itself. To cut a long story short 38kms later I had to wind off 2,000' over a little village at Brecon 'cos it was cold and I was dying for a pee, also there was a convenient bonfire providing a perfect wind indicator, smoke all over the place, still plenty of activity. Just landed as the phone went, John had landed at Merthyr golf course and where was I? No idea, had to walk into the village to find out. Thanked the owner of the bonfire and sat in their garden drinking tea until Viv and Lyn arrived. I could quite get used to this, what have I been missing. Dinks retrieved John from the golf course and all off to Abergavenny for a beer. **Phil**

They just need managing these men - you nick their car keys, send them off and organise the retrieve. Dinks and me had an unsupervised afternoon ridge bimbbling and just being seaside pilots!!! Lyn and Riley enjoyed the mountain climbing, views and the sunshine, ate their sarnies in the car and went to sleep! - **Viv**

We arrive with the wind quite a long way off to the East. Walking up, a lone glider takes off and quickly climbs out over the back. Around 2-ish, good thermic cycles coming through, and Phil takes off. Phil lands and I take off after the usual wind up on take-off. Off the hill, flying confirms what we had seen. Very little ridge lift and the house thermal to the left of take-off. Dinks and Viv take off. I must land to get some water, sort my vario out and have another slash. The thermal arrives as I am about to touch down, straight off again and start climbing strongly. Phil is already high and I centre in a good core and cruise up with the vario screaming. Phil making almost as much noise on the radio about his climb rate. The Proton thermals beautifully, while I just slouch there admiring it, to 4560'ato (6150). Peak climb rate on the vario 1350' per min! Phil seems to want to return to the ridge as I see him heading back, Viv gives him permission to go and he starts another climb south of me. It is bloody cold flitting about in the cloud and I wander off to the West to have an aerial tour of the valleys. I know them from the air and with no map or money, I want to know where I am. Hands freezing, I cross wind for a large blue hole over Bargoed. Down to 2000'ato I warm up a little as I take two or three climbs but leave them at 3000'. I pass Pontlloftyn, where I flew last week. There is a glider on take-off, pointing straight along the ridge! Catch another screamer and I am soon back at base surfing along, but very cold. I must be getting old. I can see Merthyr coming up and my drift is taking me into the Brecons. Back circling in the blue to warm the hands, another climb and I am back to 4000' north of Hirwaun. I am too cold. Look for the sun and there it is over Merthyr. I have had enough and go on a 4000' into wind glide reaching the sun at 2000' and ignoring two or three climbs I land on the top link of the Merthyr Golf Club. Hopping about I do a fair imitation of ML at North Hill. A golfer comes up. "Where have you come from?" "Cwmbran". "My God! That's 35 miles."

" Perhaps by road, not as the crow flies.". All very pleasant. Phone calls to Viv, Dinks and a very hyper Phil. Excited even by Phil standards he wonders where he is. Still on cloud 9, Mate! Thanks to a retrieve by Dinks, we gather in Abergavenny for the festivities. Great to be back inland - the coast can wait until the winter. **JF**

Tue 15th Bucknowle Farm

5-10mph, SE, lots of low skims, soared the trees to left of t/o 3 times, managed to get about 40ft ato at best and even did one 360! Landed above the fence each time. All in all about 15 minutes airtime and a lot of standing around on the hill with the glider inflated waiting for the right moment to take off. Not what you'd call epic, but hey, it's still better than being indoors on a day like today. DS, JM and LM arrived as I was leaving. **Harriet**

Wed 16th Bucknowle Farm

Bucknole again, very similar to yesterday, but without the 360! LG, AB, HP and Dinks. **Harriet**

Thu 17th Farway & Bucknowle Farm

Started at Farway, nothing spectacular and the wind went well off to the east. So off across the valley to Bucknole, met LG in the field with wind on the field and quite strong. Not great to start with +50 ft but later it picked up and made it to 280 ato above the trees to the right next to the farm. **Andy**

