

# AirHeads



[www.dscondors.co.uk](http://www.dscondors.co.uk)

September/October 2003

## Verbier Summits

August 2nd (first day): woke up at 7.30. View from bed revealed first little cu's forming on top of east faces of mountains opposite.

2 morning flights: La Tournelle - 4,000ft ttb, 33mins - some weak little climbs/sustaining over ridge/spine/trees. Croix de Coeur - 4,000ft ttb, 25 mins - more sink than lift but pleasant.

1 afternoon flight: Les Ruinettes - 4,000ft ttb, 1hr 35mins, max 3,175ft ato. Saw eagle circling over Simon. Incredible views 360 degrees - Mont Blanc, Matterhorn, glaciers. Best climb at Mt. Gelee, glide to Bec des Rosses, cross valley, scratchy then rough climb 800ft in gully but started feeling airsick [altitude sickness] so went to land.



August 3rd: 1pm, Les Ruinettes - rougher and stronger than yesterday but middle of day and better conditions. Climb to 2,200ft ato after quite a long time scratching, flew over to Mt. Gelee but no lift and lost all height going back down gully/bowl and round to front again. Bit of scratching then climbed up again and crossed to Bec des Rosses. Over spine got very good climb to cloudbase, max 12up, 3,474ft ato (10,008ft amsl). Crossed valley with lots of height and aimed for gully/hanging valley up to Grand Combin but no lift so dribbled back along to

spur near landing field. Some quite good climbs there and up gully on other side and saw two eagles. Flew out into middle of valley into wind to lose height but gained 1,000ft without trying - some biggish clouds forming over mountains so a bit worried (others later said there was no problem and I needn't have been concerned.) Found some sink and did gentle spirals to descend. Feeling queasy again, plus headache, but not as bad as yesterday. 2hrs, 12mins.

August 4th: morning - saw marmot on the way to Savoleyres - about 500ft higher than La Tournelle. Flew to spine above trees this time and got some nice lift - a bit bouncy and some little deflations. More amazing views. Saw several eagles and 2 or 3 red kites. Two eagles locking feet and jousting.

August 5th: Sky developing early. V. hot. Flew from Savoleyres am. Max 2,591ft ato (cloudbase) over teeth - good climbs, not too rough and nice cloud forming in cycles. Shared thermal with sailplane. After 45 minutes or so, crossed valley to west side and flew along towards Champsec hoping for lift. Simon did rather better, but I did get a bit over spur near end of wide bit of valley almost opposite landing field. Gradually lost out though.

After lunch in Verbier did some window shopping (too expensive even in sales!). Overdeveloped sky - huge cu-nims all merged together, rain and thunderstorms. 8hr, 13 mins airtime so far this week.

August 6th: Rough, strong, but never got very high or onto top cliffs. Simon was the only one who did and skied out to 2,400-ish ft ato. Overdeveloped again in the afternoon.

August 7th: Morning flight from Savoleyres again. Climbed well up over pinnacle and top ridge to max 2,529ft ato. Others all lower. As Simon and Neil (Routley) started to climb up I set off on glide to Mt. Brun on other side (approx 6k), aiming for top of ridge. Arrived after leg aching glide on speed bar and scratched along to rocky outcrop in slightly sinky air all the way. Rough with some small bits of lift by rocks but then strong sink and had to move away. Made mistake then by carrying on in same direction, with slope rising to right of me, instead of going back to left where ridge was lower to try to get back above it. Some more rough, small bits of lift along the way, but mainly gradual sink, so continuously losing height and had to go and land at Champsec. 1hr, 8mins. Simon specked out and got almost to top of glacier at Grand Combin!

Afternoon flight from Les Ruinettes - scary! Cloud development now quite strong and fairly windy and gusty on t/o, but Stuart and Mike felt it was fine to fly. Good reverse launch straight into lift then a bit of sink, then stonking lift. One big collapse quite low down then small cravatte - 5 or 6 good pumps got it out. Climbed 1,800ft in first 6 minutes of flight without even trying very hard - mainly concerned with keeping the glider from collapsing in very rough air. Climbed steadily (and strongly most of the time) to max 3,303ft ato (9,934ft amsl) but didn't want to go higher because clouds building fast and lift very strong in places. From in front of Bec des Rosses spine decided to call it a day and pushed forward over valley. Still a lot of lift and spent the rest of the flight (2/3 flight in total) searching for sink. Big ears and spirals (unsteady because of rough air, surges, etc). 1 huge collapse when I fell backwards with glider behind but it recovered well and I damped out the surge as it came forward again - scared though. 48 mins. Landed at Champsec. Phew! Huge cu-nims to west and east, so very glad to be down - it had overdeveloped much more quickly than everyone had expected. Had good views over glacier behind Bec des Rosses but too busy flying to take any photos. Max 13.8 up and 14.6 down.

