

The Great British Long Jump 2020

Name of Pilot.....David Bareford.....

Name of Co-pilot.....Jona White.....

Name of Balloon.....Black Magic.....

Type and size of Balloon.....U/Magic S105.....

Date of flight.....11th OCTOBER 2020

Propane at start.....11 tanks/605.....tanks/litres

Propane at finish.....1/2 tank/22.....tanks/litres

Starting place Kelloholm, Dumfries & Galloway. NS 7391 1152

Landing place...Ipplepen, South Devon SX8302 6769

Start time.....07.50.....

Duration of flight.....9 hours 50 mins.....

Straight line distance claimed.....338 miles...(544km).....

Average speed.....34.4 mph (30kts).....(Max^m speed 50.7mph).....

Maximum height flown.....11,287 feet

Wind direction.....180° +/- 5°.....

Witnesses to take-off.....Photo.....
(inc. tel. no. & email)

Witnesses to landing.....Photo...+...Farmer at Home Park Farm, Ipplepen,
NEWTON ABBOT, TQ12 5TR 01803 812438

Length of landing drag...2 big divots 50 yards apart!!

Signature of Pilot...



Planning

Musing over the weather prospects on Thursday 8th Oct. for the weekend ahead for local flying I noticed that there was a probability that there would be an ideal northerly for a long flight down the spine of Wales; something I had always thought of doing for the long jump. Friday, the weather predictions seemed more set and ideal for Sunday so I started initial planning. Looking at distance needed to try to win a long jump, north Wales to the south coast was not going to be long enough so it would mean starting in Scotland and a 100 mile flight over water to get to north Wales; it seemed possible. I messaged around for crew on Friday evening while sampling the beer at our nearby Beer Emporium – lovely beers. Dom, my son and a previous winner was very interested but had firm plans for the weekend. After several rejections, I found three enthusiastic crew, Jona White, Jack Pittaway and Steve Daly (we all seemed to be in the same bubble!). I had thought about flying solo but realised a safety pilot might be useful with flying for an intended 10 hours. I reckoned that I could carry an extra person, but it might limit my duration to 8-9 hours; however, that should take me 250 miles on the forecast winds, a respectable distance. Having lent most of my tanks to my children, Dom and Stephanie I rang Rick Vale to see if he could lend me any; he could. I arranged with the crew to meet up at 3.00pm on Saturday to travel up north for the flight on Sunday. Saturday morning, I picked up 11 titanium tanks from Rick, refuelled them, checked life jackets and transponder and booked into the Premier Inn, Dumfries. I reviewed my potential track. From Dumfries I needed to pass over Wales keeping clear of Liverpool and that track would then likely take me between Cardiff and Bristol and on down to Lyme Regis, if I was not stopped by Bristol ATC. There did not appear to be much variation in direction with height so it might all be very tricky. I looked on Google maps, located the Kirkcudbright Training Centre that operated the Danger Area of a firing range out to sea and up to 15,000ft over my intended flight track, rang them up to be told there was no activity that weekend. I then looked for a potential launch site north of there and found a very flat grass area in Kelloholm, easily accessible from the main road 40 miles north of the coast and just within Dumfries & Galloway, the next county north being in total lockdown. One just hoped it had not been built on!

Saturday 3.30pm we drove north and booked in at the hotel and had time for a leisurely meal at the adjoining restaurant; but no drinking alcohol indoors under Covid regulations!

The flight

Sunday morning, after checking on the updated weather forecasts (which remained unchanged except for a slight reduction in wind speeds) we left at 6.00am to drive the 30 miles up to Kelloholm arriving just as the early stages of dawn revealed the intended launchsite. The area was ideal except the valley

wind was against our planned layout from the road; the opposite side was a very steep bank down, so we decided on the side of the area as the wind was very light. There was frost on the grass and the skies were clear, a perfect day.