Fri 18th Bickleigh

Managed my first XC today from Bickleigh arrived at the site wind smack on and 10-14 mph av 11mph. Gave m howey a call to bring his glider, he said hes on his way with a radio glider and to asses the conditions as the farmer said it was quite windy on the farm. Got my glider out ready for take of and howey arrived there was a lot of thermic activity and the glider was chucking its self all over the place, I waited till the thermal had gone through and took off at first I did not really go ballistic as I expected but just ridge for a while half expecting to slope land as the lift was weak then things picked up and the thermals were coming through and they were punchy and narrow and before long howey was a dot on the ridge I pushed forward as penetration was getting difficult and I was almost gale hanging. At a 1000ft ato things were really getting rough I had a few tip deflations but nothing big and as thermals hit me my glider would drop back and then surge forward and making lots of loud rustling noises, in all a very good learning experience I was also accompanied by some birds of pray making it look easy. I decide to go xc as the thermals were good and there were a lot of them so off I went with a 1000ft the thermic activity did carry on for some time over the back but got less and less till the usual thermal generator spots like ploughed fields ect did not work. There was nothing so I glided as far as I could, the land slopes away over the back and is uneven typical Devon land so my glide path was extended but low altitude got the better of me and I had to look for a landing spot without power lines, houses ect ect. And so I picked a deer farm to land in :-)

As I approach the farm which looked more like a country

park with a lake I noticed one field that was suitable and had no deer in it. So I landed there I then turned around to see 100 deer staring at me, I thought I was safe because there was a fence between me and the deer but I failed to notice the open gate till later as I was trying to phone howey for a retrieve, which made me pack my glider up in record time but I was lucky the deer were more afraid of me than I was of then so all packed up I then started to look for a gate out off the farm, and I could not see one at all the area was like cattle ranch with fenced fields and dirt tracks fenced off to it was like the bloody crystal maze after a bit of walk and dodging deer I took a guess as to which way to walk and finally got to a large steel gate with a padlock on it so I had to climb that one with my pack on as it was too high to chuck it over, after I got over that I came to the main gate out to a country road this too was padlocked and was at least 10 ft high and had spikes on the top as I got over that one I noticed a sign on the other side "DANGER ELECTRIC FENCE" thank god it was not switched on or I would have been there all Easter. I must home in on electricity or somethin. **Steve Cliff Sparky Pussy Newstead**

Fri 18th Farway

Went to Farway as the threat of strong gusting winds didn't influence me to travel any further. Turned up at 10 o'clock to find 3 PG's making the most of the early smoother winds (TD turned up just after) & decided to casually rig the HG, eat breakfast and have a quick zagi. The wind picked up, averaging 19mph (so I was told ?? - it seemed more like 12-25) & off to the east a bit, so I reluctantly took off after a bit of arm twisting from DS. Not much lift - topped out at 180ft and lots of sinky holes resulting in some tree skimming, pretty rough as well with gusts that kill all your groundspeed and then you suddenly lose height as the gust drops. Unintentionally landed after 20 mins as a result of a large sink hole over the trees dropping me from 140ft to 50 ft and then into the rotor behind the trees which made for some panicky flying as I scraped over the hedge & just got into the flinty ploughed field behind take off. Decided to call it a day after TD pleaded with me not to take off again & went home for a snooze in the garden.

Mark P.

Tue 22nd Raddon

The wind was smack on but light. I had about 5 or 6 flights to about 100ft in 2 to 4 up lift. Maybe I should have gone to Beer Head? Not to worry! **Martyn.**

Tue 22nd Beer Head

Very light when I got there, so it was the old game of how long do I fly along the fence before I go down or nip back in on top? **Dinks**

Nice to see Vince McCloskey out too, having his first flight for three years. **J.M.**

