

The Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

CLUB RADIO FREQUENCY 143.850Hz



Skywords

www.dhpc.org.uk

September 2015

Club nights start on Thursday 3rd Sept.

Horse and Farrier, Otley.





Martin Baxter

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT – Sept 15

Not much to report from the committee. In fact we cancelled the last committee meeting because there wasn't enough to justify it. No news on the proposed airspace changes at Leeds/Bradford - which is probably a good thing. We have a full [programme](#) of winter club nights lined up.

This month I have been struggling to think of something to write. But considering I have done around 70 of these chats (starting in 2009) perhaps that's not surprising. So I hope you'll forgive me if I repeat a post I made on the forum about 2 years ago. We all need reminding about safety: There are no 'new' mistakes; the problem is that we keep repeating them.

I was asked to list our concerns/risks and, off the top of my head, I came up with the following, based on severity/likelihood, in order of concern:

- Mid-air collision (with own type (HG/PG) on ridge).
- Poor weather/site assessment.
- Poor ground handling/take-off skills.
- Insufficient safety margin (collapse whilst scratching).
- Car accident (whilst racing to a flying site and looking at the clouds).
- Poor judgement on landing.
- Poor skills in dealing with a collapse.
- Over confidence.
- Mid-air collision (Model aeroplane).
- Mid-air collision (Fast jet).
- Mid-air collision (Helicopter or GA).
- Equipment failure.

If you would like to comment then please feel free to add your thoughts to the [original post](#) on the forum.

Fly safely,

Martin Baxter

Chairman

Welcome!

New members to the DHPC since the July issue are:

Fran and Steve Hanvey, Tony Fawthrop and Andrew Lumb

Come along to the first club night of the winter on Sept 3rd and meet your fellow club members.

We wish you safe flying and soft landings!

TAM



CLUB COACHES



Your Club Coaches are for using—so, use them! Don't be shy, none of them have been known to bite, well not without extreme provocation anyway. All the people below have volunteered to help new pilots / newcomers to the area—they WANT to help you.

Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club - Coaches list (March 2014)

Name	HG/PG	Location	Phone (+0)	Email address	Availability
Trevor Birkbeck	HG	Ripon	1765658486	trev.birkbeck@gmail.com	Various
Steve Mann	HG/PG	Kirkby Malzeard	1765650374	stev.andbex@btinternet.com	Weekends
Kevin Gay	HG	Ripon	7794950856	kgay@talktalk.net	Various
Ed Cleasby SC/CC	PG	Ingleton	7808394895	xcflight@gmail.com	Various
Rob Burtenshaw SC	PG	Oxenhope	7747721116	burtenshaw@fsmail.net	Sun and various
Peter Balmforth	PG	Leeds	7714213339	peter.balmforth@ntlworld.com	Weekends
David Brown	PG	Ingleton	7757333480	d.brown208@btinternet.com	Various
Alex Colbeck	PG	Harrogate	7717707632	alexcolbeck@gmail.com	Weekends
Kate Rawlinson	PG	Colne	7976510272	katerawlinson@hotmail.co.uk	W/e & school hols
Kevin McLoughlin	PG	Lancaster	7767652233	kevin-mcloughlin@hotmail.com	Weekends
Martin Baxter	PG	Wetherby	7775785479	mrbaxter@hotmail.co.uk	Weekdays
Toby Briggs	PG	Pateley Bridge	7582156471	tobybriggs@btopenworld.com	Various
Fred Winstanley	PG	Higher Bentham	7770741958	fredwinstanley@sky.com	Various
Richard Shirt	PG	York	7786707424	rshirt@advaoptical.com	Weekends
Simon Goodman	PG	Leeds	7720061200	simon.goodman@talktalk.net	Various
Andy Byrom	PG	Skipton	7796421890	andy.active@unicombox.co.uk	Weekends
Dave Coulthard	PG	Leeds	7595895149	d.coulthard2@ntlworld.com	Weekends
Sean Hodgson	PG	Haworth	7999606084	sean@ogi.me.uk	Various
David May	PG	Ilkley	7928318219	dav.may@gmail.com	W/e & various

Club Coaches are pilots who have expressed a wish to help less experienced or new pilots find their feet in the Club environment. It could involve site information/briefings, developing and advising on practical flying skills, assisting on coaching days or helping pilots prepare for exams or invigilating exams. All coaches have been endorsed by the Club and undertaken some BHPA led training - they also need to do some coaching during the year to further develop their coaching skills and to retain their rating.

