

## The Great British Long Jump 2016

Name of Pilot David Bareford Solo

Crew: Karin Bareford, John Braddick,

Name of Balloon Black Magic G-CDGF Type and size of Balloon UltraMagic S105

Date of flight 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Propane at start 452 litres Propane at finish 95 litres

Starting place Whitland, Carmarthenshire SN 20025/16754

Landing place Kirstead, Norfolk TM 30717/97548

Start time 08.15 Duration of flight 08hrs 20minutes

Straight line distance claimed 260miles (419km) Average speed 31.2 knots (38 knots max)

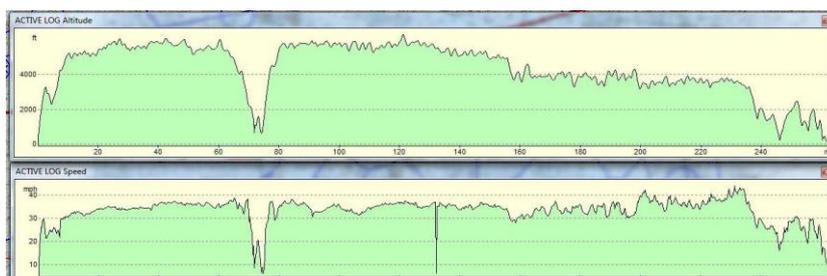
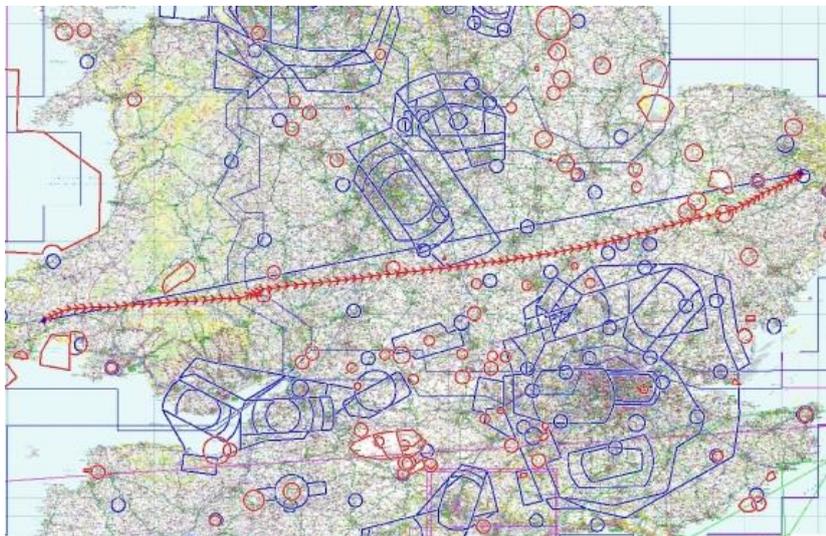
Maximum height flown 6,200feet Wind direction 270-260°

Witnesses to take-off Landlady of Taf Hotel, Whitland 01994 240356

GPS track attached

Witnesses to landing Owner of landing field at Seething Lane, Kirstead, NR15 1EG. Lives next to Netley Cottage, Seething Lane. Disappeared after giving us permission to drive into field.

Length of landing drag 5 yards Signature of Pilot



## **Report**

### **Planning**

After Dom and Steph told me they were not intending to fly the GBLJ this year I thought I might represent them in defence of their achievements last year. I originally thought I would not find the time but at the last minute noticed the weather might be good enough on the last Thursday of the month for a cross Britain flight. The forecast given on the Tuesday for the day was a moderate WSW but did suggest that the winds would strengthen in the east during the afternoon. Looking at the map there was a chance to go from the south west of Wales to the Norwich area. John Braddick, my faithful crew, volunteered with no hesitation and Karin, my wife was happy to make up the remainder. On Wednesday afternoon, Windyty (weather website) showed the lightest winds for the morning to be just north of Carmarthen Bay so, looking at Google Maps, there appeared a nice field at Whitland just off the A40. Last year when crewing for Dominic we woke up at 2.00am to drive over to the Norwich area to fly back towards Wales. We were all very tired by the end of that day so on this occasion we decided to take it easy and drive to Whitland that evening. A B&B was booked and we travelled over late arriving at 9.30pm. The owner of the Taf Hotel B&B was very helpful when we arrived. He rang a farmer friend and we drove over to see a field but the entrance was far too muddy. We then called in at the local park (Park Dr Owen) and at the bowls club there we found a local councillor who was happy for us to use the park to take off. By this time Windyty was indicating that the winds in the Norwich area, late afternoon, would be about 20 kts at 1000 feet and 10 kts gusting 20-25 on the surface so it appeared I was looking at a fairly sporting landing.

