



# Okeford Hill

OS Grid Ref: ST 813 095 (OS Map 194)

GPS N50:53.081 W2:16.032

|                           |   |                              |  |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Hill owned and farmed by: | Mr Tony Watts<br>Penhills Farm<br>01258 860491  | Wind Direction               | N - NE (005'- 040')<br>Best: NNE (030')  |
| Bottom fields farmed by:  | Mr B. Trowbridge<br>Church Farm<br>Okeford      | Height AMSL<br>Top to Bottom | 750ft (246m)<br>335ft (110m)   |
| Nearest Phone:            | Okeford Village                                 | Pilot Grades                 | HG Club Pilot + 10hrs<br>PG Club Pilot + 10hrs<br><b>Site briefing advisable</b> |
| Casualty Units:           | Odstock Hospital,<br>Salisbury<br>Poole General |                              |  |

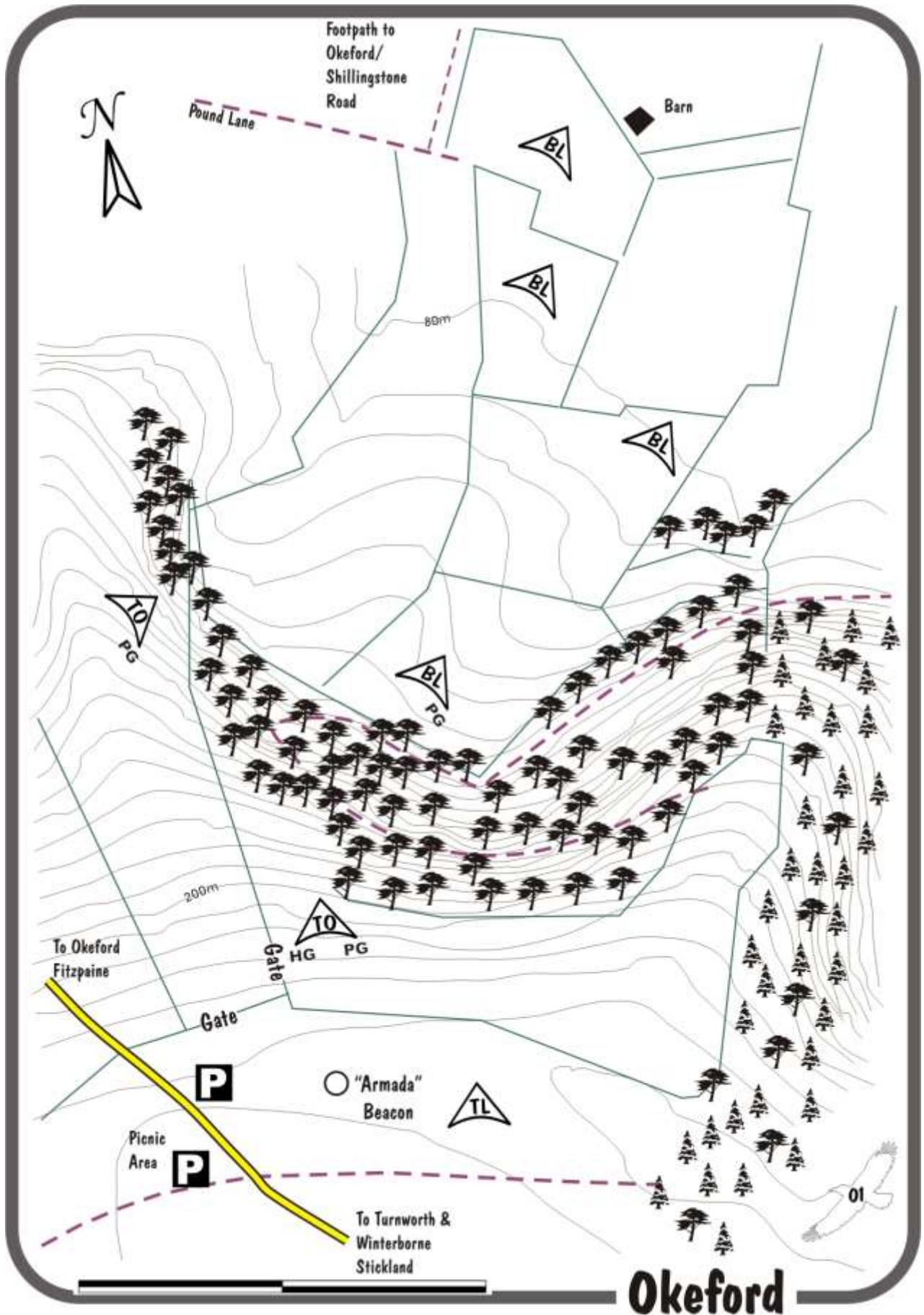
Notes by Alastair Florence

## General Site Info

Okeford Hill is a rarely flown site. The hill side is almost entirely covered in mature trees making side landing impossible. The flyable area of the site is not that big. It is not really well suited to reliable soaring and is more of an XC launch pad although it can give good soaring when conditions are right.