Please make use of their skills and experience to further your own skills and knowledge.

Ed Cleasby
DHPC Chief Coach/Senior Coach
February 2015

Anyone wishing to become a Club Coach should contact me directly for any advice or be proposed for training.

There is more detail on coaching within the club on the website.

Coaching days are always announced on the web site homepage and shout-box



Dales Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club
www.dhpc.org.uk
143.850MHz

PARADITION - (All questions are paragliding related)



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

2. Could be a consequence of 19 down
5. Can be found in the local spar
6. A total compliment of cattle
7. Popular castrated male sheep
9. Usually joins with the aptly Beau
13. A tonic for the ladies
15. Small metal connector for men?
16. Contains all you need to know
17. Highway in the sky
21. Make the crossing for a change
22. Withhold judgement in an emergency
23. Speed to fly theory
26. Strictly a pure triangle
28. To give way could be disasterous
30. Feel the need to put on weight

Down

1. Reptilian take off
3. Heavenly oscillations
4. Be ye ne'er so low you could be so high.
8. A measure of competence not necessarily nautical
10. Nothing like packing to music
11. A guru of the air?
12. Go fetch the bone
14. Noddy's best friend
18. A site for the totally mad?
19. Going over the back - low!
20. A snail shows life's up's and down's
24. High church Roman Catholic service
25. A wing in torment
27. Ever decreasing circles
29. An essential nutcase

Answers will appear on the forum (under coaching section) after 15th September. Hopefully with a suitable prize

Escape to

Pete Darwood

Brazil



“With winter well and truly set in, no let up in the cold winds in sight and a temporary gap in employment status, a last minute holiday was in order...

I spent the whole flight concentrating on the sky and picking lines, crossing between cloud streets and avoiding blue holes

A quick scout around revealed that Brazil, Columbia or back to Australia were likely destinations. However, having only returned from living in the latter a month before and with a definite sense of adventure, it had to be one of the former. Having left things so late and being an inexperienced pilot, I decided to see what was available in the way of organised tours. Fortunately trips were available to both countries in February, but I was then reminded about my mother-in-law's 70th birthday weekend, a no miss occasion, and that left one option. So Brazil it was, with barely over two weeks' notice, a yellow fever jab to get, sorting out the remaining logistics and deciding which wing to take.

Having just over 80 hours on my school wing, I had started to reach the stage where I felt ready for an upgrade to a low B. The main reasons for the change being fly a wing that better suited my weight and provided enhanced glide performance whilst, at the same time, not wishing to step too far out of my comfort zone. So it was that at the end of January I headed off to warmer climates with a crispy new Ion 3 to join a group of three others from the Lake District for a fortnight.

The flight was long and was almost missed due to snow at Manchester, then Amsterdam, but in the end a tight connection from Rio to Vitoria was made ready for the trip start then next day.

From Vitoria we went to Alfredo Chaves, a small site South West of Vitoria and 20km from the coast. This was to be our home for a few days to get everyone warmed up, in both senses of the word. The takeoff was a pleasant hill perched directly above the landing



Kiting at Alfredo Chaves

field with cafes at the top and bottom and a relatively short shuttle. The flying itself seemed to be a mixed bag here, convenient in terms of easy access, a relatively low number of power lines and generally smooth conditions early on and in the late afternoon and evening. However, the sea breeze typically arrives in the afternoon limiting cross country potential and sometimes making the valley and landing a little hectic.

The next stop was Castelo, 50km further inland. This is further into the hills with a far more dramatic landscape and lots of igneous intrusions where fantastic black rock teeth and other shapes protrude from the surrounding landscape. The cross country potential here is significant and even the drive up and a top to bottom is an adventure, with an altitude difference of nearly 800m from the spectacular Uba launch site. Unfortunately for us we had the tail end of more than a month without rain, so the first days here were reasonably spicy, especially the landings, as everything was so dry and then we had an extremely unseasonable bout of weather which effectively wiped out five days.

