



Four & a half days by Jon Trewartha

After Andy Hancock going further than me last year something had to be done to stop his head exploding and this was to fly further than him from the our only inland XC site - Carn Brea.

Day One looked good, I was keen, Alan was keen and Timmy was there too.

Sweet! the whole hill to ourselves! Take off - I was forced to go first, as always test pilot & Guinea pig what-ever I didn't mind. The day looked good, with a nice burnt patch within the gorse below take off providing a new landing area beneath me. I took the plunge and flew out into sink, lift, sink, Lift, Sink, LIFT, SINK. You get the picture "the perfect day!" After scratching around for a bit and catching the odd blip, I soon realized the new landing area was giving off almost constant thermic lift, so although the wind was light it was pretty easy to stay up, because as you know you normally bomb out in the big sink before the big thermal, but it was not a problem as the black burnt patch was a good save point.

After getting comfortable with the air and gaining height, I pushed out over the fields to an area lit by a bright patch of sun and suddenly hit a big one. Wicked!! Turning after the golden rule I cored the bitch up to 358 m above take off, so look out Andy here I come!! Unfortunately I did not find another thermal and the glide took me to the small Aerial with the satellite dishes behind Four Lanes. His XC title was still safe! After realizing the mobile was dead and that I didn't have a radio for a contact being a couple of miles from nowhere (XC is fun). I hopped, skipped and caught a taxi back to the hill after borrowing a local farmers phone (thanks farmer). Costing me ten pound for the taxi (bank holiday fares), I thought I'd better stay by the Carn Brea hill to save money.....as tomorrow was looking good, and once home I could charge the batteries up on the phone and radio.

Day Two: was there, but the weather was not great! The wind was more on the hill than the day before, but it had also increased to 18mph some times 20 or 21. This was not good, and taking off down the slope a bit is a bit dodgy! So we waited.....which paid off, for when the thermals came through conditions went light enough to take off in. The day was dull overcast but there was good lift, 7 up was the best thermal I recorded, and 10 down in the shit.

Again catching another thermal, coring the bitch up getting to 537m above take off, I set off down wind on a glide to victory. Unfortunately not making it as far as planned (bombed out). I packed my wing and stuck the thumb out on the road, and actually got a lift back to the hill (sweet!). Again, not beating Andy! The next day was similar, and the next day again, although the gap was definitely disappearing on distance.

Day Five: This day meant looking after the kids, and it looked the best of all! The pain was too great. I had rung Culdrose and asked if it was all clear, I suggested going over or around their air space, they said yes but a glider club was there so be aware! The kids were packed off to nannies, and I was on the hill again. Missing the morning big patch of cloudless blue I thought I had missed it, though the breeze felt a good 12/15 mph so it was worth a go. I flew off almost straight into a 'Biggy'. So again cored the bitch up to 507 m, but it didn't last long. So I headed back to the hill, because the down wind thing got me nowhere. Then suddenly another two "wicked" thermals, ok back to the hill we go, then another, and another, although the hill was slowly disappearing I kept this up for at least 15 thermals. Always going back up wind and getting another. It seemed to work as before I knew it Culdrose was in sight and my drift in the lift was taking me towards it. With no great height I decided to go around Culdrose airspace by heading for a village, arriving at it with about a 1000 feet. I waited over and around this village, expecting a bit of lift but ended up sinking and drifting slightly backward. I roughly calculated my landing and roughly landed there with a *going backwards super John landing thingy* WaaHa!!!! Beat him!! I thought, but where was I? 'Gweek' a local told me and Alan the star man came to my rescue and picked me up. Thanks Al, Sorry Andy - your turn to beat me now.

Ps. I was joking about your head....that's your ass on top of you neck surely ha ha!!

Well done Jon. A total distance of 8 ¾ Miles or 13Km.

Carn Brea XC tips:

Carn Brea works best in a light 8-10mph NNW-NNE cool smooth airflow with unstable conditions that allow cumulous to develop. Sometimes the ridge can be practically unsoarable due to its shallow profile, the trick for XC being to be patient and timing the thermal cycles coming through take off so as to launch into one. The Carn Brea ridge and monument act as an excellent trigger point for thermals generated by heat sources out front like Camborne and Redruth. Get high as possible and drift back with the thermal towards Four Lanes TV mast on ridge directly behind take off. Here likewise you should find more thermals triggering off to help you on your way southwards. From height you should look out and aim for the other 2 'high' bits of land downwind one being Carnmenellis. These also have aerials on top and should be triggering thermals for you. If low try to avoid the large wooded areas and flying directly over Stithians Reservoir as you will only find sinky air here. Fly along their edges as here is best for any thermal development and trigger points due to greater temperature differences between them and their surroundings. If you are lucky enough to be high then fly the clouds. Glide fast through the blue holes between clouds and slow down under them to utilize lift.

The Lizard peninsula often has a large area of **sea breeze convergence cloud** (see photo) forming above it which normally lies orientated north-south on a line roughly starting just behind Four Lanes and ending several miles offshore of Lizard point. This is your highway to heaven – or getting somewhere downwind of Carn Brea to the Lizard at least!! Use thermals to connect with the convergence where you should find lift everywhere!