Monk's Down works in similar conditions and is more user friendly.

It is one of the few sites we have that will take NE. It is best flown in reasonable wind strength as the lack of slope landing means you are heading for a hard walk back up if you cannot stay up.



- Directions** Follow directions for Bell from the Blandford - Sturminster Newton Road. Just out of Okeford Fitzpaine village take the first turning to the left and drive up the hill, signed for Turnworth and Winterborne Stickland. Follow the road to the top of the hill.
- From Bell, turn right out of the site gate and drive to the first T junction. Turn right toward Okeford Fitzpaine. Follow the road to the first turning on the right. Drive up the hill as described above.
- Parking** Pull into the parking area on the left at the hill top, opposite the Armada Beacon. Do not park too close to the hedge as horses within the field have been known to reach over and gore car bonnets. Alternative parking is available on the right in a picnic area. The area is secluded and it would be unwise to leave valuables on display in vehicles.
- Access** The gate from the lay-by is padlocked to prevent the horses being let out. Climb the gate, preferably at the hinges end. Carry gear straight ahead across the first field with the beacon to your right until you reach a small gate. Through this gate and down the hill until you find somewhere suitable to launch.
- If you wish to use the alternative launch on the western spur (maybe better with a north-easterly) then don't go through the small gate. Follow the fence line down the spur until you find a gap in the trees below that you are happy to aim through.
- Hazards** Fairly obviously, trees. There is plenty of scope to practice tree landings here if you so wish! Be aware of the potential of rotor behind the tree lines when launching or landing - it can be surprising how much rotor they can produce.
- If the wind is slightly off the hill severe rotor can occur in the lee of the spurs. The wind can drag up the slope giving the impression it is on when it is not. Look for wind indicators out in front of the hill.
- Launching** The launch on the western spur is from a reasonably steep slope. You will need to find a gap in the tree line in front of you that gives adequate space to fly out. With a moderate NNE – NE wind, the spur would probably be the best launch option although it is lower than the main launch which you should consider on a lighter wind day.
- The main launch is ideally suited to a northerly wind. The launch area will be slightly sheltered by the trees in front. The trees can also give a good indication of approaching thermals on thermic days.
- The gradient of the launch here is fairly shallow, you need to run forward fast to build up enough speed to enable you to clear the scrub before you get to the tree line. Once at the tree line you should fly into much better lift. If you don't find it then you can begin to look forward to your walk back up from the bottom landing as there is no slope landing option.

**Top Landing** It is possible to land back on the western spur or around the main take off. Be aware that the ground slopes off in these areas so be prepared to over shoot a little.

It is fairly safe to land back by the beacon. You will probably need about 200ft over take-off to get back to the beacon as the ground rises steadily in this direction. Beware of the horses as well as they can move quickly and may panic if they see you swooping in from overhead. They can also become curious whilst wrapping up your glider.

Hang-gliders should fly anti-clockwise around the beacon and land up slope into wind.

**Bottom Landing** If you need a bottom landing avoid fields that are cropped. It is possible to make your way from the bottom fields directly onto the loggers track back up the hill with a paraglider rucksack.

For HG recovery you may use Pound Lane. From Okeford Village stores turn down the road toward Shillingstone. Take the second right (Back Lane) around the back of the church and the next left down the hill signed Church Farm. This road becomes Pound Lane.

or

To get to Tony Watts farm and track, follow the directions for Pound Lane but instead of turning up past the church carry on to Shillingstone. At Shillingstone village sign turn right (Lanchards Lane). Follow this road north until almost at the chalk pit. Turn right along the signed Penhills Farm. Follow through the farm yard and along the bottom of the hill.

**XC** There is potential to fly to Weymouth with little in the way of airspace worries. There is also potential to meet the fabled sea breeze front and head westward.

**Flying Generally** As mentioned, some pleasant flying can be had here in the right conditions with plenty of thermal opportunities but it is limited in soaring potential. It is strongly recommended that lower airtime pilots visit with an experienced pilot owing to the variety of hazards, i.e. trees, rotor etc. Hence CP + 10 hrs recommended.

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