What these great big fish (JM & SM) failed to mention, is that while they were drawn inexorably beachward, us two sylph like birds (that's Lyn and I) were soaring effortlessly

for 3/4 hour before the wind died to a point where even the seagulls started flapping, and we floated down to join them. Earlier in the day conditions were a little bit stronger, apparently, and several others flew, but no-one crossed Branscombe. JH, DS, DH, PH and passenger, DP, (any others before we arrived?), Dinks, HP, SM, LM, JM, VMcC, and Russell Marshall going for an alpine launch ttb in nil wind as we clambered back up the cliff to go home. **Harriet**

Tue 22nd Sandy Bay

Not the 10mph Southerly forecast, but Sandy Bay was soarable and the crossing to the main cliff just possible, i.e. the first try ended with a beach landing. Nice gentle flying but a bit cold in and out of the light orographic. Managed a conversation with the golfers and flew with a buzzard. **TD & JOJ**

Tue 22nd Nant Y Moel

Phil gibbering with pleasure. Viv getting used to the bumpy bits. About 10 went over the back before we really got going. Nice at 1500'ato about a mile in front. Phil was even higher and further. A little gentler than Cwmbran last week, only recorded 1000' per minute climb but still very pleasant for about six hours! **JF**

Wed 23rd Pandy

I have rejoined the idlers who delight in upsetting the Club workers by sending out tedious tales of flying while the righteous gaze longingly out of the window. So here goes again. Joined the daring duo on Pandy after a morning earning a crust. Blown out! "It was great earlier." Returned to the hill after some R & R and strong lift extending right across the valley. Went past the bottom landing with around 600'ato - started with 500' into a 20mph wind. Difficult to land, eventually resorting to big ears at terminal velocity. Interesting! Cloudbase around 6500, but didn't get near it. I am getting to like this. **JF**

Thu 24th Beer Head

Arrived at Beer Head to find 4 glum looking faces waiting for the wind to drop (JH, PH, DP & Dinks). Rigged the HG & took off - a bit slow heading westward but going up all the way to dunscombe cliff despite the airspeed of 32-36mph too 900ft ATO. Straight across the gap at Sidmouth arriving at Jacobs ladder at 100ft ATO (Thank god that vario started to beep !) back to 600ft & around to Ladram, chickening out & turning back with 300 ft left at the stack just before Ladram beach. Heading back there was orographic starting form and drift inland from the higher points but the downwind leg wizzed by at a straight & steady 500ft and soon arrived back to find Jeff & Dinks still looking a little glum. Nice evening flight with the whole of the coast to myself. I'll send the Grid references when I've worked em out tomorrow Harriet, as it is getting late. **Mark P.**

I wasn't going to write this on up, but on reflection it shows how I got my priorities wrong. Arrived at Jacobs 1610 (it says on my carpark ticket) and because PH & DP had opted for Beer head on the ground that it was too

light, I thought it was probably a waste of time and bought only an hour on the meter. Despite the reports of 20mph at Beer head, it was 11 max at Jacobs and I was able to impress the tourists with a quick and easy TO, the lift was so good that I would have been too high to hear the applause (if there was any). Cautiously made my way to Peak Hill, well out to sea in case my poor old PG was unable to deal with the wind and I didn't want to be embarrassed landing in the grounds of that mansion just behind TO, Slow progress because it was off to the West and probably over 20 mph at 700ft. Going went from smooth to lumpy as I neared Peak Hill so I thought Salcome cliff might be more friendly. Rapid transition across the gap, still in lift over Jacobs at 750ft, I reached Salcome Hill in record time, level with the top, a first for me. That bit was easy, so I thought I ought to try going the other way. It needed 3/4 bar to make any progress and as I was worried about running out of parking time I decided to land. In fact it was no worse than it often is when the wind is a bit off and I made an easy landing on the beach, halfway across the gap Back at Jacobs, I was getting reports that everyone was still sitting it out at Beer Head and rather belatedly I realised that no one was going to give me a ticket at 1710, also with the conditions, a trip at least as far as Seaton seemed possible, so I went for another go. This time I had big problems getting a stable inflation and when I succeeded, on take off there was no lift and I had to top land in front of the fence. Not wishing to be beaten, I had another go and having cleared the fence went straight down to the beach with hardly a hint of lift.

