

Review - Road Angel Adventurer 7000

By Ian Curren

I am both a paraglider pilot and microlight pilot and have been using the Adventurer 7000 for a few months now. This is not an in depth review, just a first impression of the unit.

Like most recreational pilots, what I needed was a lightweight GPS unit with a good sized screen that I could upload airchart info onto. I looked at Garmin and other manufacturers of GPS & PDA units but the only suitable products were clearly designed mainly for general aviation and were well beyond my meagre budget!

As a partner in Northern Paragliding I did try to get a few orders together and buy Aviation Garmins at dealer price but was offered a pretty unexciting 6% discount!

A friend who had been looking for a marine GPS mentioned he had found the Adventurer 7000 which apparently accepted memory map uploads, and sure enough it turns out that this very neat little unit (3.5" screen) can be loaded with all the UK aircharts (as well as marine charts if you want). Even better it comes pre-loaded with all the Ordnance survey landranger national parks maps. – brilliant for me, as I fly mostly the Dales and Lake district. I duly bought one and the memory map airchart software.

The first thing I did was use it as in in-car sat-nav to find my brother's new house in Bristol, it took me straight to the door and saved me from a speeding fine as it warned me of a particularly stealthy camera… so far so good.! But I guess you want to know about flying with it...It did take a while for me to figure out how to stop myself flying off the screen! (should have read the instructions I suppose). But once this human interface glitch was sorted I found it worked perfectly. Sadly the touch screen zoom button is tiny, so trying to use it without a stylus is pretty hopeless in flight, and out of the question with gloves on. You really have to decide on your chosen scale and stick with it - or attach a stylus that you can use to your flight deck.. The next issue is the screen brightness. It is primarily an in-car system and in direct sunlight the colour screen is very hard to read, so a shady vertical mounting in a cockpit or a convenient hand over the top is a necessity if it is sunny. The battery life on max screen brightness is only about 2 hours, good for shorter XC flights but a pain if you are going large or if you are flying a microlight! However you can configure the screen to turn off after a set time and to come back on at the touch of the screen. Alternatively, the unit does have a 12 volt power lead so a power hook up is pretty simple for most microlights. Or you can buy a “Power Monkey” external battery pack for extended life.

Things improved rapidly as I got used to the unit and the installation glitches were sorted.

Basically, the screen shows your position over the airchart or OS map with a blinking red cursor and your heading with a red arrow, you can enter your destination and turnpoints so that a route is easily planned and followed. You can also do your planning on a PC or laptop and then upload your track to the unit for use in flight. I also use the feature of waymarking (flagging) nearby points of interest (such as alternative landing strips)! This is perfect for most of us, and using the 1:250,000 chart on the GPS, in conjunction with a 1:500,000 paper chart gives a great blend of accurate positioning, planning range, and detail. You can load the half-million map on the unit for long range stuff, and use the zoom function to get a good working view, but the lack of ground detail is a nuisance on these charts. (They are obviously not designed for use in an electronic medium with a zoom facility). I like most pilots I expect, can use an airchart OK, but sometimes struggle with my exact position, especially when over featureless terrain, after lots of circling, or at low level. From this point of view this unit is brilliant, there is no need ever to get lost again, and now you will always know the heading home, be able to compensate instantly if you drift off-track, or be able to find that elusive grass strip. Using it in the Dales (where I know there is no airspace at all) or when I am microlighting and carrying a paper half-million airchart as well, I have found the detail of the pre-loaded land ranger map the easiest background to use. These maps are great for walking as well of course.

In summary, as a pure navigation aid it is excellent and with a price tag of just £249.95 for the unit and £20 per chart for the memory map airchart software it is the only real budget option for pilots looking for a GPS. Don't forget that you also get a full-featured voice sat nav for the car as well as a great GPS that can be used for most outdoor activities. For more product info, [click here](#)