

Defined Flying Challenges in the Lakes, Dales and Pennines A Paragliding guide

by Ed Cleasby

Review by John Smith - November 2013

Paperback (and paperback-sized - you can travel with it), 193 pages (nice quality paper too)
Published by Ed Cleasby, 2013 Price £11:99

This book should be part of a series covering the UK. It contains illustrated descriptions of over 60 routes in the Lakes, Dales and Pennines. I'm trying hard not to say "site guide" because in the Introduction Ed has put, in red, bold, capitals that "It is most certainly **NOT A SITE GUIDE.**" However, the grading (more on that in a minute), Ordnance Survey mapping, safety overlays and written descriptions are certainly enough to judge the route before seeking more detailed information from the Locals.

I don't particularly like the title...but can't come up with a better one. Maybe at my stage of paragliding I don't "get" the challenge aspect, but the title belies the benefits the book offers. Yes, it does what it says on the tin, but this is part-travel guide for inspiring (and planning) your next flying holiday, part-training manual for allowing progression through more challenging (I get it now!) flights. The aim is to give pilots routes of various complexity to challenge them and allow them to progress and build up experience in a safe and progressive way. As Ed puts it, "*My aim was to give those pilots who were post coaching group, or just wanted a few challenges, something to get their teeth into and have a go at.*"

Pulling on grading systems familiar with skiers and climbers, Ed has cleverly given an indication on how difficult a route may be. The format (as a skier myself) is instantly accessible, I get how it works. Black runs bite!, Beginners start on the Green, Intermediots do something in between (Blue and Red). Not having flown these routes, I don't know how well this actually transfers to paragliding, but the logic is sound. I see it as a very helpful step in clarifying the particular challenge of the route in question. This would give me confidence to try it and confidence too in investing time and resources in planning a flying trip to do more. This is the other use for this book, which Ed hasn't emphasized. Planning a flying trip is going to be much easier with a guide of this nature; contact with local pilots can be kept to a concise minimum, allowing much more relevant communication and hopefully resulting in a much more fulfilling flying holiday. Having a pre-planned range of options will allow for much more flexibility (and therefore much more flying), which has to be good news given the vagaries of the British weather.

The book is divided into introduction and information, the Lake District section, articles ("essays") from guest pilots, the Dales and Pennines section and finally "six of the best" which records some of the more impressive flights in the areas covered and the pilots who flew them. It is well-illustrated throughout, with photos, diagrams and actual Ordnance Survey and Google Earth mapping. Each route section begins with an overview of the general area from a flying perspective before going on to the individual routes themselves. Each sub-area may have several routes described and starts in a nice standard format. The inclusion of the guest "essays" is a great idea and stops the book from feeling too "dry", as does the information-packed Introduction. This goes from basic explanation of the book through to GPS use, flight software and post-flight analysis.

What I would like to see is this format repeated for other sites around the UK. Rather like the OS Explorer Maps, I'd like to be able to buy a book like this for the major flying areas across the country. Remember, to me this is as much about inspiration as anything else. There are many club sites on the internet hosting site guides; they come next, after you have been inspired to fly in that area. The mapping and text in the Guide is such that most of decisions on what to fly has

been done for you, by someone who knows the area better than you do - how great is that?

Sections:

Foreword

Introductory notes

Paragliding challenges in the Lake District

Paragliding essays - articles by guest authors

Paragliding challenges in the Yorkshire Dales and Pennines

Closed circuit flights

Six of the best - a selection of impressive flights carried out in the areas covered by the book by six pilots.

Details of each flight are given

Support - Links to mapping

Route listings - list of the routes to "tick off" as you do them

TYQ:3 VFM:Good. This article may appear elsewhere on the Internet and in print.

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