

# AirHeads



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

January/February 2005

## [Flying in Perth \(WA\)](#)

This October I was lucky to get a six-week work assignment in Perth, Western Australia. Naturally, I took my paraglider, met up with some of the local pilots on the weekends and had some interesting flying experiences.

I was there towards the latter part of their spring, and the bush was full of wild flowers; I photographed 20 different species on one short walk. I only got to fly two sites, so I can't offer a complete guide to the area. But the sites that I flew seemed to be fairly representative. Compared to nice grassy UK hills, their inland sites tend to be small and scrubby with few top-landing options and small launch areas, but the thermals were big and booming! I didn't fly any coastal sites, the coastal ones near Perth are all small sand dunes but there are bigger cliff sites near Albany, about 5 hours drive south!

Serpentine is a small hill about 40 minutes south of Perth. Facing ESE, it is covered with granite boulders and surrounded by trees. Forming part of the Darling Escarpment, it is only 400ft top-to-bottom, and doesn't look steep enough to be soarable, but it is (if you stick close to the trees) and there are miles of flat land out front to generate thermals. The Darling Escarpment is the edge of the old central Australian continent, where the rocks are 2.5 billion year old. All the ancient mountains have been worn down, so that once you cross the Escarpment, the next highest hill is 3,000 miles away in New South Wales.

The other site was an hour's drive east of Perth near the town of York (population 400). Mount Bakewell is about 700 ft above the surrounding plain, so that gives enough height to find thermals if there is no ridge lift. My three flights there put me straight into some adrenaline-rush thermals, fairly smooth once in them, but with collapse-inducing air around and equally big sink in between. The official bottom landing field is the centre of the town racecourse. Apparently the local pilots have been asked to land there when the races are on, but so far the winds have not been "right" for this. I suspect the local hang-glider pilots are also reluctant to show off their landing skills in front of a grandstand full of people!

On my second flight from Mt Bakewell, I flew around for an hour in the thermals, before I got tired of the rough air and had to find a large patch of sink to spiral down in before landing at the racecourse. The next weekend, there was no ridge lift at all, and I was down to 400ft below launch before I found a thermal that took me up to 2,000ft. Then it got rough and I spotted what appeared to be an inactive airfield a few kilometres north. I headed there for a landing, and then was greeted by a "Gooday mate, do you want a lift back to town? Lucky we have finished our free-falling for the day, this is the biggest skydiving club in Australia". Apparently they only jump in early morning or late evening when the thermals are gentler. Pity they were all just leaving as they had a nice bar and a swimming pool, both just closed! Driving back to Perth, I called in at Beverley Gliding Club (sailplanes), they told me they had been up to 7,000ft that day, perhaps if I had been brave enough to stay in the rough air I would have done the same.

There seem to be equal numbers of PG and HG pilots all sharing the same hills and lifts back to the top, and all very friendly. My best contact there was Jules Sanderson (brother of Jocky), a very friendly and

helpful guy. He runs a paragliding/hang-gliding school, contact via: ([www.airoz.com.au](http://www.airoz.com.au)). A useful website for weather all round Australia is: [www.seabreeze.com.au](http://www.seabreeze.com.au). This gives up to date wind graphs for many places around the coast.

If some Condors members don't know me yet; I moved to Bridport in January, and my photo is attached.



John at Mt Bakewell launch



HG launch at Mt Bakewell



Mt Bakewell LZ, the hill is above

*John Pinchin*

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## **Forthcoming Events**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January - 8.00pm Maypole Inn Thurloxtton, Nr Taunton

We think this is to be one of Jeff's Quiz Nights.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February - 8.00pm Maypole Inn Thurloxtton, Nr Taunton

Not sure about this one, sure it will be stunner – ask Robin!

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March - 8.00pm Maypole Inn Thurloxtton, Nr Taunton

AGM and presentation of club trophies.

## The low airtime bit



*2 ½ alpha male Nutbeems – now that’s really scary! Chris, Finn and Sarah Nutbeem, Lynne, Oggs and Dinks – what does the LAT do when he’s not flying?*

Well, not got much to say this month. It seems that some of you gooder pilots take offence when advice is offered or things are pointed out.

So if any body would like help, advice or info just ask and I will do what I can

Merry solstice and a happy flyable new year to all

FLY PHONE - **07796 206551**

This service seems to me to be running well. Keep the reports coming in (text still preferred).

If you’re new to the club and don’t know about the phone and how it works give me a ring and I will explain it to you or check out the web site and look at past issues of air heads that tells you all about it

*Dinks* [coglandman@hotmail.com](mailto:coglandman@hotmail.com)

## For Sale

Garmin Emap GPS £125.00 – contact Martin Kellaway, email: [knitram@lineone.net](mailto:knitram@lineone.net), mobile: 07813165928

## Club Contacts

Position	Name	Telephone	Mobile	e-mail
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## Editorial

I would say, just a quick pretty picci from the Christmas do! but then you might suspect my judgement – pretty it ain't. Great that everyone enjoyed themselves, as usual, looks like it has now become an established event in the club calendar.



*The Club Librarian  
leading the rowdiest  
table!*

Not much in this month's issue, promised contributions from various people have not materialised, must be an excess of alcohol. Congratulations to all those who passed their pilots, I haven't got an official list, but from memory – Chris Squibs, Chris Betty, Bob Moore, Simon Fouracre, John Hughes, Rob Dixie, Darren Fieldhouse....., apologies to anyone I might have missed.

Looks like the weather is set to be rubbish for the beginning of the new year, but personally I don't mind too much! We are off on the 1<sup>st</sup> to Oz for a month where hopefully it will be slightly warmer (up to 40c at the moment in Manilla!!!)

See you all when we get back.

Wishing you all a Happy and flyable New Year

*Phil (and Viv)*

P.S. we will try to send flying today's home when we can, just to keep you all posted (*don't you just love him!- Viv*)

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