The down time was used to travel to the final destination and the principal flying site in the area. Governador Valadares is situated nearly 500km North of Rio, at least 200km from the coast and has hosted many international competitions. The takeoff, Pico do Ibituruna, is an 1100m lump of black rock sitting impressively to the South of the city. It is the largest outcrop in the area and along its spine provides a spectacular takeoff to the North or South depending upon the time of day. The designated landing options are either side of the Rio



View from Castelo Uba take off



Heading West from Mirante (near Castelo)



Doce some 900m below.

However, people do not come to Valadares from all over the world for the top-to-bottom; the main objective is to head South along the road towards, and possibly past Caratinga, some 100km away. Whilst being a popular cross country venue, Valadares reaffirmed that for the low air time pilot no XCs are easy! The first problem is the launch time; too early, when the best pilots launch to maximise their flying day, the conditions have not generally developed enough for the beginner to easily stay up, whilst too late and everyone has launched and so apart from a few spectators there are no pilots on launch and there is no one to follow. The next big problem is the hill itself. Being significantly larger than any surrounding mounds, a lot of thermals are drawn towards it and trigger off the sides and summit. This means that if you fail to get a climb from near launch, then it is often a long glide away from the hill before another thermal is found. The key to success seems to be to make sure you climb out above the hill before leaving.

My first few attempts did not yield much, but I was learning all the time. After the second day I had had a couple of bomb outs but also managed to get to roughly the 20km mark twice. After a lot of analysis, and Brah-

ma, I worked out that I was not paying close enough attention to the sky and in particular which clouds I should be aiming for. The third day dawned and I was determined to put up a better performance. However, the conditions dictated a forward launch from the South of takeoff and after a long glide and small scratch I landed between power lines a disappointing 7km from the hill. Fortunately, our guide was on hand to drive me to the top again before chasing the rest of the group. Now on my own, but with a better looking sky and more thermic action at launch I had a second attempt. I spent the whole flight concentrating on the sky and picking lines, crossing between cloud streets and avoiding blue holes. On my own and with the help of a lucky low save I had reached a new personal best of 50km. Ecstatic, I obviously wanted to go on, but the realisation of the main goal led to lower levels of concentration and before I knew it I was heading to what turned out to be the wrong clouds and ultimately down just past 60km. Threading my way between power lines I opted for the safest landing the far side of the river and in between electric fences. After packing up in the heat, I walked and hitched back to the main road and into the nearest town to find an ice cream and sink a celebratory Brahma.

The last day dawned and I had to be back in the city to catch the night bus to Rio. This left a reasonable amount of time to get a flight in, providing I did not stay up too long and there were no traffic issues on the retrieve. As there was no option of a second launch, I left the start as late as possible, however, the day turned out to be much harder and slower than the previous one. A succession of low saves and clouds that just did not seem to work or line up kept me concentrating and all of a sudden I was at the 35km decision point. Sensibly I should have turned around and started heading back to the city, but the allure of another 50km flight kept me heading South. I scraped the 50km mark but failed to make any headway back towards launch, landing almost immediately. Whilst gulping a cold Brahma I checked the bus time and realised it was 30 minutes earlier than we thought; a moment of panic and I started to walk in the baking sun back towards the city. Fortunately, Steve was on hand within half an hour and with a good use of his speed bar I made the bus with at least 10 minutes to spare.

Personal bests accomplished, and despite the unfortunate weather, we had a great time. Brazil is definitely a place to go back to, although my sense of adventure is likely to take me to a few other destinations first. Getting around in Brazil can seem daunting at first, but is manageable. However, going with a specialist tour company, such as XCBrazil, makes things much easier. I think to get the most out of the trip it is probably advisable to have done, at the minimum, a few small XCs before hand and have a grip on thermalling, although the vultures are a huge help here. Also being on top of your landings and your landing out judgement is important as power lines are an ever present hazard. Unlike more Western countries these are not always laid out logically and a single strand can be almost invisible until quite close up. Finally, whilst the fresh fruit is excellent, if you like your food spicy I would take a pot of black pepper with you as this proved near impossible to find out there, in supermarkets or restaurants!