Moral - if you are up and flying well, to hell with parking tickets just go for it. **JOJ**

After writing off Beer Head this afternoon as too windy, Paul (desperate to fly his new glider) 'phoned me at 8.00 p.m. to give Jacobs Ladder 30 minutes. Wind strength and direction was just about OK so Paul took off. I followed 30 seconds later smiling as I heard Paul cursing as he slowly went down on the beach. Circling overhead I watched him pack up, race back to takeoff and take off again. Down he went again, this time I was too high to hear the cursing. He packed up and returned to takeoff for a third attempt but by this time the street lights were on, it was getting dark and the wind was easing. Not one of Paul's best days but he really pissed me off the other day when he flew from Farway to B & Q at Exmouth without me. Anyway I had more than my 30 minutes and landed and packed up at 9.00 p.m. Watch next months Skywings for a good deal on a second hand, hardly used Vulcan. **DP (Uncle Derek strikes back! - ed)**

JF

Forthcoming Meetings

Wednesday 7th May - Maypole Inn, Thurloxton, Nr Taunton – Will Owen from the Met Office - definitely not to be missed by all aspiring XC pilots!

Wednesday 4th June – Change of venue to the Royal York & Faulkner Hotel, Sidmouth – speaker to be advised

News from other clubs – Wessex

Due to the largesse (£300!) distributed in the Wessex direction towards the Bell Hill fund we have been invited to their Mid-Summer Bash on Fri-Sun 20th-22nd June at Lyscombe Farm (8 miles NNE of Dorchester). Camping, Bar, Loos and PG/HG winching arranged so far.

Contact Dave Moores 0870 744 1643 for further details. The idea is to party and fly (either tow or local hills) for the 3 days!

Jeff's Coaching, Training & Comps Page



Training

The longer days enabled a concentrated effort on getting Robin trained up to become a Tug Pilot. This will make a big difference to the Aerotow group as we have been struggling lately getting Tug Pilot out. Many of them have lost their licence and need a GFT to get back in the air.

Three dummies were available to be the guinea pig behind Robin. Unfortunately, disaster struck for Mark, as he fell over and fractured a bone in his hand, whilst chasing the towline. This left it me and Harriet to fly for the rest of the evening.

The Club lectures have definitely not been forgotten. We will be joined by North Devon members, but I am waiting for the details of the Pilots who want to take their exams afterwards.

We need crap weather as well, (a bit like what's outside now).

Competitions

With the BCC very much in the frame, we are just waiting for the right weather. Current Teams are as follows:

Paragliding Team AA	Phil Fouracre Dinks Lester Gordon Harriet Pottinger Mark Reader Hoer Martin Howe Viv Fouracre	Capt
Paragliding Team A	Andy Tew Derek Sadler Martin Kellaway John Milner Steve Newstead Lyn Milner Jeff Hoer	Capt
Hang Gliding Team	Robin Campbell Patrick Peglar Mark Phillips Simon Murphy Roger Slaney Simon Bell Gerry Mc Cann	Capt

Preliminary rounds are to be held in the SW for Paragliding, and the prelim's for the HG are to be in SE Wales. It's been a few years since we as a club took part in the Airwave Challenge, now the British Club Challenge. I think Harriet and I were the last to take part flying on a Dual HG. We actually did very well.

The club has been runner up in the past, and we could do it again. There is a lot of talent in the Condors, it just needs focusing. This year we may just do it.

Not much more news.

Jeff

Editor's Comment

Looks like John's going out with a bang! This must be his longest flying diary yet. Is he giving Jeff something to follow? After all he has been saying that "we are owed a good year", who better to record it? He could very well be right, So far very promising, some fantastic flying, good spring weather and good meetings, especially the last one with Judy Leden and Chris Dawes, thanks to JM. Next lecture on meteorology could be perfectly timed, especially for those on the Lakes xc course. We also have three teams entered for the BCC, is there no stopping us? Could this be a Condors year??