August 9th: Last flight of the holiday. La Tournelle. Slow-ish, rather bitty climb over

spine, finally to max 2,191ft ato. Much better, more efficient glide to Mt. Brun than previously. Rough lift over rocky outcrop, plus sink, ending in huge asymmetric (60-70%) quite low over chair lift, so then flew away and on to large tree covered spine/shoulder further along valley. Slow but reasonably consistent lift there and started climbing out to top/back spine but ran out of time so flew out over valley to land at Montagnier. 1hr 45mins. The glacier will have to wait for another visit.

Breakneck drive to Martigny and almost missed train to Geneva Airport and home. Total airtime for week - 13hrs, 29mins.



Apart from the flying being absolutely fantastic (there were other flights as well as those described above, including a couple of evenings' scratchy ridge soaring, just like we do at Farway and Bucknole), the hospitality was five star. The chalet was very comfortable indeed, we were fed deliciously every evening by Jo, the chalet girl, breakfasts were substantial (and if you were still peckish there was a wonderful patisserie next door), and the fly guiding was first class. We were taxied to take offs and collected from landing and given all the advice and guidance and cold drinks we needed in between. For hangies you can hire gliders out there, saving all the bother of driving out with your own. Our hosts, Stuart and Mike Belbas, were two of the nicest, smiliest, most helpful people you could ever wish to meet. Oh, and the most gliders we ever saw at a time was about 15.

Verbier is expensive, but we had a brilliant week and it was worth every penny. Highly recommended!

*Harriet (Pics from Simon)*

# Jeff's Flying Diary

## 05 July 2003 22:31 Bossington

Flew back to the car park and had to walk back to TO to collect dog, bags, jumpers, car keys etc. (all left on the hill to lighten the load!) leaving PF to pack up the gliders. Arrived to find all the red ribbons (3 in no.) with a total airtime between them of 6 hours taking off in a goodish blow. Told by DJ that they all hoped to fly back as well and shouted at the last one 'not a good idea - it's breezy back there'. 'OK, will tell the others' and off he went. Walked back to be overtaken by 5 gliders, very low heading back. Great variety of landing techniques as they scabbled about trying to avoid the bushes. PF said he was enjoying the sun and thinking 'shame they are all too low to fly back' when he realised they were all heading his way!

No harm done and following a bollocking from me and a serious talk from PF they won't be repeating the exercise in a hurry and certainly not without parachutes next time. One chute was apparently in the boot of the car!

As Dinks said 'an epic day' and greatly enjoyed by all. All the red ribbons doubled their airtime.

**Viv**

**AND**

An epic day at bossy. Flyable from the time I got there (12.30) to well after the time I left (6.30) I had over 3 hours. The day just got better and better with the sun coming out and some nice thermals forming. so greater heights were gained allowing P&VP & me to fly back to the car park. With task 9's, wing overs, spirals, tandom flights and more it all happened at bossy. the usual, some old & new pilots there today. Still buzzin as I write this.

**Dinks**

## 06/07/03 Bossington

Felt strong in car park, but decided to walk out

anyway. Strong on take off, but with effort was able to slide off the side of the hill into smooth conditions (JF taught me that one) .

I had the hill to myself again, except for a passing microlight.

Despite the wind strength very little lift, but lots of sink. 150ft at best i could manage so had to settle for landing at take off, and the long walk back.

**Bryon D**

## 07 July 2003 Flying Sunday

**East Hill.**

In the afternoon it seemed flyable but with 8/8 cloud. I did winddummy and went down, but with hints of lift.

DS found it and got high above TO, then DH DS & I enjoyed a short window of good lift to 500 at with wind up to 20mph at altitude, before it died.

I did another couple of wind dummies to tempt MP to launch his rigged HG but only JJ flew and he didnt stay up either. SB arrived with PG and we left - no connection!.

