



Scottish Airsports Club

Lanzarote Special

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Forthcoming Events

There's plenty to look forward to this season. Microlighters, please let me know what you're planning and I'll put it in this section of the newsletter.

Celtic Cup

This year the annual Celtic Cup (an informal hang gliding competition) is being held in Iceland and several of us are planning to go. More details to follow.

Aberdeen Club trip

We're planning to go up to Aberdeen and fly some of their many sites this summer. Details to follow.

Sand dune soaring

We're also planning to find some nice coastal sand dunes, possibly at Gullane sands and go low-level soaring. This should be great fun and also give the sport some good PR. We will, of course, check with the council and others beforehand to make sure we don't upset anyone.

FLPA expedition

Another event on the planner is an FLPA expedition to Strathaven airfield from Thornhill, cleverly avoiding all the controlled airspace on the way. As will the other events, details will be published once we've picked a date etc.

Lanzarote Report

On the 3rd February, Allan Huntly, Andy McLaughlin, Willie Russell, Gordon Ross, Tim Richley, Dave Greenlee and myself set off from Glasgow Airport for another great Lanzarote hang gliding adventure. The previous year we had had great weather, but seven days of South Easterlies meant we had only flown Macher. Would we get to fly some of the other sites this year, and maybe even the famous Famara ridge?

Day 1

A nice North-Easterly was blowing - ideal for Mala. Bob and Ian were just starting their second week and were flying Mirador, but we opted for Mala because of the much easier landing options. This proved a wise decision as us rusty pilots showed our spot landing skills needed a little sharpening up. What we didn't know was that Bob and Ian were at Mirador because earlier in the week the cloud base had been so high (6000 feet) that the gliders were coming into conflict with the passenger jets flying out of Arrecife. Obviously the authorities weren't too happy about this and sent a helicopter to force the gliders to land. They also confiscated at least one glider. However on this day cloudbase was a more normal 3000 feet so we had no such problems.



The Famara top take-off

Al gave us a briefing on the top landing - easy as long as you make sure you've got plenty of height and stay left away from the dam, rotor and other hazards. Just as we were about to launch, a German pilot showed us exactly why this was good advice by coming in low and right and piling in downwind. Result: one trashed glider, one broken arm and one ambulance required. Despite this slightly unsettling incident, all of us got good flights, and the whole of the area was providing lift. Dave the 747 pilot got the highest. Having just got his CP rating, he claimed he had only 5 hours or so but we were beginning to suspect that he had more experience than he was letting on.

Day 2

It's only the second day and it's blowing from the North West which can only mean one thing - it's a Famara day! Unfortunately the wind was well off the the right and not that strong, so it wasn't possible to do the full ridge run. However good flying was had by all.

Day 3

A strong Northerly wind was blowing so it was off to our third site in 3 days - El Cuchillo. This site has strong rotor behind the take off where pilots have been killed trying to land, so before we flew Al took us to see the official top landing area which is well back from the ridge in smooth air. It turned out to be another great day's flying, with Andy going cross-country. We watched him fly over to another volcano, and start to soar it to regain some of the height he'd lost. As he got back up, he hit some vicious turbulence which caused his glider to pitch down vertically and dive around 400 feet towards the ground before recovering! This dramatic dive was quite visible from where we were watching. A rather shaken Andy nevertheless continued his journey and landed safely further on.

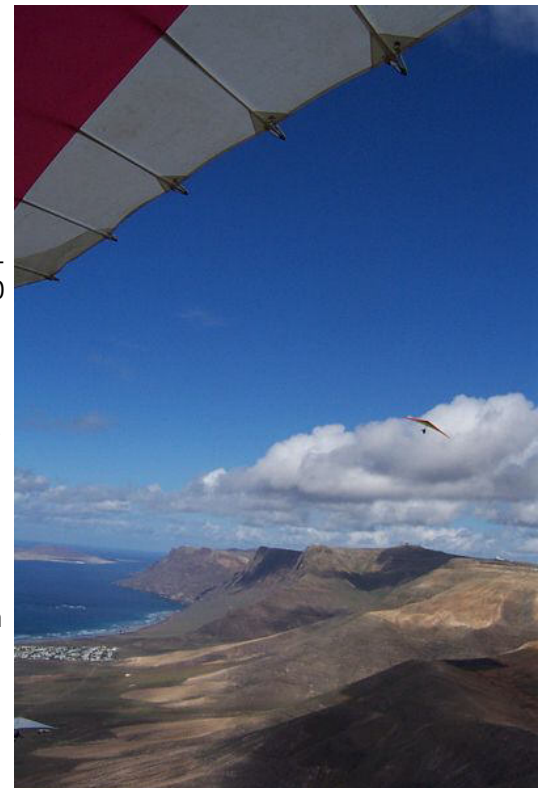
Dave again showed suspiciously good flying skills for a low airtime pilot by consistently getting higher and thermalling better than anyone else could. It was certainly a good advert for his new Avian Rio glider.

Day 4

It's back on Famara! Again lightish winds off the the right mean the full run isn't working but it's still a lovely place to fly.

Day 5

Jackpot! It's bang on the Famara ridge and it's blowing! Several pilots have epic flights right out to Mirador and back. Andy and Henry fly right over the harbour at La Graciosa before flying back to the cliffs and eventually landing on the beach at Caleta. Conditions were so good it was VG on and full speed all the way along the full length of the ridge and back. No



Looking down the famous Famara ridge from my Amour.

need to turn, beat, thermal or any other nonsense like that! Gliders were flying like powered aircraft - fast, straight and high.

