

AirHeads



www.dscondors.co.uk

November/December 2006

'Onwards and upwards'

Having decided to take up paragliding nine months ago, I was looking forward to going on my first trip abroad, hoping that this would provide the opportunity to enjoy a new flying experience.



With a group of twelve other people, we set off for the small French village of Greolieres, situated approximately 40 miles North of Nice. In typical fashion, I had done very little research about an area beforehand, so I didn't quite know what to expect.

The holiday got off to a positive start, as we all successfully negotiated our way through Bristol check-in without paying anything extra for our "large rucksacks". Once in Nice, we picked up the hire vehicles and began the fifty-minute drive to Gite de Cheiron, where we were welcomed by the warm

hospitality of Ben and Karen Moss. Brave enough to pursue their dreams, Ben and Karen decided to leave 'Blighty' and build their dream home (along with three purpose built flats) in Greolieres. Judging by their fantastic lifestyle and the gorgeous surroundings, it was a decision well made.

That night we checked out the landing site in the village, in readiness for the next days flying. The early flights were from top to bottom, but as the day warmed up and the thermals began to kick in, it wasn't long before we all were enjoying some great lift.



Everyday brought new challenges and adventures. We visited some magnificent ridges, mountains and coastal sites, such as Col De Bleyne, Lachans (both North and south sites), Gourdon, and Roque Brune.



The highlight for me though was soaring above the awesome city of Monte Carlo (photo top left).

It was hard to believe that a few months earlier I had been flying six foot off the ground on the nursery slopes back in Dorset, with Andrew or Paul sprinting alongside shouting out instructions.

I had only met a couple of people in the group before leaving. I felt I came back amongst twelve friends. There is much more to be learnt than just paragliding from a shared experience like this. I would thoroughly recommend Greoliere to anyone who has just passed their CP and keen to take their flying to the next level.

John Wigglesworth

Book Review

“First Light” by Geoffrey Wellum, DFC.
Penguin 2003 pp338 £7.99

Wellum is writing quite recently about his wartime experiences. He kept a journal and log book during his war, but no detailed diary. This retelling of his war is well worth reading.

He is brutally honest about the fears and losses involved. As a 17 year old he started flying training in 1939 and was commissioned as an 18 year old at the outbreak of war.

Few of his group who survive the assessments, examinations and flight training survive the war. After three years on Spitfires he was rested and then seconded to the Gloster Aircraft Company as a production test pilot and ended the war as a gunnery instructor.

This book concentrates on his Battle of Britain experiences. He writes in the present tense and it isn't possible to distinguish between what are reflections after sixty years or quotes from the journal he kept all those years ago. However, the effect is startling, conversations, jokes, youthful drive and explanations of fearful situations are convincingly told – he really did fight through the Battle of Britain; continuing to 1941 and 1942 as the air offensive moved from South East England to France; he even flew a Spitfire off HMS Furious in the Mediterranean to lead a flight of Spitfires successfully to Malta.

Full of the joys of flying “This is my destiny. I know of no other way of life.” (p. 289). The detailed descriptions of dogfights are so realistic I felt as if I was in the cockpit with him.

Thank you to RS for lending and recommending this book to me. Also recommended as similar historic accounts of the period in paperbacks still widely available are:
“War in a String Bag” by Charles Lamb and “Flying Start” by Hugh Dundas.

Harry D

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The library has proved very popular, so much so that people have been complaining about the difficulty in borrowing certain titles. As I have said before if you have a look at who has borrowed what you want, give them a gentle nudge to return it promptly, and reserve it for next time with me, I will make sure you get what you need, or in certain cases we may even order another copy...

Books

Paragliding, From Beginner to XC
Meteorology and flight (1st edition)
Meteorology and flight (2nd edition)
Radiotelephony manual
Navigating with GPS
Performance flying
Hanggliding training manual
Towing aloft
Understanding The Sky
Touching Cloudbase
Microlight Pilots Hand Book
Flying With Condors

Vids

Cloudbase 3 Hang Gliding Extreme
From Nowhere to the Middle of Nowhere
Starting Powered Paragliding
SAT Attack
Security in flight

Kit

The Harness Optimiser

Coming soon...

Instability II DVD
Performance Flying DVD
The secrets of Champions book
Any other requests...? (Except for 'Debbie Does Free flight' or anything else Dinks!!!!)

If anyone still has titles outstanding for several months get them back to me, by post if you can't be bothered to come to clubnight. Next month I will name and shame, so lookout if your hording stuff that is collecting dust, or baby goo, pop it in the post today!!!!

Rob email: mac-man@blueyonder.co.uk

(OK, OK, I know I still have Air Riders Weather (the book), but it is taking me ages to get all this tech stuff into my head! – Asst Ed)

Dinks' Page (aka The Low Airtime Bit and Flyphone!)

Low Airtime Bit

Well, it looks as if we are all becoming low air time these days. This is obviously caused by the unstable and unusual weather we are getting for this time of year. Although it's rather pleasant for the most part it's most definitely a sign of climate change and in my opinion it's not going to suddenly get better or fix itself.

So what are we going to do to keep flying?

Well here's what I think/do.

Keep a close eye on the forecasts and note potential days. Don't just rely on the BBC as for the most part they could not organise a piss up in a brewery. But they are good for telling what has happened. This is useful for building an over all picture of how the weather is moving in relation to the forecast.

The best one for me is theyr.net which you now have to pay for @£36 a year. Well worth it as it is the most consistently accurate three day forecast.

The Met office with it's chart predictions is always worth following. Also for an in the moment look the rain radar and satellite pictures of the cloud gives you the real picture.

There has been many a time the bbc rights the day off for my work, with rain all day, and I look out the window and at the rain radar and follow the track of where the rain is and has been, make my own decision to go to work and don't see any rain all day!