**JOJ**

## 08 July 2003 12:01 Branscombe

Just to let everyone know that after an attempted PLF at old Branscombe TO yesterday I got the bent legs down bit ok and foolishly put my arm out simple fracture of radius and ulna. back to fracture clinic today- no flying for a couple of month I guess.

I though my chosen approach was clear of rotor & it wasnt.. Straight down fast.. Wind was SW so tried from E side of TO. bad idea..TD and low air time visitor/member did it perfectly in usual place..

**JOJ**

## 11th July 2003 EAST HILL

My zagi is currently sitting in the top of a big beech tree at the East Hill TO Car Park.

If you happen to be up there and find a zagi lying around then please give me a ring.

Expensive evening!

Martin.

AND

### **EAST HILL**

It was still firmly lodged there last night as confirmed by. JJ, OH, OP, HR and Me.

Pleasant evening flying again at East Hill, but quite cold after a while.

**Jeff**

### **12 July 2003 BEER HEAD**

Went to beer head not expecting more than a flight to the beach and thats what I got!  
Although I did have a very pleasant one & half hours floating around the cliffs and was the only one to jump across branscombe and scratch my way to the top after 15 min of some lovely close up views of the trees over there. paul got across but couldn't keep it up.! new as the wind dropped off I was not going to get back to TO.  
Still I enjoy my bollock numbing swim and then a cold beer (from cafe for future ret)  
also to top it all Lynne came and retrieved me(:

**Dinks**

### **14 July 2003 BCC Hang Gliding Semis**

The Condors managed to field a full team plus reserve for the semis.

It was a good weekend with limited flying and no points, but we enjoyed it.

Many Thanks to the team: Gerry, Guy, Patrick, Mark, Harriet & Russell

**Robin**

### **19 July 2003 BEER HEAD**

Flying last night

Went to beer head after my guests phoned and said they were going to be late(wonderfull news )Got there to find it gusting between 10 to 20mph( not so wonderful) and MP SR de rigging having not flown. After an hour and the arrival ofDP+ tandom it calmed down and was gusting a lot less. Then a miracle happened JF(alias captin Proton)took off without ANY trouble (without getting draged around the feild a few times first, as is his norm).PF VF and me following him off It was lifty but smooth as a babies arse so headed off to sidmouth enjoying the views with the sun low in the sky,beautiful. JF jumped the gap over Sidmouth but went down at Jacobs. Me, Phil and Viv hovered around this side getting more height phil and I went out over Sidmouth but lost too much height so turned to come back. Viv watched from 500ft above TO as we sank like bricks getting no lift when we got on to the cliffs. As we went below the cliff it got very trashy(felt like being in rotor),horrible! the beach was well skinny and when I landed my trailing edge on one side got a bit wet Phil came slightly worse off! ! ! !  
Viv headed back but also ended up on the beach in the middle of no where and it took her an hour to walk out Phil and I walked to Sidmouth met john as Paul arrived to take us all back to Beer( thanks Paul )and I got home only 10 mins after my geusts and take away arrived so not to bad all in all.  
DP went down at Branscombe I think?

**Dinks**

### **20 July 2003 BREAN DOWN**

Sunday

Coastal bimbling again. A dangle on Brean Down staying at ridge level until it blew out, then back for breakfast.

**JF**

### **24 July 2003 MERE**

Just happened to be driving through Mere at 7.

OOam, the sun was shining, so I stopped for a flight from Cowards Bowl. Light SW wind. Excellent to be flying while all around was so peaceful/asleep?  
Got wet feet and a wet PG packing up and was late for a meeting but who cares!

## Tim

### 27th July 2003 WOOLACOMBE

With a strong west wind forecast theres only one place to go,,,, Woolers  
Flew the middle, the top, then the dunes as the wind went from strong to > perfect, to stronger splendid day  
hanges had the top in the afternoon  
pg s were JT MH MK plus North  
Devoners

## Dinks

### AND

HGs were SM, RC (on his brand new LS4S, which he seemed to like), MP, MD, SR, HP, Trevor J, and Dave Clark on holiday from the Midlands.  
Very pleasant flying, despite being a bit of to the southwest.