Viv has asked me to remind you that subs are now due - £25 and excellent value for money. She is compiling her "list of shame" which will be published in the July Airheads - better not be on it! Please fill out a form and send with your cheque, it helps to keep the club records up to date and means we know how to contact you.

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

Doesn't look like there's much to say this month!



robinc@eurobell.co.uk

Going weightless

Ohhh that wonderful feeling, no not when you've just gone into full stall but when you get on the scales and you're a tad lighter. In a bid to get into the weight range of my glider I'm doing a sponsored slim for the Devon Air Ambulance. The deal is that I have until Anncy to get down to a decent flying weight and that I am sponsored per pound weight loss but any weight that I put back on between Anncy and the Christmas Do I have to pay back -not to everyone that has sponsored me but to the Devon Air Ambulance. So the Air Ambulance win both ways. Well, end of the first month, I'm 14 pounds down so Devon Air Ambulance are £350 up. Still not too late to sponsor me. Just tell me or e-mail me the amount per pound. Doesn't matter how much, I'm grateful for anything. Thanks to the following who have already agreed to sponsor me: Lyn Milner, Harriet Pottinger, Jeff Hoer, Chris Hoer, Paul Hook, Lester Gordon, Andy Tew, Richard Sheridan, Mark Hoer, Jon Harvey, Keith Boniface, Mark Phillips, Nick Adams, Martin Kellaway, Johnny Heriz-Smith, Patrick Pegler, Derek Sadler, Harry Dike, Dinks Nutbeam, Viv & Phil Fouracre, Simon Murphy, Hedley Ritchie, James Lynch, Denis Salt, Derek Posta, Simon Bell, John Fielder, Guy Anderson, Graham Rainey, Robin Campbell, Craig Parker, Stephen Corben, Mike Penny, John Owen-Jones, Mark Aplin, Jay Taylor.

John Milner

Safety – Becoming a better pilot

According to unexpected contractual obligations (i.e. small print), I *was* supposed to write a quick reminder about spring flying + how we're all generally less safe than we think. But reading my Skywings, I see this has already been pretty much done to death this month.

So instead, some thoughts loosely inspired by bits of the John Welch article on "becoming a better pilot".

If you haven't read it, do. He has some wise words on a number of points, in summary –

- * *really* learning from (using) your mistakes
- * the difference between "external" (skills) and "internal" (psychology) problems
- *distinguishing causes and symptoms
- *goal setting

Some years ago when I was just learning to ski, I was lucky to get some advice from a very experienced skier. One thing she said that really stayed with me was that skiing is "really only controlled falling, and not always even that controlled". The point is that the *illusion* of control can easily get the better of you: The apparent ability to monitor and control a couple of dozen things at once actually depends on a lot of sub-conscious processes, which is why its hard to learn: Your actual conscious awareness is more limited, and you can see this when one distraction means you miss something unexpected in another department.

This definitely applies to flying too, and perhaps most of all to HG landings...When all goes well, you can balance a whole set of factors, being aware of everything without even thinking too much, and you arrive "just so" at the end of your neat little dance. It feels great. But some of this control is an illusion, and landing is often the least forgiving part of flying, simply because you don't get to control the rate at which things happen. So it's a classic area for messing up when you "ought" to be able to cope.

Well at any rate, *I've* certainly had that problem (and seen similar troubles elsewhere)!

The point of all this is that with this in mind, and after reading the Skywings article, I tried just summarising the nastier bits of my own flying over the last couple of years.

The collected evidence is a bit surprising + not very flattering! :-

- 1) although mostly I get down fine, *every* incident I was unhappy about involved landing badly
- 2) every incident was under stress -again, not just any stress, but in *every* case the first flight on a new site
- 3) the actual errors divide pretty evenly between lack of foresight (poor planning) and lack of flexibility (poor awareness!)

None of this is actually that surprising, given my known strengths + weaknesses ("doesn't always cope well with the unexpected"). What is a surprise, maybe, is that I've only now seen the pattern.