We attached 7 tanks to the outside and only 4 inside (just for social distancing purposes for those in the basket!). Preparation and inflation went as planned and we were airborne at 07.50, 15 minutes after sunrise. We climbed steadily requiring much burning as we were only about 40Kg below our allowed all up weight and the overnight temperatures had suppressed the gas pressure. We switched the radio onto Scottish FIR but as we intended to remain below the TMA and there were no transmissions, we just kept a listening watch and dialled 7000 on the transponder. Jona pointed out that we had taken off not far from Loch Doon which seemed rather topical. After an hour the coastline due south approached and we climbed up to FL 90, changing on to our third tank. You could see the Isle of Man distinctly. We climbed further up to FL100 which gave us an extra 8kts. We were now flying at 40kts over the Irish Sea taking us an estimated 2¹/₂ hours to reach Wales. We switched to London FIR but being Sunday the radio traffic was non-stop and would not allow us much time to communicate between the burns. We flew on with views of the Lake District in cloud to our left, the Isle of Man to our right and the offshore wind farms below. After 2 hours, as we approached the air lane between Liverpool and Ronaldsway on the Isle of Man we called up to request clearance through it. We were greeted with a firm NO so dropped down to FL70 to pass below; we didn't see one aircraft at all above! We passed over Llandudno at 11.40 to climb back up to FL95 on a track of 180° as the lower wind was taking us too much west. Sadly, just as on my previous GBLJ over Wales, much of the land below was obscured by cloud so saw nothing of Snowdonia or much of the spine of Wales, the initial reason for the flight. Maybe next time! We took it in turns to fly, an hour about and on my next hour off I recalculated our route and expected duration. This would take us over Swansea and clear of all airspace with enough gas to get us into Devon. We had to keep subtly altering our height between FL80 and 95 to keep a course between 175° and 180° and our speed above 30kts (anything higher or lower taking us more south-westerly and more water). We got in contact with our crew and asked them to continue from Strensham on down to Exeter.

We had good views of Barmouth and the Dyfi Forest but not much of the reservoirs of the Elan valley. It did not seem long before we could see the south coast of Wales glinting in the autumn sunshine. I texted Stephanie who was working that day at Singleton Hospital to indicate we would be crossing over Port Talbot at FL80 and she may be able to see us. She did and sent a photo back. At 3.15pm with just under 3 cylinders left we passed over the south Wales coast with north Devon very visible in front of us. It took us just half an hour to cross the Bristol Channel and we were now over our third country of the

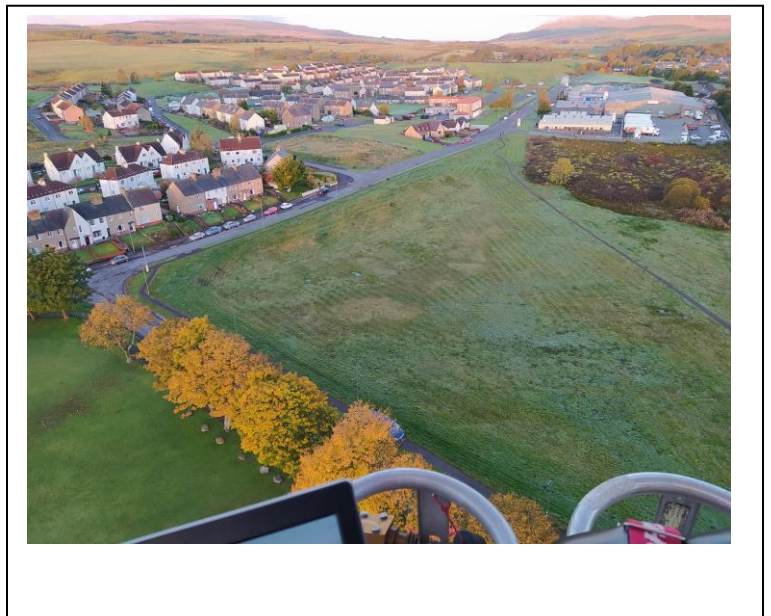
day. The cumuli cloud below were dissipating fast, so we saw more of Devon than Wales. We continued at FL70-80 to keep up the speed and direction and realised that the all time GBLJ record set by Mike Forster was in site of us, a record I had always admired.

We had lovely views of the whole of Exmoor and as we crossed the Exeter – Barnstaple road at 4.15pm we had reached 304 miles and were now extending the GBLJ record.

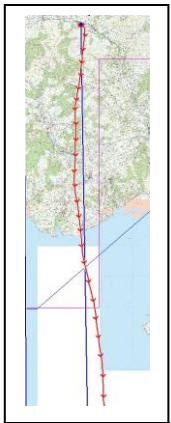
Shortly afterwards we could now see the south coast. We knew that South Devon does not have big fields and the forecast wind was 10kts gusting 17kts, so we needed something a bit larger than average. We flew past Exeter and waited until the land was a bit flatter. Though we were now down to 20 kts at FL60, this speed held all the way down to 2,000ft. We crossed the A38 14 miles southwest of Exeter and started our final descent. It certainly was gusty down there and as we lined up to several fields a gust would take us away. Finally after 10 minutes and several aborts a big clear field opened up in front of us, though the largest tree in the area decided to obstruct an otherwise straightforward approach requiring a final steepish approach and a rather solid landing – or two! At 17.39 we came to a halt. Not the best of my landings! 22 litres of propane left. When the crew arrived about 10minutes later, I first went to see the farmer opposite the gate onto the road for our field, the gate only held by twine. He was very friendly and when I told him of our launch point he said he had never been to Scotland. After a lovely chat I gave him our bottle of wine, then went back, packed the balloon away and we all headed home.