## Harriet

### AND

### SOURTON

Went to Sourton today it looked good but when I got there I could see a curtain of rain over to the west, any way made my way to the top and met Ivor , we discussed the weather as you do and found it to be slightly of to the west and not too good.  
Later Innes turned up and Malcolm and a few trainees who needed top landing to get signed off then the weather started to come on the hill and there was a frantic scramble to get the gliders out of there bags amongst the trainees ground handling in all directions (sounds familiar) , Ivor and Malcolm made a brake for it and was first off only to find there was more sink than the titanic  
But they made it to the west end of Sourton and

stayed there I soon followed and landed just below ivor and Malcolm we were not gaining any height at first and it was very rough Malcolm launched and stopped dead and then went into a swinging action with the glider pitching back and forth with an asymmetric that any task niner would be proud off , Ivor was not having as much trouble but he was further out from the hill .

In all the flights we all had were short and rough with not much height and flying souton in scratchy conditions is a much fun as chewing razor blades  
On one of my flights I was dropping in sink above a load of rocks and had to fly out from the hill and just cleared the rocks but its more fun than the coast.

## Steve Sparky Cliff Deer Newstead

### 02 August 2003 BEER HEAD

Beer head was wear it was at ,sea breezzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz worked a treat with some punchy little themals  
pilots me DH DS AB JB PH JL MH +guest pilots

## DINKS

### AND

### WEST BAY

Well, Westbay came on around 4ish. Mike Richards, was first away and up towards the Beacon, then followed by myself, then Keith B, and newcomer to WIB Paul Browring, all making the Beacon, and returning for to. after around 1,1/2 hrs later. Just as we landed Tony Brooks arrived and flew. also.

Plenty of lift along the whole ridge. with around 700ft asl at the beacon.  
A good afternoon, in the end. PIB even clocked sufficient airtime to discard his red ribbon. Well done Paul.  
My first flight since arm injury, and thoroughly enjoyed it,

## Jon

### 08 August 2003 BATCOMBE

Batcombe again today for some lively thermic flying until the wind switched to the north fun while it lasted  
DS & guest JL AB AB

## **DINKS**

### **09 August 2003 RADDON**

Went to Raddon this afternoon about 1 ish, too gusty from 15/20 mph and smoggy could only see about 5 mile max.

Tomorrow is looking to be hotter than today

**Steve Sparky Cliff Deer Newstead**

## AND

### **BREAN DOWN**

Very pleasant coastal bimbbling at Brean Down. Little wind but, when about 500 gulls suddenly took off, I joined them thermalling in the buoyant air coming off the mud released by the tide. About an hour and a half before it went off to the west.

## **JF**

### **16 August 2003 PANDY**

DS, DH & AD went to Pandy and got to 2400'ato. 'Best flying he has had for two years', said DH. 'Why go abroad when you can get flying like this here?' said AD. DS was just very tired and happy. They got home for tea.

## **JF**

## AND

### **CONEYS**

Max height today 147 ft. Previous max height

8008 ft

Today Coney's, last Annecy..No Contest..

## **Jeff**

### **23 August 2003 BATCOMBE**

After some oohin' & arrahin' went to batcombe a light wind was on the hill with gentle thermals had 6 flights 2 side landings 3 bottom 1 almost top 3rd being best with over 200ft oto  
JM JH AND ME

## **Dinks**

## AND

### **BELL HILL**

Saturday was my third time at Bell this week, the least flyable day too, though some lovely thermals enabling some to get away. I only managed twenty minutes in the air,

## **HD**

## AND

### **SMEATHARPE**

Good for you.. we had a very pleasant day's aerotowing on Saturday - RC, MN, AH, BW, RS, GMcC, HP and Mark R-H on his booster.

## **Harriet**

### **24 August 2003 BELSTONE**

Flying today. went to belstone " nice thermic easterly winds not too difficult to stay aloft in ,the early flights but were sometimes a little rough and some off us were getting tips collapsing, as the day got on the wind did too, I reached 1278 ft above take off on one flight and 1000 ft on another but unfortunately rain stopped play typical moor weather. it soon became strong winds and low cloud ,we waited as in time honoured tradition for the weather to clear again but it didn't so we trekked back to the cars but still all in all had some good flying on my door step, Ivor . Malcolm my self and two other red ribbon pilots and john bates were present.

**Steve Sparky Cliff Deer Newstead**

### **26 August 2003 Malverns.**

Strong with just the rigids and HG's flying. Launched around 3.30. Bar to penetrate out and a very slow run up to the north end of the ridge. Infuriating having to push through the thennals

to maintain my position. I climbed 600' in one flying straight through it with the bar on. Probably a bit wimpish, but I was not going over the back with that windspeed. Eventually pushed right out in front and managed to use the lift a little more efficiently. Landed at the Three Counties Showground, vertical descent over the last 200' with half bar - quite windy! Great to have some activity, plenty of choppy flying and some big surges. The only other PG kept going on about his full frontal and how smooth it had looked - until he took off! Proton flying like a dream.

