

A very productive day was had today, winching in the gorgeous winter sunshine of the Pewsey Vale. Great to see Dave back on his feet only a few weeks after major back surgery... his sense of humour is still firmly intact, but sadly the quality of his jokes hasn't improved. Great to see you back, mate! Also present were Trainee Air Dogs, Hamish, Damson and Muppet - very well behaved spaniels, not that they had much choice tied up to a large truck all day.

We also had Cloudbase's first ever winch student, Geoff the Doc, who was briefed and dispatched by Dave and Chris and winched skywards by Lee. Fantastic flying and very big smiles from Geoff - an excellent addition to the Cloudbase Posse and a real flying enthusiast. He's also a great photographer, capturing some excellent images from Liddington on Tuesday, the first of our 3 (so far!) days out this week already.

So, by the end of the day we had ironed out a few minor teething problems (mostly caused by Dave "donking" the winch!) and had succeeded in getting 22 flights - not a bad tally! These included Geoff's first ever winch flights and several test flights with Chris being the lucky one at the end of the line getting whisked ever higher, while Lee taught Dave the finer points of our shiny new hydraulic winch. With only a very limited take-off space we managed a couple of launches to 200 feet which was plenty of height to fly a gentle circuit back to take-off, all while the sun was setting over the still frosty countryside.

Winching is definitely the way ahead for calm days - we all had a ball...and are out to do it all again tomorrow! Yippee!

Chris