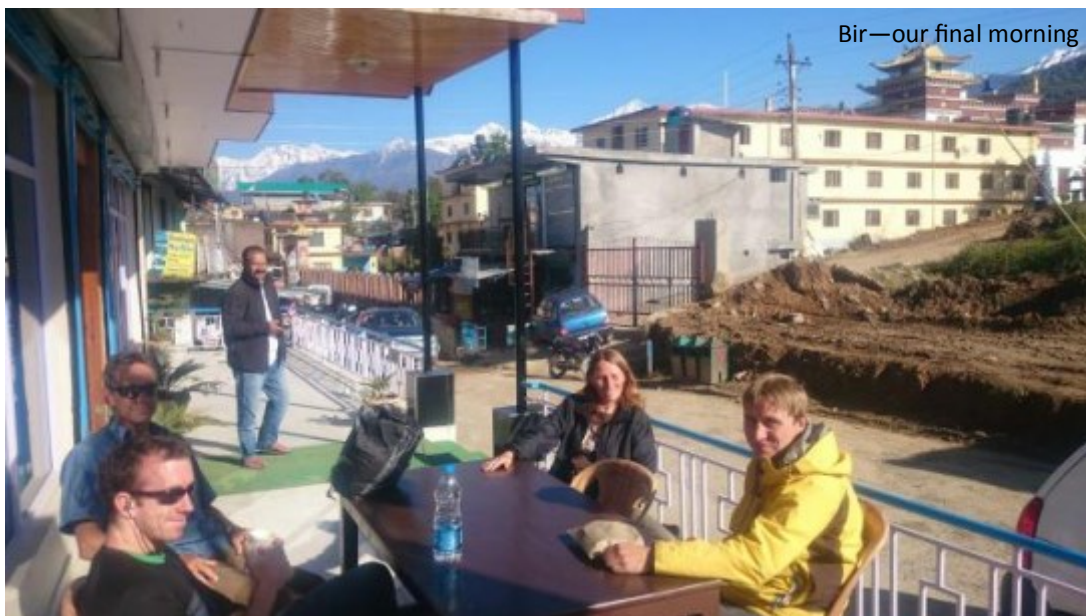
PD



What do you do when you're an ambitious Kiwi paragliding pilot, about to take part in the toughest race in the world—the Red Bull X-Alps. Go flying with a Dales club member of course! This is an extract from Nick Neynens' blog, who practiced for the X Alps flying with our very own Toby Briggs in the Himalaya.

It's been a tough pre-monsoon season in the Indian Himalaya. The [weathergeek](#) has reported rainfall of three times the average and for more than a week we struggled to get any flying in between thunderstorms. On the bright side, all the rain meant the visibility was the best I'd ever seen – although still poor by New Zealand standards! Initially intending to spend only a few days in Bir before setting out east to vol biv towards Nepal approximately 400km away, we kept delaying our departure date. Bryan was the motivating force behind the project and noted that we could fly in the hours before the afternoon rain, but he was the only one with a tent – Glen and I weren't really enthused with our bivvy bags. Toby had been persuaded to join in but when the good weather finally came he was in bed sick and we could only delay our departure by one more day –

we'd waited long enough, and Glen only had a couple of days before he had to return to work. So we set out finally with good weather forecast for a few days starting on 9 April 2015.



Bryan had planned our route around 15 waypoints which traversed a similar route to that flown by Luc Armand and (independently) the Himalayan Odyssey expedition, with most passes at approximately 3000 metres. Reading Luc's account I was worried about the prevalence of trees, and this certainly was a challenging aspect of the trip. There were landings but generally none of them were very good and you'd often rely on some good luck to find a place to launch. The trees extended up to 3500 metres and snow gullies dropped below, although at that level snow was very patchy if not completely melted. On our first day of flying cloud base nudged up towards 3150 metres, which meant we were never far from terrain. On the next days we were treated to heights of up to 4700 metres but still the flying was much lower and much warmer than we had expected. On the final days cloud choked off the mountain passes in the mornings and steadily built to