**JF**  
**AND**

### **PANDY**

Good HG day at Pandy.  
Strong NE blow made for good lift all round, under unseasonal dull overcast with some embedded Cu (mostly fairly weak, but not all). Many got onto Hay Bluff, inc MP but not me (very rusty + cautious)  
Arrived to PGs flying, plus a huge swathe of HGs rigging, turned out to be a BCC round. Big boys whizzed off, then wind picked up discouraging most of PGs. After which nice for several hours, though shame about the sunshine. Hoped- for storming thermic conds never materialised, but good to see a day wth PGs sitting it out after all this light stuff (sorry, guys!).

PP MP RC GA  
+ PGs inc at least JH PF VF

### **Chairmans Chat**



I went to Laragne in August. Great flying. They are very keen on recycling as well.

Have Fun

*Robin*

[robinc@eurobell.co.uk](mailto:robinc@eurobell.co.uk)

### **PATRICK**

#### **26 August 2003 Flying Saturday & Mon**

**Bossington Saturday** - complete waste of time, fogged in at first, then cleared and went light so a mere top to bottom.

**Pandy on Monday** - a completely different story. 2057ft above take off, 740fUmin on the averager even though it was well over developed and managed to fly the whole ridge. A very sucky cloud was tempting me over the back but I knew it wasn't a good idea with Patrick as the retrieve, he couldn't find the Severn bridge so how would he find me in the middle of nowhere. Quotes of the journey home where "Oh look, Isn't that Guy, he's going the wrong way" & "Hang on a minute, isn't the Blorenges supposed to be on our right hand side". Condors HG'ers for the day - Me, PP, RC, GB. Splendid spot for it

Tip of the weekend - whilst transporting a hang glider ensure that it is tied on at **both** ends, I'm not a grasser so you'll need to look for an Xtralite with a ground down nose catch to work out who left an aluminium coloured streak down through Sowton industrial estate.

**Mark P.**

## Forthcoming Meetings

### **Wednesday Sept 3 Royal York and Faulkner Hotel, Sidmouth 8.00 p.m.**

Flying techniques discussion and 2 videos, one about Bill Moyes beating the World record for a balloon drop in 1973, the other about Bill and Steve jumping off Kilimanjaro in about 1980.

### **Wednesday 1 October Maypole Inn Thurloxtton 8.00 p.m. **Please note venue change****

TBA.

### **Saturday 1 November Royal York and Faulkner Hotel, Sidmouth 6.00 p.m. **Venue and day change this time****

Kaz Harland (Ex National Team) Flying Psychology - refreshments for 5.30 p.m. prompt.

### **Wednesday 3 December Maypole Inn Thurloxtton 8.00 p.m**

Bob Drury – superstar, more details later.

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## For Sale

*Paragliding Boots* - Excellent condition, size 8 ½ cost £120, £40 offers. *(No not Viv's boots – just some we have been asked to sell!)*

*Sup Air Flight Deck* - £10

*Aerotow syndicate share for sale.*

Ring Phil/Viv 01823 490724 or email [phil4acre@aol.com](mailto:phil4acre@aol.com)

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## 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	Patrick Peglar	01392 204253	07967 809783	ppeglar@blueyonder.co.uk
PG Safety	Andy Tew	01278 684671	07790 718449	andy@tewa.freeserve.co.uk
Hanglider XC Claims	Harriet Pottinger	01823 601202	07811 567918	harriet@eclipse.co.uk
Paraglider XC Claims	Paul Hook	01395 513043	07748 908393	paulhook@eclipse.co.uk
Competitions	Jeff Hoer	01404 850489	07787 104792	jeff@hoer.freeserve.co.uk
Airheads	Phil Fouracre	01823 490724	07850 216464	<a href="mailto:phil4acre@aol.com">phil4acre@aol.com</a>
Low Airtime Contact	Phil Fouracre	01823 490724	07850 216464	<a href="mailto:phil4acre@aol.com">phil4acre@aol.com</a>
Social Secretary	John Milner	01460 240476	0771 3600232	<a href="mailto:crosstree@vosnet.co.uk">crosstree@vosnet.co.uk</a>
Condors Web Site <a href="http://www.dscondors.co.uk">www.dscondors.co.uk</a>				

# airtopia

## The shop

Full of all the latest equipment; Harnesses from Sup-Air, Gin, Airwave, Gradient and Edel.

