



Scottish Airsports Club

Latest News

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Forthcoming Events

Parachute Repack Session February 2006

The SHPF parachute repacking session at Ratho Adventure Centre is happening again on 25th February 2006. Deploy your reserve in safety while 60 feet off the deck, and then repack it once you've had the chance to admire it. Information and a Registration form have been added as files to the SHPF group at <http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/shpf>, so look up, fill in and book your spot.

Safety Advisory

The BHPA have recently issued the following Safety Advisory, which comes directly from the USHGA. Given that it concerns towing dual gliders too slowly, I don't think it's something we need to worry about with our super-fast 912 tug. All the same, here it is in full.

USHGA SAFETY NOTICE REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF HG AEROTOW TANDEM OPERATIONS

Experiences in hang glider tandem flight using aero-tow launch along with analysis of accidents and incidents that have occurred during such flight strongly suggest, for safety reasons, the following cautions be observed:

If the pilot of the tandem glider finds that he/she is too low behind the tug and slow enough that the glider will not climb without pushing out pass trim, then the pilot should pull in and release rather than trying to push out and climb to the tug altitude. Though pushing out to climb to the tug altitude has been a common practice usually accomplished without incident, there is a deep underlying danger in doing this. Should the tandem glider become unattached from the tug during this maneuver, the nose high attitude of the tandem glider attained while doing this will cause a very abrupt stall which will result in a much greater altitude loss than one would expect (possibly more than 750 ft.). The most extreme cases may result in structural failure of the glider.

Towing tandems requires extra awareness on the part of the tug pilots, particularly in the early part of the tow to help the tandem pilot avoid the development of critical situations. Prior to the start of the tow, proper tow speeds based on the gross weight of the tandem glider should be determined. Greater total weight will require correspondingly higher tow speeds. It is CRITICAL to understand that the towed hang glider is at risk when the tow is slow and the glider is low. When towing a tandem glider, the tug pilot should fly the appropriate airspeed to keep the tandem glider in the proper position and if there is any doubt the tug pilot should fly slightly faster and avoid flying slightly slow. The tug pilot should avoid pulling up abruptly and leaving the tandem glider low. If the glider is low on tow, the tug pilot should attempt to speed up and to descend to the altitude of the towed glider, releasing the tow rope only as a last resort.

David G. Broyles, USHGA Chairman of Safety and Training Committee.

BHPA Aerotowing Dual Hang Gliders: Key safety points

1. The difference between being a little out of position and being locked out is very small when on tow with a dual hang glider.
 2. Tug pilots should be specifically briefed if the dual instructor is thinking of letting the student do any part of the tow. The tug pilot must pay very close attention to the glider behind him, and release it sooner rather than later if it starts to get out of position.
 3. On tow the Pilot in Command must have his hand actually on the release at all times. 'Near' the release is not close enough! When you have two hands completely full of locked-out glider, taking one off to go looking for the release guarantees that your situation is going to get worse before it gets better.
 4. If the student is flying the glider on tow and gets the least bit out of position release immediately! You will not fight it back into position, and the situation will go from inconvenient to dangerous in the twinkling of an eye. This is especially important below 1000 feet agl.
 5. If you get low on the tow such that recovery would involve a big push out, release immediately! Attempting to recover from this position exposes you to the possibility of a tow line failure and a very severe stall.
 6. Full control of a dual glider requires the pilot to be situated with both hands widely spaced on the base bar, chest no more than six inches above the bar, and able to push out to full arm extension and pull in to knees over the bar.
 7. The only people who should ever have control of the glider below 1000 feet are:
 - Fully qualified dual aerotow pilots. Students who have completed at least twenty tows and have demonstrated good control on tow above 1000 feet.
 - Fully qualified solo aerotow pilots who are being trained as a dual aerotow pilot and have completed at least one dual flight as a passenger where good control on tow was demonstrated above 1000 feet.
 8. Hang glider pilots converting to aerotow benefit from an initial dual flight to show them the correct positioning behind the tug. This can be combined with 'site familiarisation' on the way back down. There is no benefit to be gained from letting them handle the controls during the tow.
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Lanzarote 2006

Once again we had a fantastic holiday in Lanzarote. The first week in February seems to be a good week for the weather: most of us flew 5 days out of 7, while Andy managed a perfect 7 out of 7.