On re-reading the John Welch article, it finally struck me I've been too content to consider my attitude "safe" just because I'm rather cautious about when+where I fly. But actually, everything I got wrong I can actually do, and *would have got right* another time. So probably, I should be more aware of the mental process, and not just assume problems are down to lack of technique, experience or currency.

So . . . this actually looks like a classic example of what John calls an "internal" factor: It involves mental attitude rather than skills. And it now seems rather obvious the "problem" is with focus + stress management, not really with landing at all. (In fact, maybe -with a better attitude- I should actually be seeking out more challenging situations?)

Now I've seen it, this actually "feels" right + makes more sense. So this week's favourite tip has to be "review your experience + look at it from another angle".

Anyone else like to own up to this kind of problem, or associated blind-spot ?!?

Patrick Peglar

Safety - Room to manoeuvre

I have had some concerns related to me about Low Airtime pilots and air space. It is not just red ribbon pilots that need consideration when flying and landing, we also need to allow for some of the lower airtime pilots. Some of our smaller sites especially we need to give them adequate room in the air and when landing.

One incident reported in the last two months with the details below accompanied with some useful information:-

Blown over the back at West Bay , an extract of Harriet's Flight on the 24-3-2003.

When Jeff and I arrived it was blowing about 15-16mph on t/o with a few white horses on the water. It seemed to be dropping a bit so we went to get our PGs, and prepared to sit and wait for a better strength. By the time we'd got back up to t/o it was blowing about 10-12mph and still dropping gradually. I launched first but only got a ttb to the beach, shortly followed by Jeff. We hauled ourselves back up to t/o. 20 minutes later the wind seemed to be increasing again a bit, up to about 13mph. John and Lyn arrived and we then measured 12-14mph - I think Lyn got one reading of 15. John took off first and seemed to climb without problem. I was soon in the air too and climbing well. This very soon turned to total lack of penetration. Still climbing and going backwards despite big ears plus full speed bar and I knew I was in trouble. I was about 200-225 ft above the top of the cliff at this point. So the choice was to hang on as I was and land in rotor somewhere close-ish behind the top of the cliff or turn tail and run for it, knowing I would hit rotor at some point on the way. I took option 2 and got a thorough trashing with big deflations, big surges, thrown around a lot. Flying as actively as I could, and with one eye on my reserve handle. The glider managed to remain flying enough to be able to keep it facing the way I wanted it ie more or less into the real wind direction (as opposed to the rotor direction as that was anyone's guess). Crabbing sideways/downwind towards the Caravan Park, as the slope from the top of the cliff down to this was less steep than the field next to it. I had hoped to get further away from the cliff edge, but the deflation's etc had meant some rapid descent along the way. I left the reserve in its bag and the glider stabilised enough at about 30-50ft ato to land on my feet without falling over or being dragged, but I dare say that was as much down to luck as anything else.

John had meanwhile managed to big ears his way down to the beach at Eype. (It's probably worth noting that he is at the heavier end of the weight range on a Hornet (DHV2), than I am on my Matrix (DHV1/2), so both these factors will have given him better speed and penetration than me.) Dinks took off and went straight down to the beach. By the time I'd packed up and got back to take off, the wind had dropped by 2-3mph again.

I also think that as 3 of us have now had this happen at this site, that everyone should be particularly aware of the possibility of it happening to them - one day it might happen and the person concerned may not get away with it.

Stephen Corbens reply to Blown over the back at West Bay :-

1.If conditions are strong try taking off low down on the SW side of TO and keep below ridge height until you have established the wind strength.

2.If it looks like you are going backwards and lowish head for Eype, The ground behind, facing south west, rises slowly with a large amount of space to land. The only problem is a power cable half hidden in the trees. (Watch Out).

I did try to head for Eype but to very little avail - the wind was very slightly off to the west so penetration that way was less than nil once over the edge. Once I'd gone over the back I did keep myself facing that way as much as possible though, for the very reasons you cite. I didn't see the cables but fortunately this didn't become an issue. (It's hard to notice hidden things when you're being chucked around like I was.)