Helmets from Lazer, Charley and Icaro. Flying Suits, Instruments, radios, compasses, T-Shirts, reserves, boots, books, instrument mounts, flight decks and groovy sunglasses....even coffee and biscuits!

## The Holidays.

Off to Spain again, 20<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

One or two weeks of Alicante action,  
good flying from easy coastal to mountain thermal.

### Second hand canopies

Edel Atlas small	fab condition 65-80kg	£600.00
Edel Atlas Med	Good condition 75-95kg	£550.00
Edel Atlas Med	Good condition 75-95kg	£550.00
Edel Atlas Large	As new! No airtime 90-110kg	£900.00
Firebird Flame med	Very good, very low airtime, 70-85kg	£600.00
Nova Xyon Large	Good 105-125 kg	offers
Edel Sabre Large	Fair 100-120kg	offers
Paramotor	210cc twin prop, electric thingy	£1,600.00

## **The New Stuff**

Canopies from Ozone, Gin, Gradient and Airwave, demo's available, part exchange a possibility!

Call Robin tel 01453 827202

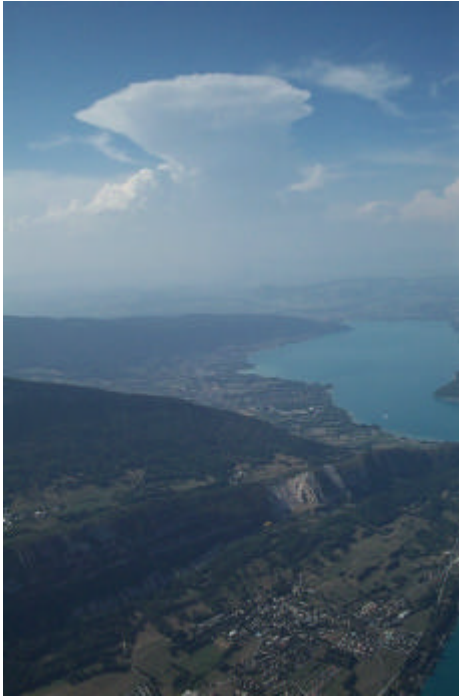
Mobile 07973 844449

[www.airtopia.com](http://www.airtopia.com) [robin@airtopia.com](mailto:robin@airtopia.com)

We are very easy to find, just off junction 13 of the M5, check out the map on the web site.....

## Editor's Comment

No editorial problems at the moment, bits and pieces coming in, enough to fill the pages!", the holiday seems a long way away, was it only last month? As we have enough for this month and I'll have forgotten everything by November, here is a précis of Annecy 03



All arrived safely via different routes and at different times, apart from John and Lyn having an argument with the crash barrier en route!! Weather began well and just got hotter, max at 44c by the end, too much. Camp site packed, making up for last year when it flooded. Flying was fairly extreme, even the local dual pilots said it was the roughest for years. Primarily due to the extreme heat and low humidity. Loads of collapses, serious climbs and generally 'interesting' flying. A shame in some ways because it worried some of the less experienced pilots, putting them off staying in the air as long as they could have. Fewer gliders than usual, probably due to the publicity regarding overcrowding and landing hassles. No problems on either score for us. Landing options at the campsite as usual, or the new landing at Doussard. There is even a regular minibus to take-off, absolute luxury.

Best heights were anything up to 8,500'+ above the valley floor with a number of mini tours of the lake. The extreme weather produced some interesting over-development in the afternoon, so you had to keep an eye on the 'house' cu-nimb that developed behind the Tournet every afternoon. Lovely lift but always wise to make sure there were a few brave souls nearer to it than you were so that you could 'leg it' at a moments notice! What with that and keeping an eye on the rapidly changing valley winds, there was never a dull moment. Take-off

conditions even grounded the duals on occasions as it was so variable in strength and direction.

All survived intact, although some of the normal alternative pursuits suffered because it was just too hot. As the holiday progressed the bar and cold beers at the official landing attracted more and more pilots. Everyone seemed to enjoy it with most looking forward to returning next year.