Day 1.

Our flight was at 7.10 am, but Willie nearly missed it after he slept in and didn't wake up until after 5am. Thankfully he lives near the airport and just managed to make it in time. We landed at Arrecife on time, and were met at the airport by Bob, who'd arrived two weeks earlier. For the first time all nine of us were able to stay at Henry's since the adjoining villa is now his. Although the building work was not finished, it was perfectly habitable.

After long-packing the gliders we were on Macher by around 2.30pm. The wind was light so no-one stayed up for long. The Macher landing field can be a bit tricky in light winds since it slopes downhill. Although most of our landings were a bit iffy, there were no bent uprights and it was great to get our first flights under our belts. Only Andy claimed a perfect 2-stepper, but since he was first in there were no independent witnesses!

Day 2.

The Famara ridge. Unfortunately the wind was too light and Northerly for anyone to get all the way along to Mirador. Willie discovered that his glider had been damaged by the baggage handlers with a noticeable ding on the inside leading edge, so he was our retrieve driver for the day. Thankfully he managed to borrow another glider from Henry's garage after phoning the owner for permission so he was only grounded for a single day. Dave, as always, managed to spend most of the time above us all on his Avian Rio intermediate and lapped up the conditions with a 3.5 hour flight.

Day 3.

A light North-Easterly meant we were off to the sea cliffs of Mirador. This was a site that several of us had never flown before, so Bob first took us to the landing field (which you can't see from take-off) for a thorough briefing. In the light lift I only managed to get a maximum of 150 feet above take-off, but still had a very enjoyable flight of just over 1 hour before the lift died. The scenery here is truly spectacular. Andy and Allan Huntly felt confident enough to ignore the official landing field and land on the beach instead - a difficult landing option with cars, rocks, a downhill slope and of course the sea to avoid! They both pulled it off but hadn't thought to bring their swimming costumes. Undeterred, they went skinny dipping in the surf.

Day 4.

Back to Mirador. Slightly stronger lift allowed me to get to 500 feet above take-off and appreciate the views even more. Again the lift died after just over an hour of soaring the cliffs. Allan Huntly again went for the beach landing option but with the wind light again and more easterly he came in too fast and crashed into the knee-high water, breaking both uprights and wrecking his museum-piece vario. Since he knew Andy had top landed, he tried to phone him up to warn him off the beach landing, but Andy had already taken off by this point intent on joining Al. Although Andy managed to avoid the sea and kept his uprights in one piece, he still piled in and managed to cut his nose in the process. His claim of a "shaving accident" didn't wash with the rest of us!

Day 5.

The third and best day at Mirador. Lovely smooth air and gentle thermals took me all the way to 1000 feet above take-off and 2500 feet above the sea below. From this height the views of Lanzarote and across to La Graciosa were truly breathtaking. There were a dozen gliders in the air but there was plenty of room for everyone, and I felt like I was part of a flock of big fat seagulls soaring high above the cliffs. I took some photos with my camera but accidentally opened the battery compartment to see my batteries drop a couple of thousand feet to the rocks below. This was probably the most amazing and second longest flight of my life! After a full two hours I came in to land with a huge smile on my face. This time everyone chose the official landing field!

Day 6.

Light rain with low clouds in the morning, then blown out on Macher in the afternoon. Andy and Gordon went go-karting. Opinions vary as to who won, but Andy demonstrated his love of gardening when he took a detour off the track to inspect a hedge close up. In the late afternoon some of us went to Playa Quemada where we were told there was a possible site right on the shore. Since only paragliders had ever been seen flying here and landing options were limited, this was a job for Andy, our resident test pilot. He took off, flew a couple of beats of the small cliff and then hit some nasty sink. Turning back, the top landing option was no longer available, but he pulled off an excellent landing on the small beach.

Day 7.

Blown out on Macher again, so we packed the gliders ready for the journey home. Late afternoon the wind dropped and three low-airtime pilots heading up the hill asked if they could get some assistance. Andy and Allan Huntly went up to the take-off with them. This was one of the pilot's first ever high flight, so Andy took a quick flight on his Avian Rio to check the conditions and top landed, declaring the conditions suitable. The three pilots then all had successful flights in the fading light down to the bottom landing field.