3.If you have any height try and get at least two or three fields back, its much less rough.

4.When I get blown back, I think the first "hit" is the worst and comes with little warning. I try and keep internal pressure with some brake (hard I know when going back!) to add stability. I did just this - knowing it was going to come but not knowing exactly when was the only really stomach churning bit - after that it was a matter of riding the roller-coaster and concentrating on staying the right way up. I've found the danger times are when the wind is slightly off the hill and strong. The conditions are fly able but if the wind direction changes so it is on the hill the compression builds up rapidly. Also take care on a building sea breeze, this would fit with conditions yesterday, although it didn't seem overly strong at 13-14mph. I hope this conversation will help prevent the same thing happening to anyone else.

Note:-

Please can all club members keep me informed about any incidents of safety concerns. I can also be contacted via email at andy@tewa.freeserve.co.uk if you do not want your details on general circulation.

Andy Tew

March Meeting - AGM

Minutes

1. Apologies

Bryon Davies, Simon Murphy & Robin Campbell.

Jeff Hoer stood in for Robin and chaired the meeting, which about 30 members attended.

2. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the 2002 meeting were read out, which were approved as a true account of last years meeting.

3. Treasurers' Report

Summary of treasurer reported as follows - Club funds stand at £ 1130.

Apart from the usual expenses for sites fees, training, etc, there were some larger outgoings from normal this year, mainly £300 donation to Wessex club to assist the purchase for Bell hill and speakers for club nights.

The issue of raising club fees were discussed, it was agreed that this coming years sub will be raised from £20 to £25, by the vast majority when put to a vote. It was mentioned and generally agreed that the current club subs are exceptional value at present, however if more club funds could be raised by raising membership subs, and ever the possibility of purchasing a site was to come up, there would hopefully be some club funds available to help with the purchase. There was also a feeling that club fees could be raised to £30, which still would represent good value for membership.

An idea was presented to the meeting, that the club should donate to the Air Ambulance via a direct debit scheme of a £1 a week, where the club could stand to win £1000. This will be raised at the next committee meeting.

The club agreed that paying additional costs on entry to club nights for occasional special presenters who demand higher fees was fine.

4. Sites Report

The sites officer reported that at this time, there was not much to report on with the exceptions of.....

East Hill - concerns that the forestry commission may plant trees near/at take off.

Farway - parking in the fields in wet condition has caused some members to be towed out, so park out on the road if wet.

Telegraph hill (Devon) - Still looking for a take off.

Cony's Castle - is now being used, thanks to site clearing by some members. The sites officer agreed to organise some other site clearings.

Charmouth – Still no progress on permission for the higher take off, however the lower take off is only suitable to Paragliders.

Woolacombe – Not a Condors site, however it was noted that if you fly there a lot, it's worth joining north Devon's club at only £11, to help with their club finances.

5. HG Safety

Generally last year was good with and nothing of note to report on.

6. PG Safety

Also generally a good year safety wise, apart from a couple of incidences regarding reserve deployments.

7. Competitions

Not much to report due to the frost bite being cancelled, and the Smoothies verses wrinklys be postponed, however not due to lack of support.

There were a few spot landing comps, which were much enjoyed by those involved.

8. Airheads

Phil and Viv Fouracre, are the new editors. Phil stated Airheads needs contributors especially new ones, for it to remain successful. So send the editor articles big or small on anything that may be of interested to the readership.

9. Election of Committee for 2003.

The committee agree they will stand again for the coming year, with the addition of Patrick acting as HG Safety and Andy as PG Safety, both roles are handed over from Phil. Harriet will remain HG XC claims, he will now be a member of the committee.

The 2003 committee will be

Chairman	Robin Campbell
Secretary/ Club Contact	Jay Taylor
Treasurer	Viv Fouracre
Sites	John Fielder
HG Safety	Patrick Peglar
PG Safety	Andy Tew
Low Airtime Contact	Phil Fouracre
Competitions	Jeff Hoer
PG XC Claims	Mark Aplin
Social Secretary	John Milner
HG XC Claims	Harriet Pottinger

9. Any Other Business

A vote of thanks was noted for the committees work put in last year.