Day 6

Yes it's Famara again! More flights along the ridge to Mirador. However late in the afternoon the wind swung round to the North, turning the lift on the sea cliffs into rotor and sink. Everyone landed safely before getting caught out except Henry, who was on his way out along the cliffs when he got completely drilled. Thankfully he managed to land safely in the only available spot - a small rocky cove at the foot of the cliffs. Although he had landed well out of sight of us, he had his phone with him. On speaking to Al, as they discussed how we might get him out, Henry voiced his concerns over whether he was above or below the high water mark, followed quickly by "God, that's a big wave!" In fact he had landed at high tide so there was no problem there. However after various attempts by Henry and others it soon became clear there was no way out on foot. Bob and Ian were therefore despatched to get a boat over to him. A boat was finally arranged and got to Henry a couple of hours later. Henry waded out to greet them, but the skipper made it clear that he couldn't take Henry's glider. This was no good to Henry, who declined the rescue and decided to call in the Emergency Services instead. However it was now dark and once they had assessed the situation, they decided they would not attempt the rescue until first light the next day! As so it was that Henry spend the whole night at the foot of the cliffs. And what a night it was! The weather was so awful with strong winds and torrential rain that the road to the Mala take off was washed away! And what do strong winds, torrential rain and vertical cliff faces make? Rock falls - that's what! The first big rock that came down hit Henry a glancing blow on his helmet and gave him a large bruise on his shoulder. After that, Henry managed to take cover while more rocks were washed down by the rain. Then a particularly large one came crashing down right on top of his glider!

Day 7

By first light the next day, there was a large pile of rocks and boulders where Henry had originally tried to settle down. Thankfully with daylight came rescue, and a cold, wet and exhausted Henry was winched off by helicopter, but his glider had to stay behind. The weather was still not good so it was a perfect opportunity for the rest of us to try and organise a boat to get the glider back. Surprisingly this proved impossible. It seemed the only boats available were from La Graciosa. Unfortunately the weather for the next couple of days was for strong winds so getting the glider back was looking more and more unlikely.

After lunch the weather had improved a bit so we went back to El Cuchillo, where the eastern facing ridge was flyable. Andy and Tim both went flying, but the rest of us declined given that the area of working lift was only large enough for a maximum of 3 gliders, and the Germans had got there first. Typical!

Day 8

Time to go home after a great week's flying (4 days out of 7 on Famara has to be a record!) and look forward to our next adventure. Many thanks to Andy for doing an excellent job of organising it all once again. Thanks to Henry for letting us stay in his Villa and providing us with the biggest drama/hardship/rescue story of the holiday. In the end he decided to abandon the glider since the rock and salt water damage has effectively made it a write off. Finally many thanks to our Chief Aerotow Coach Allan Huntly for doing an excellent job of looking after all us not-so-experienced pilots and keeping us safe. Unfortunately due to an eye injury he was unable to fly, but we all greatly appreciated all the help he was able to give us on launch and retrieving us. It should be noted that those of us under his wing had not a single incident and not even a single bent or broken upright! (another record?) If you weren't there, you missed out - join us next year!



Henry's parachute dries off after his Night On The Rocks

Wise Old Bob Says...

Bob was disappointed by the lack of tell-tales on the gliders in Lazarote and would like to remind all hang glider pilots that having a tell tale on your nose wires is extremely helpful, particularly when hill flying. It gives you important information about the what the wind is doing, and a bit of wool or ribbon isn't exactly expensive. (If it was, Bob wouldn't have one!)

Airfield Issues

Sue would like to remind all power pilots to please get into the habit of signing in and out in the airfield log book before and after their flights. This is necessary because of our airfield planning permission, and also makes good safety sense. If you have signed out for a trip to somewhere like Insch or Gigha and you don't turn up, at least we will have some idea of which set of hills to look for you!

Please reminder that ABSOLUTELY NO FUEL is to be kept in the hangar (including the lockers obviously).

If anyone is prepared to share a locker, would they please let Sue know.

Finally, all the hangarage and airfield money is now deposited in the Scottish Airsports Club's new bank account.

Scottish Aerotow Club AGM

This year's AGM was held in the bar (where else?) at Lanzarote airport on 10th February 2005. Unfortunately due to the huge queues at check in and also to get through security, plus the fact that our flight actually boarded and left early, the meeting was rather shorter than planned! However the following points were discussed.

We need to actively ensure everyone either has or is working towards gaining the necessary pilot/tug pilot/aerotow ratings. To help us achieve this, Allan P will send Bob a current membership list. Bob will then check this against BHPA records to see exactly who's got what. Allan Huntly will then help us fill in the gaps.

We also need to appoint a couple of Aerotow Coaches to assist when Allan H isn't present. This is an internal appointment that Allan Huntly can make, but candidates MUST be pilot rated and have a club coach appointment. It was agreed that Bob and Andy would be appointed Aerotow Coaches in the near future.

It was also noted that we hope to gain a couple of new members this season: Dave Greelee who came to Lanzarote with us, and Colin Harrison who already has a pilot rating and can therefore immediately start aerotow training.

Bing, bong, this is the final call for flight 1415 to Glasgow...

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