Once again our annual Lanzarote trip was great fun and a great success. Thanks to Andy for organising it as usual and to Henry for letting us stay at his villa. Roll on next year's trip! Four of us had video cameras, so watch out for the forthcoming feature length movie of the holiday!



Left: Dave soaring high above Mirador with La Graciosa in the background.

Above: Tim enjoys the afternoon sun in the Mirador bottom landing field after another great flight.

For Sale

Unfortunately due to health reasons Christine and Mike Rielly are giving up flying and selling all their gear:

2 Discoveries (195 + 195s), 2 Doodlebugs and 2 Metamorphosi reserves with paraswivels for sale @ £2,000 for each package. Additionally 2 Icom A5 Sport airband transceivers that have never been used, with a Sperwill Helmet and a Comtronics Helmet for £200 each. Anyone interested can e-mail Mike at rielly666@tiscali.co.uk.

DVD mini reviews

I got the following DVDs from Santa this year so I thought I'd share a few thoughts on each.

Never Ending Thermal

A beautifully made film about two guys from Venezuela who spend five months travelling the world with their paragliders. Lots of footage of paragliders doing what they do best: falling out of the sky in various states of collapse, although strangely most of it seems to be intentional. Their journey takes them to:

- That big sand dune in France - lots of messing around at 5 feet agl
- The St. Hilaire festival - spectacular fancy dress paragliding
- A couple of acro competitions including some chat with the Rodriguez brothers
- Morocco - spectacular desert scenery
- Venezuela - flying from the Angel Falls - the tallest waterfall in the world with a drop of over 3000 feet.

There's also a lot of strange hand waving with the middle 3 fingers curled and thumb and pinky sticking out. I'm not sure what this means - "I'm risking my life on this dodgy paraglider thingy" maybe?

47 minutes with 32 minutes of extrax.

The Red Bull X-Alps 2005

The tagline for this is "Launch into a world of pain" and they're not joking. There are rather too many close up shots of badly blistered feet with black falling off toenails for my liking. This event was plagued with bad weather for the first week, with some of the competitors walking up to 90% of the distance.

It's an interesting video with lots of good footage, but there are two things I don't like about it. The first is that you never get to see on the map where the pilots are during the documentary so it's hard to visualise their relative positions. The second is that none of the interviews at the end are translated or have subtitles, and not many of the competitors speak English!

75 minutes including extras.

East Wind - A Border Crossing Adventure

This is what the box says: "Join Till Middelhauve, Michael Werner and Erik Behr as they embark on a border crossing adventure of easter Europe on "Flykes"... flying bicycles! The Flyke is a hybrid of a push-bike and a paramotor, and can be pedalled engine-off, motored propeller on, and, of course, flown. Over 15 days the trio fly, pedal and motor the 1632 km from Hanover to the Black Sea. Travel with them as they breeze down leafy lanes, cycle across summer meadows, fly over wondrous cloudscapes, push through deep valleys under orographic mist and propel themselves, motors on, down bustling highways, dwarfed by articulated trucks. It is an eyebrow-raising, hilarious adventure that crosses boundaries and leaves bystanders astonished. With the Flyke, the journey never ends - you touch down, fold your wing, and cycle on!"

A reasonably accurate description, although these things are more flying tricycles than bicycles. One or two crashes also make things more interesting! 37 minutes with extras: 56 minutes total.

Bivouac Tours

At last - a film about hang gliding! This is all about the bivouac styled touring holidays for FLPHGs that Flylight Airsports run every year. Not surprisingly most, but not all of the machines are Doodlebugs. It's a fairly low-budget

production, but no less enjoyable for it. Again there were a couple of crashes but unfortunately not caught on camera. All we get to see are the inventive repair jobs afterwards - these guys can fix anything!

Although this was the cheapest of the 4 DVDs (£10), for me it was the most enjoyable. The only problem was that the home-made DVD-R disc wouldn't play properly on either of my PC DVD drives, but it did work OK on my laptop. 55 minutes no extras.

If anyone wants to borrow any of these DVDs, just let me know!

Website Updates

I've stuck some of my Lanzarote photos on the www.scottishairsports.co.uk website. If anyone has any other photos they want me to add, let me know.

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