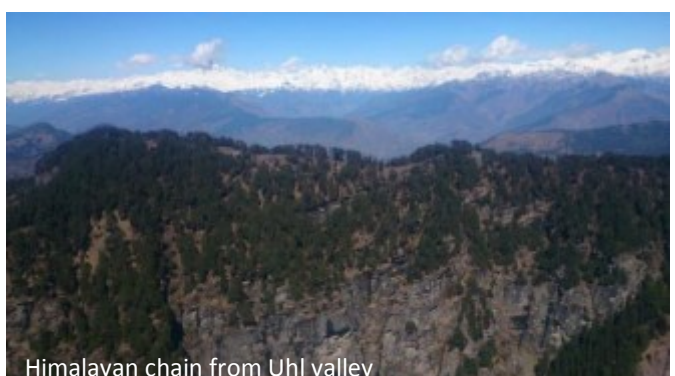
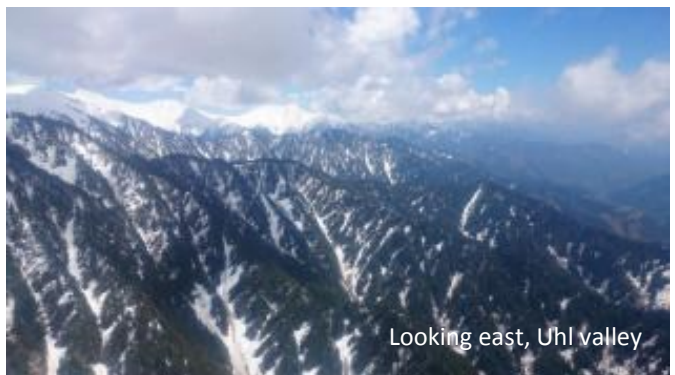
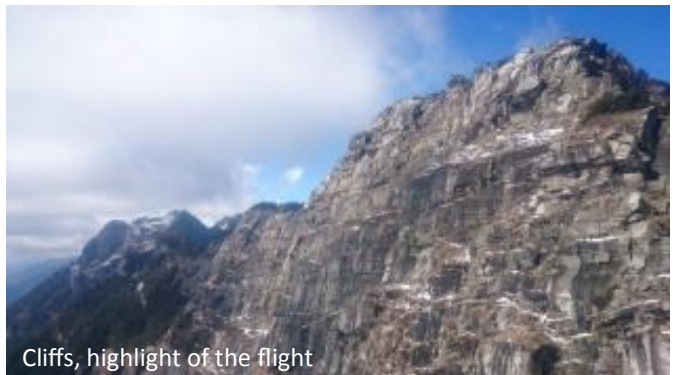
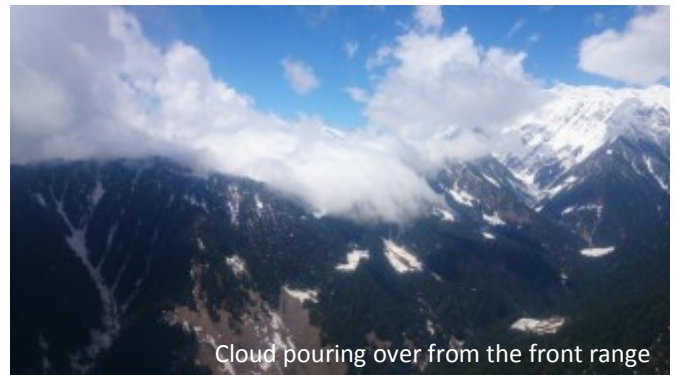
Clear views of the Dhauladhar range from Billing launch

towering cumulus delivering rain, lightning, and thunder by lunch time.