**Phil**

**Email: [Phil4acre@aol.com](mailto: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**



*Lyn climbing out at the Puy de Dom*

*All pics courtesy of John Milner*

## Safety

No reported incidents this month

### *Safety Note:*

On replacing a damaged line on to rear edge of my paraglider, I first checked the new line length against my existing line. I found the old line was 30mm shorter, it was line shrinkage. I then applied 10kg pull (Advised by Aerofix) to the old line and it stretched it by 27mm. After replacing the line I then applied the same pull to all the lines on the rear of the glider, comparing them with the equivalent line on the other side. All the upper brake lines had stretched. This is common on Dyneema lines on upper brakes and tip lines as they do not get the weight put on them as do the main lines and they are more likely to get wet.

I would recommend when changing lines to adopt the same procedure as I did, to keep all the lines the same length. Shrinkage can affect all lines on older gliders.

*Andy Tew*

## Novice XC Course June 03

The SE Wales HG & PG Club Novice XC Course was held on the weekend 7/8 June at and around Tredegar. I saw it mentioned in Skywings and decided, following JF's advice, that Wales was the place .... I used to live there and should not have been so optimistic. the weather let us down totally on the Sunday and mostly on the Saturday.

However, it was well organised and senior coach Jim Hay kept a group of about thirty of us entertained, learning and hoping for several hours both mornings. We met at the Bryn Bach Park Outdoor Sports Centre near Tredegar, less than an hour's drive from Bristol. Subjects considered included equipment, thermalling, glide angles, retrievees, weather forecasts, maps, friendly and unfriendly landing fields, planning an XC and most importantly the South East Wales Club's sites.

On the Saturday afternoon the PGs went to Mynydd Meio where we all had a few lowish flights the wind being insufficient for large height gains and the thermals being inadequate for XCs. Mynydd Meio is where this year's precision paragliding championships took place. It is not a big site and to have all 30 of us scratching was hazardous. But we did all fly and one more experienced pilot did go over the back to win a tube of Smarties when we reconvened the next day. The Sunday afternoon visit was to Merthyr Common. A much bigger site and hill, unfortunately the wind had picked up and the day's flying was restricted to kites - it was even too strong for my kite.

This course held annually costs £10, offset fully if you join the SE Wales Club for £20. I recommend it as both an introduction to XCs and the local sites.

*Harry Dike*

## Book Review

“The Gliders” Alan Lloyd, Arrow Books, 1982, Now out of print

This book traces and illustrates the history of the military use of gliders either side of, but particularly during, World War II.

Germany first developed the idea of military gliders when it was denied the use of powered machines at the Treaty of Versailles after World War I. Young Germans were encouraged to get flying experience on gliders and these pilots were to form the nucleus of the successful Luftwaffe. They were of course initially inspired by Otto Lilienthal. By 1930 the world of competitive glider flying was dominated by German pilots, these pilots led the successful invasion of Western Europe in 1940.

Lloyd explains how the “impregnable” Belgian fort of Eben Emael in May 1940 was surprised and taken by a force of ten DFS 230 gliders for the loss of less than a dozen German dead. The DFS 230s carried nine paratroopers each and these were landed on top of the fort at dawn achieving complete surprise. So successful and unobserved was their arrival that the Germans were able to keep secret their silent weapon, secrecy was desirable because they intended to use gliders to secure the beachheads when they invaded Britain. They planned and built giant gliders with wingspans of 181 ft (compared to the DFS 230s 72 ft). It would carry 200 troops and flew well once in the air, but getting it off the ground involved joining together two twin engined bombers with another engine at the join and putting booster rockets on the glider itself. In the end German thoroughness prevailed over impulse and fortunately the opportunity was lost, though the Germans built over 200 of them. They weren’t used even for the invasion of Crete where 70 DFS 230s were employed to spearhead the air and sea assault. At Crete the glider borne troops fared even worse than the paratroopers and such was the loss of life, that although the German invasion was successful, Hitler refused to sanction mass airborne invasion again.

Lloyd goes on to detail the development (at Churchill’s instigation) of a British airborne

force at Ringway near Manchester. It was given the title “Central Landing Establishment” a title and unit so obscure that even the Ministry of Defence misdirected correspondence to the “Central Laundering Establishment”.

The British developed the Horsa glider remarkably quickly. It was bigger than the German DFS 230 and carried 25 troops in a 67 ft fuselage with an 80 ft wingspan. Fully loaded it weighed 7 tons half of which was its own weight.