Other useful bits of the met office are the inshore waters forecast and the free aviations briefings.

Let's now talk xc weather. For the most part a handy tool for showing you the direction of the wind on the day and not bad at the predicted directions. On the day bear in mind if the wind map is showing more than 10-12mph it's going to be blown out or at the best, top end for our sites. Their predicted speeds are generally under what it is on the day as well.

With all the above taken in to account, if you want to get in the air you just have to make the effort to go on the iffy forecast days as well as what looks like a good one. There are many times when the flying window is a short one, so if you are not on the hill you miss out. The wind very rarely stays the same all day and our window for launch is a small one. Therefore get to the site early and don't wait to be told it's flyable.

I must say here that all of my best flying in the last couple of months has been on very iffy days, the good forecast ones never seem to work out.

Now we are going into winter making an effort to go early and on an iffy forecast is all the more important if you want to fly.

Dinks

Fly Phone

Nothing much to say, just keep the reports coming. Remember it is just as important to report when it stops being flyable.

Now we are going into winter mode, there will not be a lot of point putting any updates on after 2pm, as it starts to get dark earlier.

Let's hope the fly phone becomes red hot with all your reports of it being flyable very soon.

Dinks

FLY PHONE - **07796 206551**

or email: coglandman@hotmail.com

How to do it, a lesson for Local Authorities

The Concierge at my hotel lives just below a well used take off in the north of Tenerife and he said I should take a look at recent works there.

The old take off was quite impressive by our standards with green carpet just big enough to lay out on and run off to clear the bushes lining the cliff edge. The local council decided it would improve their image as a tourist resort to have a proper take off - Los Reales hardly springs to mind as an international PG destination.

The new take off has notice boards - 'have a nice fly' in 4 languages smartly painted safety rails, tennis court size astroturf area, massive retaining walls tastefully faced in stone, 3 windsocks and a large tarmac car park.



How about asking EDDC just to replace the beach access steps at Orcombe and rescind the prohibition byelaw so that fellow Europeans can take advantage of the World Heritage Jurassic Coast thing - oh well perhaps not.

JOJ



Editorial

Ain't the weather turned lousy! – I'm afraid we've all got a bit too used to our rather longer than normal summer; although the weather was glorious at Countisbury this week, shame there was not a breath of wind.

A definite for the calendar next year will be the Homegrown Festival assuming that it's held again. It really was a cracking event, with absolutely perfect weather and a great setting. Bit of a shame that it didn't get much coverage in Skywings, unfriendly rivalry perhaps! They will be hard pushed to better it, but here's hoping. Of general interest, the Welsh Borders area has some lovely sites, and they are all very friendly, so why not pay them a visit. It's not that much farther north for us than Hay Bluff and Pandy.



It's good to see that we still manage to get something to put in Airheads, even though nobody seems to have managed much over the last few weeks; dream on John, not a chance. Not much in the way of news recently, apart from an addition to the Hook family, congrats to Paul and Lou on the arrival of daughter Skye. Pics look good, looks like she's got the same amount of hair as her dad! Only joking; congratulations and best wishes from all of us. If he thinks it won't change his life I think he's in for a bit of a shock! Paul's dad says she has a great set of lungs, rather him than me.

While I think about it, don't forget to book with the Royal York for the Xmas do, if you haven't already done so; should be another good one.

Lets hope we get some half decent winter flying soon; please.....

Phil Phil4acre@aol.com Mob: 07850 216464

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 6th December - Maypole Inn Thurloxtton, near Taunton, - 8.00pm, TBA

Friday 22nd December – Christmas Dinner, Casino and Disco, Royal York & Faulkner Hotel, Esplanade, Sidmouth .

By popular request, we are holding the Christmas Dinner once again. Full details later in this newsletter, make sure the date is in your diary.

*******Wednesday 10th January 2007** - Maypole Inn Thurloxtton, near Taunton, - 8.00pm, TBA.

The date for this meeting has been moved on a week to allow you all to recover from the effects of your New Year celebrations!

Remember to check the flyphone/email for updates to events.

If you have any suggestions for topics or speakers for clubnight please contact Lester, lestgordon@aol.com or tel. 01823 253673

FRIDAY 22nd DECEMBER 2006

ROYAL YORK & FAULKNER HOTEL

ESPLANADE, SIDMOUTH, DEVON

- AFTERNOON TEA ON ARRIVAL
- ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER
- CHARITY CASINO IN AID OF DEVON AIR AMBULANCE
- DISCO TILL 3.00AM
- FIVE COURSE GALA CHRISTMAS DINNER
- FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST
- EN-SUITE ACCOMMODATION



£47.00 PER PERSON
FOR RESERVATIONS
FREEPHONE 0800 220714

Dinner Menu

Japanese Style Breaded King Prawns
With a Sweet Chilli Dip

Minted Pea Soup

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Melted Goats Cheese on Golden Puff Pastry
With Caramelised Red Onion and Oregano

Champagne Sorbet

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Hand Carved Devonshire Turkey with a Smoked Bacon wrapped Cranberry
And Fine Herb Force meat Stuffing with a Red Wine Gravy

Roast Rack of Lamb with a Stewed Compote of Dried Apricots
And a Spiced Redcurrant, Chestnut and Port Wine Sauce

Steamed Fillet of Hake with Langoustine
Topped with a Traditional Mornay Sauce

Sun blushed Tomato and Parmesan Crusted Mediterranean Vegetables
on a bed of Mixed Beans served with a Rich Tomato Sauce

Selection of Season Vegetables

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Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce

Raspberry Romanoff
Crushed Meringue with Raspberries and Cream

Passion Fruit Sorbet

Fresh Fruit Salad

Various Ice Creams and Sorbets

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Cheese and Biscuits

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Coffee