Day 1

The Slovaks proved it was thermic by mid-morning so we took off but it was a few hours of scratching until we were able to cross over the back. Bryan was first over but had to walk up to relaunch as he arrived a little low (like I did the other week). Glen and Kat followed soon after the first clouds started forming, and I struggled at the back. It seemed my timing was out or my scratching just wasn't good enough but finally I was working the wisps at Hanuman after much frustration and although I couldn't get high enough to guarantee the next thermal I had certainly had enough of the stable conditions out the front. Landing over the back I relieved my bladder and then spent a bit of time getting snagged on bushes and clumps of dirt on the terraces while the others flew on ahead. Finally I got in the air and started soaring the spur just as Michael came to join me. The next spur up valley had a good sheltered face feeding it and I was able to get to cloud base and head off on my own at last. We were all in radio contact and I caught up with Stuart as we reached the impressive high bluffs on the eastern stretches of the Uhl valley, the snowy Himalayas stretched out in a panorama to the north. This was one of the scenic moments of the trip, above the inversions out the front the visibility was really incredible.

After making the long crossing to Prashar lake, one of our waypoints about 50km along, Stuart elected to call it a day while Bryan and Glen who had landed nearby took off to join me. We climbed over the maze of connecting valleys and crossed the Beas, hoping we wouldn't have to land there. After climbing out of a side valley we continued over shallow valleys with cloud base far above us. Spotting a snowy hill in the distance we closed in on it and top landed there together, the altitude 3150 metres matching the peak cloud base height of the day. Some locals greeted us at the small temple before returning to their village, and we set up camp in the setting sun. Selecting one of the open fire pits we cooked dinner before retiring for an early night under the stars.





Bryan and Glen crossing the Beas

Day 2

Spirits were high as we woke to clear skies with a little frost on the bivvy bag. It seemed the weather had finally changed. Our hill was a good thermal trigger but the launch was on the wrong side. I talked Bryan out of launching where we were, given the limited landing options it was worth walking for ten minutes to a (somewhat) grassy spur. With my harness packed to the brim, sleeping bag and overflow bag clipped to the risers, and wearing way too much clothing, I preferred to err on the side of caution in the stable conditions. But Bryan took off and went straight up and we followed. The views were amazing with blue skies all around except for the distant Dhauludars (behind Bir) which had well defined cumulus bubbles along its length.

We worked our way east along the hills and were slowed a little by high level cloud dulling the sunshine. As it returned we crossed to the first big snowy thing of the trip. It's still one of my favourite moments of the trip as I joined Bryan in an unlikely place for a rough and tumble "chunky" thermal finally worthy of the Himalayas. Both the air and the scenery was finally a bit more like how I might have expected it.

Another major valley crossing (the Sutlej) followed and Glen elected to land while he still had a chance to get back to civilisation. Bryan and I continued but the cirrus

slowed us down again. We slowly scratched up impressive cliffs, observing an improbable road being built directly into the sheer face across the valley – it was a first for me to hear a detonation whilst flying. Bryan's close in scratching style seemed to work better for him and he followed light lift further up the valley while I opted to return to the same face and wait for more sun. By the time it came Bryan had almost managed to get high enough in light lift to cross the snowy mountains, but the kicking thermal I'd taken in the meantime was enough to cross through the col and Bryan joined me there instead.

Popping through the col we sank down but a couple of ridges further on we got straight back up again. A vulture joined me and we looked at the next snowy ridge-line we had to cross. A cumulonimbus was building above but the cloud further to the south looked entirely manageable. Still it was prudent to get going, so we left the vulture. I managed a buoyant glide under the cloud while Bryan flew low in the shade before finding a thermal. At the edge of the cloud I spiralled to stay out as the lift was stronger, Bryan meanwhile pushed bar and got a little icy up there. He popped out to join me some minutes later and we had a long glide into the Tons valley. There was a climb but I didn't linger there because Bryan was miles ahead, thawing out and following the long rocky ridge. Even when this didn't work I thought we'd find a climb on the sunny windward slope of pine



Friendly vulture

Landing, day two



trees across the Tons river but it was wind affected (possibly by other storms), so we ended up landing in the village, at 5:45pm we'd used most of the day.

I managed to put a sopping wet muddy foot on my wing while carrying it around before packing up – another blow to my once like new glider, the India trip has taken its toll. We insisted to the exuberant villagers that we didn't need a guide to follow the trails through the open pine forest, and found a nice place to set up camp. It was a relief not to have to burn rhododendron and have

an easy time getting a fire going. We found out that Toby had had an amazing flight that day from Bir in a bid to catch us up and was only about 30km behind us. Brad Sander commented that he'd previously landed nearby and had had a long walk through forest to a spectacular launch the next morning...