“The cockpit was a veritable greenhouse in which two fliers sat side by side with a fine view. Each had a spade grip control and rudder bars. An elementary flying panel contained three instruments: an airspeed indicator, an altimeter and a “blind flying” device, the so called “angle of dangle”, which denoted the glider’s tow position. Beside the pilots were two handles, one for the huge flaps which could be set at 45 or 90 degrees when required and one for releasing the tow line. The line attached by a Y junction to two points on the wings, contained the telephone cable to the tow plane. For take-off, the tug slowly took up the slack, the wheel brakes of the glider were released and the combination gained speed. At about 70 mph the glider lifted off before the tug was airborne. The position was now “high tow”, where the line was more clearly visible. Like all gliders, the Horsa was a handful in towed flight, but once released became, as a pilot put it, “incredibly smooth, a strange silence in the cockpit”.

In tow, speeds of up to 160 mph were safe, if improbable. In free flight the glide was about 80 mph loaded, losing roughly 1,000 ft for every 2,500 yards flown. The ship was superbly tolerant. Stalling was no worry and with flaps down a pilot could descend with a fantastically steep 1 in 1.5 flight path, levelling off to land just above stalling incidence.” (Page 19)

The British also developed their own giant glider the Hamilcar, with 110 ft wingspan, 70 ft fuselage and a height of 25 ft it was used successfully to carry vehicles including light tanks.

Lloyd details the allied use of gliders in the

battles in Burma, Sicily, D-Day, Arnheim and the Rhine during the final two years of the war. He quotes extensively from the brave pilots of the Glider Pilot Regiment and their losses that demonstrate their courage “of the 3,302 officers and other ranks who took part in the operations

of the Glider Pilot Regiment 551 were killed and 750 either wounded or taken prisoner”. (Page 198)

*Icarus*

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*Colour co-ordinated down to his socks – HG pilot on Pandy last weekend!*

*Photo courtesy of Gordon Mucklow*



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## **Sites Info**

### **Countisbury**

I was approached on Countisbury by the National Trust Chief Warden, who questioned my right to be there. If approached at Countisbury, Bossington, Collard Hill or Crook Peak give them my name and mobile number (if you have it!). Tell them that we have an agreed licence to fly with the National Trust. You should then carry on flying or sitting on the hill hoping you are going to fly. Be polite, but do not be intimidated.

If approached by Landowners or members of the public on any of our sites, please let me know if they seem to disapprove of our presence.

### **Beer Head**

Can I remind everyone that parking at Beer Head is in the Council Car Park before the Caravan Site. It is not part of our agreement that we can fill the grass verges on the way up the road. This eventually will encourage others to do so and may risk our privileges on the site. Should anyone park there, could all members point out the error of their ways. It has also been known that the Sites Minder visits Beer sometimes and may catch you. He gets fairly excited where his precious Sites are concerned.

JF

# *Paragliding & Hangliding Christmas Party*

FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2003

ROYAL YORK & FAULKNER HOTEL

ESPLANADE SIDMOUTH DEVON

- AFTERNOON TEA ON ARRIVAL
- GALA CHRISTMAS DINNER
  - CHARITY CASINO IN AID OF DEVON AIR AMBULANCE
  - DISCO UNTIL 3.00 A.M.
  - IBBLE-DIBBLE UNTIL THE EARLY HOURS !
  - EN-SUITE ACCOMMODATION
- FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST

## Dinner Menu

Parisienne of Melon with Parma Style Dried Ham & Mango Dressing  
Red Onion & Goats Cheese Tart - Watercress & Potato Soup

...oOo...

Scrambled Egg with Smoked Salmon & Chives, en-croute

...oOo...

Traditional Hand Carved Turkey served with Forcemeat Stuffing  
and a Cranberry & Gooseberry Compote

Braised Sirloin Steak with Fresh Asparagus, Rich Red Wine Gravy  
& Tarragon Butter Sauce

Baked Fillet of Haddock topped with Sliced Onions,  
Crispy Potatoes & Fresh Herbs

Vegetable & Aubergine Mousaka with a Mediterranean Tomato Sauce

...oOo...

Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce - Chocolate & Hazelnut Roulade

Individual Pear & Ginger Crumble with Clotted Cream

...oOo...

Coffee

£45.00 PER PERSON

FOR RESERVATIONS

FREEPHONE 0800 220714.