Balloon fully loaded



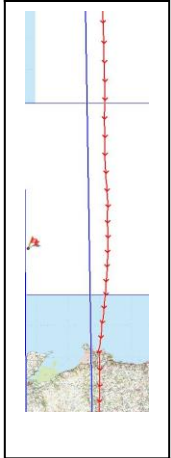
Take off Kelloholm



The south coast of Dumfries



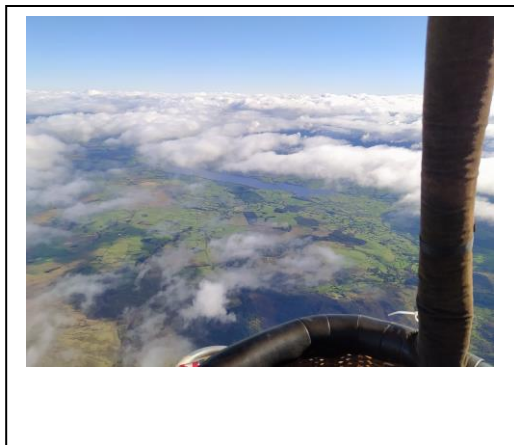
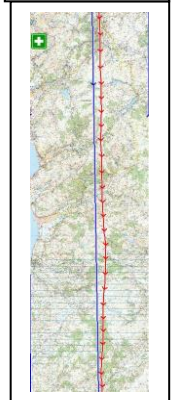
The Irish Sea with the Isle of Man in the distance



