

# Photography from the Air

Craig Ibbotson

*I have long dreamed of being able to fly, and combine this dream with my love of photography. I did get the chance to do it once with an hour's flight in an autogyro and I got some great pictures of Oxford.*



*Heage Windmill from the air  
Picture - Craig Ibbotson*

In 2012 I got another shot at my dream, but on a smaller and less costly scale. As part of a foundation degree in photography at Derby University I built a remote control aeroplane, made many modifications, and placed a camera on it.

I had planned to use a tough type camera, to withstand any bad landings, but it would not focus in flight. So back to the drawing board. With radio controlled model aircraft, weight is always an issue. So I found a camera at the right weight and fitted it to the mount I had already made. This gave me a problem - a long focal length (telephoto) was needed to stop the nose of the plane appearing in the image. I would also need subjects that would stand out from a distance and with lots of room around them with a good place to take off from.

I had already, as part of my degree, photographed Heage windmill, creating *Heage Windmill Planet* and one of my favourites, *Blue Heage Windmill* (these can be seen on my web site). I had found the staff at the mill to be very helpful and accommodating during this first visit in 2011, when I turned up and found the gate open, as they were unloading a delivery of corn, but where not expecting any visitors.

Heage windmill looked to be a good subject for trying out my aerial imaging systems. I got in touch and made a booking to fit around any building work on the mill and any visiting groups, as it was better for me to fly from an empty car park. The problem this year was the weather and the amount of it. Then one morning was ok to fly: sunshine, scattered clouds but more breeze than I would have liked.



## *Aerial Photography*

### *- continued*

So I rang Lynn at the mill, and thanks to her, I went and photographed Heage windmill from the air, getting great images I needed for my degree work. I have since gone on to photograph other landmarks in Derbyshire with this system.

For the New Year I am working on a new aerial camera system which will give me options to shoot at much tighter locations and improve the quality of the images I can produce. The new system will also be more stable, giving more time to compose the images.

With this new system I am planning to offer aerial photography as part of Square Planet Photography, the photographic business I am now in the process of setting up. Please do have a look at my website and get in touch if you would like to have your own low level aerial photographs of your wind or water mill, other landmark locations or maybe even your home.

I would like to thank Lynn Allen who was prepared to drop everything at the hint of good weather, Alan Gifford for being keen to promote my aerial images of Heage windmill and all the great people I have met at the mill and who have come to see my work of the mill displayed at local events. Great place, great people, go see them!



*Another view of Heage from a lower altitude  
Picture - Craig Ibbotson*

Craig

[www.squareplanetphotography.co.uk](http://www.squareplanetphotography.co.uk)



*The Camera Bird on the ground  
with its radio controller  
Picture - Craig Ibbotson*



*Sutton Scarsdale Hall, Nr Chesterfield,  
Derbyshire  
Picture - Craig Ibbotson*