



BANNERDOWN

NEWS

May 2005

Bannerdown Gliding Club RAFGSA Keevil Airfield

Editorial

April slipped by without me bashing the keyboard, but was by all accounts had little to write home about. In order to help me write something of interest could you please ensure that the logkeeper records any significant events – conversions, badge flights etc on LogStar.

March at Keevil

March will be remembered by many as the month of Northerly and North westerly winds. Never before in my time have I seen so many days when the wind was on the ridge (6 Saturdays in a row!). March the 5th produced ridge, thermal and Wave that took Andy Miller to 8,700ft on a day where the cloud base was 5,000ft. Saturday the 12th was an exceptional day with thermals to 5,000ft forming in terrific streets allowing some good cross countries to be flown. The LS8 flew for over 7 hours from 3 flights whilst Bob's Large and small (Brain & Bromwich) managed slightly over 8 hours in 1 flight in the DG500.

Ron Peach converted to the Janus Whilst Jasper Mathews flew a Bronze Leg in the K21. Megan Montgomery successfully completed her Basic Instructors course at Husbands Bosworth and thus doubling our number of female instructors.

Bannerdown achieved a first in the UK with the introduction of plasma rope on 1 of the drums on the 'Merv' Tost.

Statistically a good month with 221 hours flown from 433 launches but with only 80Kms recorded on LogStar. Cross country pilots please ensure that your Kms are passed to the logkeeper on the day of your flight.

The tractor is now serviceable thanks to Pete Brownlie and team and after a considerable absence from the launch point the K18 has finally

emigrated from the workshop to see the light of day again. Another glider arrived for the Slingsby museum in the form of a T.8 Tutor.

April at Keevil

Bob Brain broke on the winch on the first flight of the month and promptly deposited the new plasma rope in several back gardens in Keevil village by flying with the wrong wing down.



The first flying day of the month must have been exceptionally soarable as the concrete swan (HKB) was kept aloft for almost 2 hours by Ron Peach. Terry Brown proved that you can't bat wood by flying 3 hours 19 minutes in the K18 for the longest flight of the month.

Sunday the 12th produced the first solo of the year when Oscar Constable sent Tim Roberts off in the K21.

A contingent came from Lee-On-Solent lead by ex Bannerdown member Ben Bennett brought a Sport Vega and Cirrus up for the bank holiday weekend, whilst the flying weather was far from exceptional the social scene took a step forward.

Statistically a very poor month with just 108 hours flown from 279 launches.

Saturday 5th March – One not to forget (Andy Miller)

Early last summer, Neil asked me "what is this wave that people talk about?" "It's the reason that pilots give when they can't sort out the thermals in this area" was the best description I could think off then. To be fair, the converse could also contain a grain of truth, something I found out on Saturday.

The various forecasts had all been pointing to a lovely ridge day (again!) for quite some time and so I was delighted to be offered R3. Even the instruction to stay airborne while a drop progressed did not seem to be too onerous. The ridge may well have been working, but on a day when you reach it higher than leaving the launch it does not matter too much - the thermals were lovely. The drop seemed to take for ever, although cloud base was a good place for watching it. The ridge may well have been almost irrelevant, but Westbury was triggering the strongest lift of all so when my call of "down in 10" was answered by "please make it 15 minutes" I knew just where to go.

This duty thermal was humongous; with a hang glider parked in the core as a visual aid, even I could centre, but not for long. Cloud base stopped the fun as the vario needle bounced off the stop and the averager reported 8.9kts. Heading back, however, it slowly dawned on me that, even though I had left this cloud, I was still in lift! No way could the scenery be described as wave cloud, 'chaotic, ragged cumulous' would fit better, but, upwind of the biggest lump on top of that humongous duty thermal, was lift. Without a pattern to work to, working it was little more than guesswork & imagination.

This upwind patch was rewarding and eventually took me to 8,700' above Keevil. In normal wave flying the pattern becomes obvious as you climb, but not this time, not even much scenery unless you like a view of 'chaotic, ragged cumulous' (I do). It is always a shame to come down, although re-establishing contact with one's feet is a bonus. The really tricky part? explaining to Kathryn why I was 2 hours late picking her up.

Well, was it wave?

Other useful Information

A club expedition to Bowland Forrest is being mounted 14th – 21st May, those who are interested should contact myself. For those interested in wave flying Andy Miller is proposing to run an expedition to Sutton Bank in the second week of October rather than going to Aboyne again this year.

As always your input for the next Bannerdown News and your comments, good or bad are always welcome by email.

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