### **The flight**

After an early breakfast, we drove from the B&B 300 yards to the launch field. It was calm but overcast and it took us half an hour to arrange the tanks get the balloon inflated. My GPS indicated sunrise at 08.00 and sunset at 18.00 though the latter would reduce to 17.38 by the time I landed the other side of the country. I was eventually off at 08:15, watched by the landlady from the B&B, and climbed up to the cloud base at 3,000 feet which gave me a direction of 070 at 20kts. This would take me straight into Sennybridge Danger Area so I climbed up above the cloud to 5,500 feet giving me a direction of 085 at nearly 30kts. Sadly this meant flying over the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains without seeing them. After two hours I was now heading for the D147 Danger Area so descended just as the cloud was breaking in the lee of the Black Mountains to move left. As I descended I did not turn left as much as I thought so had to keep going down to a level where I then hit curl over and into slow and unpredictable winds. Eventually the wind stabilised and I headed in a direction of 030 at a slow 8kts to skirt the danger area. Once clear I climbed back to 5,700 feet and at times was now reaching 32kts. In the lee of the Welsh mountains the cloud began to break and I had occasional clear views of Hereford and the Malverns. I passed over Evesham just after 3 ½ hours and there was enough directional control between 5,200 and 5,400 feet to steer myself below the

Daventry corridor with a ceiling of 5,500ft. The cloud cover below had become complete once again but the sun above made it quite warm. It was now 1 o'clock and time for lunch so I consumed the cheese sandwich that the landlady had kindly made for me. On my present course I was still aiming to land just south of Norwich at about 16:30 with plenty of fuel remaining. I was more than happy to land at about 16:30 as the gusting was forecast to increase towards dusk. Just north of Milton Keynes, which luckily was in cloud, I descended to 4,000ft but continued at 30kts. As I approached Bedford after 5 ½ hours flying the cloud again broke up but the speed was slowly increasing. Next was Cambridge and as I flew just to the north of the city high-level cloud came in and the temperature dropped such that I had to put my jacket back on. At this time a microlight climbed up to wave at me and after two passes turned back to his base. I was now approaching the active USAF air bases at Lakenheath and Mildenhall and I knew that a current NOTAM showed that the Danger Area D208 beyond was active to 7,500 feet. I had now descended to 3700 feet, with the speed at 34kts, and this gave me the correct direction to fly south of the danger area but still allow me to turn north later towards Norwich. I called up Lakenheath and informed them of my intentions and they appeared happy even though I could not squawk to them. I heard plenty of active jet flying but never saw one aircraft. I then passed over RAF Honington as I reached my top speed of 38kts and then descended to 1,500 feet with a speed of 20kts and a good direction of 065.

All there was to do now was to land. I had hoped that some of the farmers in Norfolk had been lazy but I found them all to have been very industrious and virtually every field had been ploughed, harrowed, and planted leaving very few landing areas. I came down to ground level and the wind was about 12 kts with only slight gusting. This gave me confidence to fly on a bit further. There was a very nice gliding field at Tibenham which I considered but there was some activity on the ground with two gliders out and what appeared to be a winch so I climbed to 2,000ft to overfly. I had just finished the seventh tank so had plenty of fuel in reserve. I was now passing south of Norwich and approached to land. I missed two possible landing spots due to mild gusts but then in front just to the left was a lovely pasture field. I came down to treetop height and just moved into the field as the wind slowed and my touchdown speed was no more than 5kts. The field was close to the village of Seething, 7 miles south-east of Norwich. As I touched the ground a gentleman from an adjoining house came out to greet me. On questioning him he told me he owned the pasture field and he was happy for our van to drive in through the open gate. Just at that moment I heard the retrieve on the radio for the first time telling me that they were just at the entrance. We had agreed that we would not try to keep in radio contact but I would text them my position every half an hour. I had not seen them the whole journey and they had only seen me when I came down just past the Black Mountains; they had done very well to keep up. That just left us to pack up and drive the 3 ½ hours home.



Preparation at Park Dr Owen



Take off 08.15



Park Dr Owen in Whitland looking back



The Brecon Beacons



Descending over the Black Mountains



Hereford through the clouds



Upton upon Severn



Easton Neston at Towcester



Traffic holdup on the A428 approaching Cambridge



The microlight disappearing into the distance



The landing



The crew arrives on time