Also a vote of thanks to Paul Hook for his hospitality for the Xmas bash, was proposed and carried.

Finally at next club night Judy Lenen and Chris Dawes will be the speakers, £5 on the door.

10. This year's winners are ...

The award of trophies was ceremoniously performed.

11. Pilot Profiles

The evening was finished off with Jeff's most excellent video of Condors Pilots Profiles, plus other club flying videos.

Jay Taylor

Club Contacts

Position	Name	Telephone	Mobile	e-mail
Chairman	Robin Campbell	01392 428152	0771 3651831	robinc@eurobell.co.uk
Secretary	Jay Taylor	01823 490703	07767 614429	jays_postbox@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Viv Fouracre	01823 490724	07966 230206	Vfouracre@aol.com
Sites	John Fielder	01275 343927	07970 629551	john@rocketprintman.co.uk
HG Safety	Phil Fouracre	01823 490724	07850 216464	phil4acre@aol.com
PG Safety	Phil Fouracre	01823 490724	07850 216464	phil4acre@aol.com
Hanglider XC Claims	Harriet Pottinger	01823 601202	07811 567918	harriet@eclipse.co.uk
Paraglider XC Claims	Mark Aplin	01373 864918	07753 829626	mark.aplin@talk21.com
Competitions	Jeff Hoer	01404 850489	07787 104792	jeff@hoer.freeserve.co.uk
Airheads	Phil Fouracre	01823 490724	07850 216464	phil4acre@aol.com
Low Airtime Contact	Phil Fouracre	01823 490724	07850 216464	phil4acre@aol.com
Social Secretary	John Milner	01460 240476	0771 3600232	crosstree@vosnet.co.uk
Condors Web Site www.dscondors.co.uk				

Devon & Somerset Condors Paragliding Award Winners "2002" Season 1st November 2001 to 31st October 2002

PG XC League Trophy

(Awarded for best total distance over 6 flights from any UK site)

Won this year by Steve Corben with 104.80km
Second Paul Hook 77km
Third Jeff Hoer 54.2km

Paragliding Trophy

(Awarded in 2000 for best total distance from Condors Sites only)

(Awarded in 2001 to Jeff Hoer for a total of 111.95km in his first year of XC flying on a paraglider)

This year awarded to Paul Hook and Derek Poster for their "best ever Condors Paragliding thermal XC in pairs" of 47km from Batcombe.

Runners up were Lyn and John Milner with 20.8km, also from Batcombe.

PG XC League – Condors Sites Only

First Steve Corben 104.8km
Second Harriet Pottinger 30.8km
Third Paul Hook 30km

Best Rookie Trophy

(Awarded for best single xc flight by a pilot in first year of xc flying)

Won this year by Lyn Milner with 20.8 km from Batcombe
Second Viv Fouracre 17km from Westward Ho!
Third Harriet Pottinger with 11.2km from Batcombe

Best XC Flight from a Condors Site

(Awarded for best single xc flight from a Condors site)

Won this year by Paul Hook for 25km from Farway – setting a new site record as well.

Best Winch Flight Trophy

Not awarded in 2002 – no PG XCs were flown from the winch this year.

Welldone Trophy

PG equivalent of the "Wonderclamp".
Awarded for best 1st thermal flight in the season.

Won this year by Lyn Milner with 20.8 km.
Others doing their first thermal PG flight in the season
Harriet Pottinger with 11.2km from Batcombe

Winter XC League Trophy

We do not have a trophy for this, this year only one pilot entered flights – Steve Corben with 19.6km from West Bay.

Harriet

For Sale

For the discerning few we have embroidered 'Devon & Somerset Condors' badges - gold lettering on black background (very tasteful!) - suitable for flying suits, caps, or sweatshirts £5 from Viv. (Limited supply only)