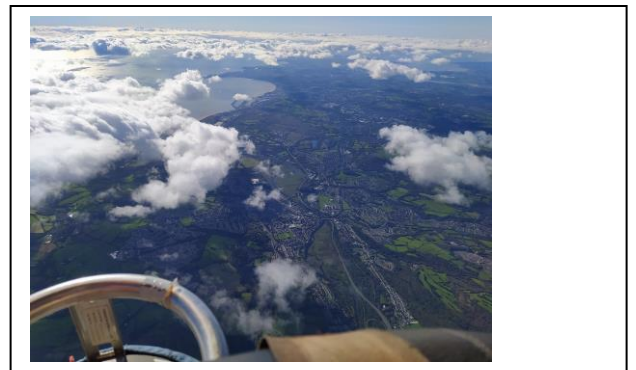
Landfall at Llandudno



Looking back at the wind farms



Wales through the clouds

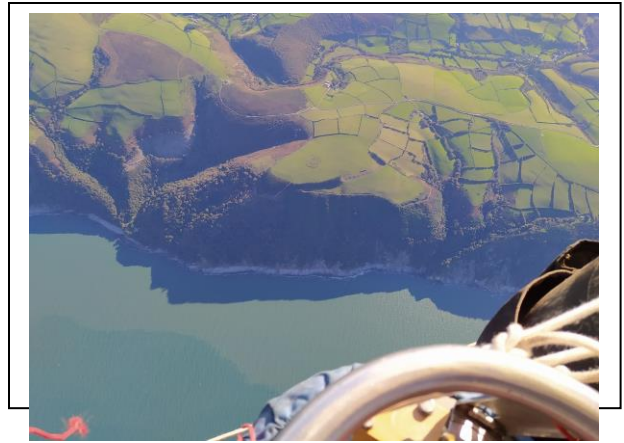


Swansea Bay

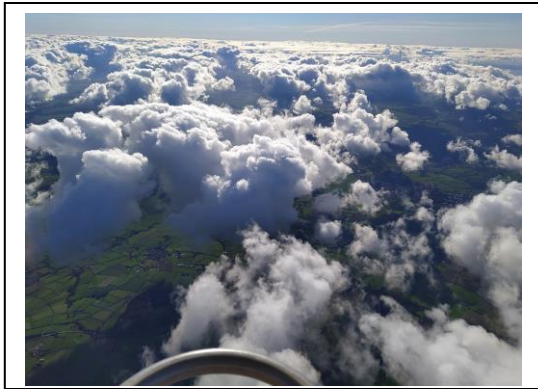




Looking up the Bristol channel



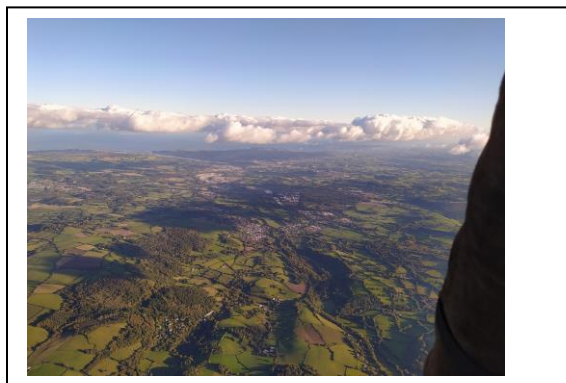
Arriving at the north coast of Devon



Devon below



and the clouds dissipating



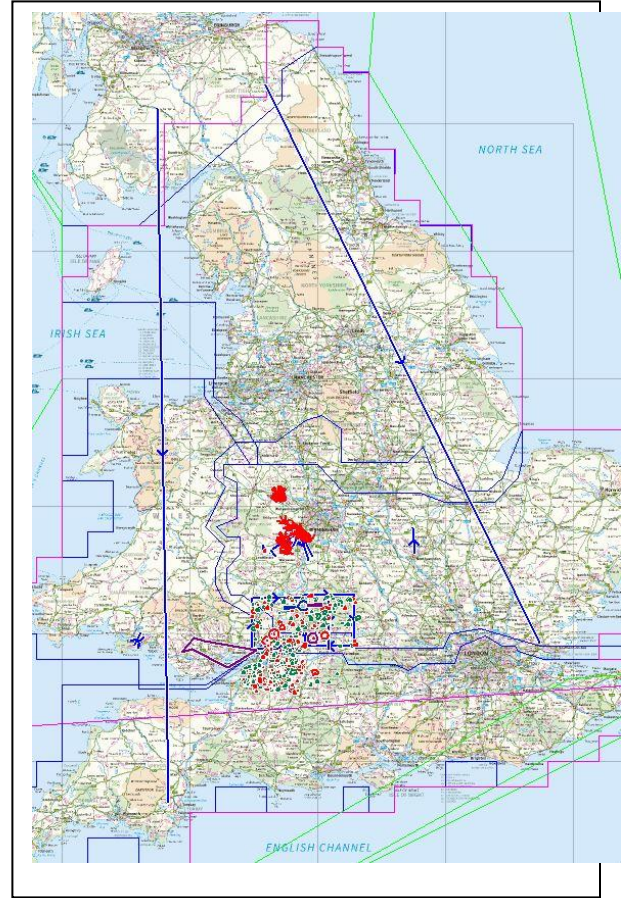
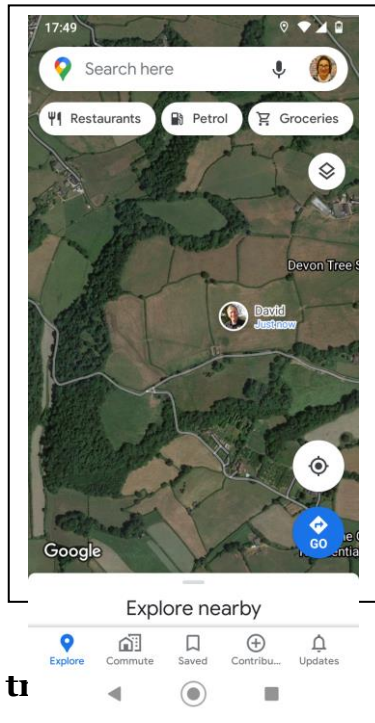
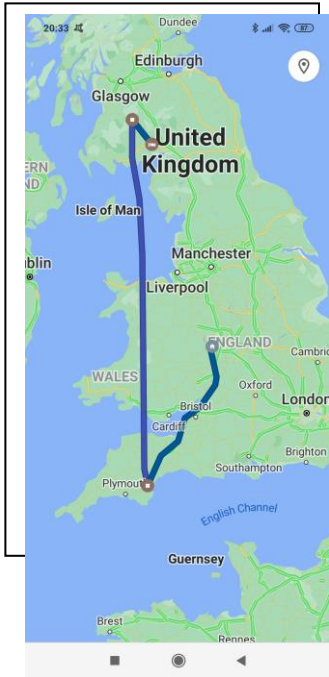
The south coast of England ahead



The final landing



Take off



My route c.f. Mike Forster

