

TINTO AGAIN

Avon Kites introduces the new:—

Phantom

The PHANTOM is a class I Rogallo sail wing, and has excellent handling and performance characteristics. The Terylene sail is made especially for us by Avon Sailmakers.

Sail area	21m ²	£155.00
Sail area	17.5m ²	£148.00

Phalanger

The PHALANGER is of course still available, and is better engineered than any other Rogallo. Sporting its unique seated soaring harness, with quick release facility, this must surely be THE class I Rogallo.

Sail area	25.25m ²	£256.40
Sail area	22m ²	£245.83
Sail area	18.5m ²	£237.23

The PELICAN, our two seater trainer, is also available upon request.

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All prices are exclusive of V.A.T.

Sunday 26th October was the day I discovered the thrill and exhilaration of a long soaring flight. From a previous best time of 15 minutes to three hours three minutes seemed hard to believe but it was one of those days when it all went right.

The weather forecast the previous day had sent the adrenalin coursing through the veins with a forecast of moderate to fresh southerly winds. As first arrival on site my enthusiasm was somewhat dampened at a sight of cloud forming halfway up Greenhill. "Never mind, lets get rigged, perhaps it will clear up later".

Colin Charles arrived. By then the cloud had lifted to the top third of the hill and Dungal hill opposite occasionally cleared of cloud completely. Prospects were beginning to look better all the time. As Alan Morrison arrived I started the uphill climb.

On the hill at cloud level a check indicated a wind speed of between eighteen and twenty two miles per hour. A perfect soaring wind but the low cloud was a little worrying. A further wind check at the top of the hill which was completely shrouded in cloud indicated a wind speed between twenty four and twenty six miles per hour. In spite of the low cloud we decided that it would be safe to fly provided one moved out from the hill quickly and away from the low cloud. The three of us set about rigging our kites.

A final "swank show" check and I was ready to go. "Just a minute where's that other glove? It's not lying about anywhere". A quick rummage through my bag without success. "Never mind, let's have a quick flight now down to the car, collect the glove and back up the hill, and by then perhaps the cloud will have cleared. Let's get strapped in. Just steady the nose wires a second. O.K.! Let's go!"

Two steps, a slight push on the control bar and I was airborne. I pulled the bar in to penetrate out below the cloud. As I moved out from the hill the cloud ceiling rose and I was able to gain height of approximately a hundred feet. Below and behind I could just see the outline of two parked kites disappearing into the mist. In front the cloud was another hundred feet above. I was still penetrating forward without difficulty. A reading of the ventimeter attached to the control frame was twenty four m.p.h. From previous occasions I had discovered that my best glide angle was about twenty m.p.h. leaving a reasonable margin to avoid stalling. I eased the bar forward watching the speed fall away to twenty. Within seconds I was entering cloud and quickly pulled in on the bar. A turn to the left and I was back in control again. The lift was fantastic and the difficulty was keeping down rather than staying up. On the other hand I had plenty of speed to spare. This was just great, plenty of lift, plenty of penetration to spare, an airstream as smooth as glass. Glove or no glove need to stay up for a while now, this is too good to miss.

After two or three drifts along the ridge I could see Alan Morrison behind and below preparing to launch. He took off and climbed rapidly.

"Need to keep the eyes skinned now with two of us in the air".

I moved away along the ridge to give him room and time to settle in to the conditions. Turning back at the end of the beat I expected to see Alan in front of me. No sign of him.

"Must be above and in front. Hope he knows the traffic rules and does not get too close to the cloud".

After another half minute still no sign of Alan. Down below Colin's kite was parked unattended. The truth began to dawn. He had gone into cloud and must have been blown over the hill. There was a moment of panic.

"Perhaps this low cloud is too hairy. Let's get down while the going is good".

I moved out from the hill again and the cloud rose in front of me. With a flying speed of twenty four miles per hour penetration was good.

"Still plenty to spare. I can reach thirty plus if necessary. I'll keep going for a bit longer".

More cars were arriving at the car park. After a while minute figures slowly toiled uphill. They seemed to take so long and for some reason kept stopping. Flying was effortless. Just like being in another world and watching the awkwardness and slowness of these land based creatures.

"Why don't they just float up here with me, much better than crawling about down there".

I began to explore my flying and turning technique continually flying with one eye on the ventimeter.

"Flying along the beat now with the hill on the right. Keep the bar out and hold the indicator at 20 m.p.h. Correct for the side gust. Prepare for a turn. Pull the bar in a little. Air speed 24 m.p.h. Push bar to the right, legs and weight to the left. Starting to turn. Now push the bar right out until flying speed falls back to 20 m.p.h. The height gain was tremendous. Nose into wind now. Centralise the control bar. Getting close to the cloud. A slight pull on the control bar; speed 24 m.p.h. Weight and legs to left again. Centralise. Back along the beat and control speed to 20 m.p.h.

Other kites were being set up on the hill. Alan was back and his kite seemed no worse for ware. "Looks like he had a reasonable if unorthodox landing".

I had done over the hour and was quite pleased with myself. I was beginning to feel cold.

"This right hand is just about frozen to the bar". I said to myself.

"Let's keep going a bit longer".

Colin took to the air. He flew about for a while then seemed to go too far in front and lost the lift. Other kites were launched. Some stayed up others lost lift and landed. I seemed to have no difficulty in staying up. I am now convinced that the ventimeter enabled me to fly at the optimum speed whereas other flyers flew too fast or too close to the stall.

A waving of arms below informed me I had reached two hours. Could I make it three? I tried pole squatting for a few minutes but my concentration went.

"Better to keep beating up and down the ridge. Gives me something to think about".

The cloud had lifted from the hill now and I could fly higher. I let the lift carry me up and backwards until I could see the other side of the hill. Nearly got in trouble that time though and had to penetrate at 30 m.p.h. to get back to safer territory.

It now seemed an age since take off. I was cold, tired, hungry, thirsty and could do with a?

"Can't be long now. Let's go in low and see how long? I pulled the bar in hard and with the sail rattling like a two stroke skimmed along the ridge.

"How long now?"

There were wild gesticulations. I think they shouted three hours.

"To hell with it anyway. Let's get down. Nose into wind and down we go."

My undercarriage felt as though it had seized up completely. I gave my legs a wriggle.

"Twenty feet to go. Ease the bar out a bit. Just a little bit more. Hell, I've stalled it! Too late now. Hold on".

Crunch!!!

"What a bloody awful landing!"

FRED JOYNES