Day 3

Starting shortly after 6am, it was a nice walk through open pine forest and later some rhododendron flowers on the ridge with snowy peaks visible in the gaps. Rounding the corner to the southern face we were relieved to find a suitable space in the trees to launch, just as we started to hear whistling in the pines. Flying east we crossed into bigger mountains and it was another good day. Leaving the tree covered hills I enjoyed thermalling up the shady lee of a handsome peak with footprints (Thar or Chamois?) in the snow.

After only just making a glide I took the next climb to cloud base and we were getting into the bigger peaks. I glided straight at one just for scenic value. Bryan joined me and we both failed to breach a notch in the ridge but found a lower col not much further along to get back onto the sunny windward side. The day was in full swing now and we found ourselves crossing the Yamuna valley near Yamnotri. Gliding to the top of a forested spur, Bryan's wingtip was flirting with the cliff face behind quick-

Bryan approaches the col, a speck on the mountain



er than you could say, “Are there any landings in that valley?”

I’d encountered a couple of patches of appreciable turbulence and wanted to get a better feel before diving in

got wet as I neared the shepherds village on the pass. Ken an American expat living in Taiwan greeted me and Patan the dhaba walla (restaurant manager) welcomed me into his humble abode for a hearty dinner, trading off the wet and the cold for stifling wood smoke.

About to head for Yamnotri



so I was a little slow to climb up alongside the vultures. When I went on glide to cross the next high snowy ridge Bryan was already returning from a failed attempt, with 65km/h ground speed. I continued ahead and he caught me later on in the Bagarathi valley as we rushed to try and cross the next range before it overdeveloped – it was already raining up the valley under dark cumulonimbus. I was a little higher and pushing towards the pass when a knot slipped with a bang. Suddenly without speed bar I felt naked. I landed shortly afterward on a clearing on the ridge and quickly fixed the problem, but not before I heard the rumble of thunder. The wind became light and variable and gust fronts passed through. I decided to pack up and walk. Bryan was hovering overhead but ended up landing nearby but elsewhere.

A seemingly stunned young shepherd watched me pack up, and I set off up a good track along the ridge. There were some ups and downs as the stone path weaved around waterfalls but it was good going. I passed a group of monkeys. Finally the thunderstorm set in and I

Day 4

Remnants of last night’s humidity were disappointingly evident in the morning. I climbed up to a grassy knoll I’d spotted the previous day and prepared for an early launch. The sun had already consolidated the cloud onto the high ground, it was completely overcast with base a few hundred metres above the 3400 metre launch. From around 10am I soared the southeasterly but as I began sinking I pushed out to the lower hills for sunshine. I scratched there and got some small climbs but the sun was dimmed by thick altostratus, so I



Panorama from my lau

crossed the valley to land on the upper limit of terraced paddy fields to save what height I still had.

A young guy in a ironed shirt asked me if I had per-

I was close to getting off a number of times but I didn't manage. It was stiflingly hot and the growing numbers of amused spectators from the village didn't help. Every so often someone would shove a mobile phone in my face but Indian's have no con-

Another authentic village



mission to fly – was he a policeman? I said I was going “up”. I again felt overdressed and over-prepared, with a heavy backpack I wondered whether I should hike up the hill or wait for more sun where I was. When I saw Bryan fly past and climb out on the same spur I'd flown I decided I would try and launch. It was tricky due to the terraces and limited gap between trees but it should have been possible especially with the valley breeze kicking in. I would have liked to have t-shirt and shorts but I had to wear my clothes or leave them behind.

cept of personal space – I didn't want any help. My mood deteriorated as my wool underlayer and down jacket became drenched with sweat, my glider picked up prickles and vegetative debris, dung, and ash, and time drew on. Finally the local policeman (so he said) was the last person to insist to take my details, keeping his cool even once I'd finished yelling at him. At this point I gave up, he copied my passport and visa specifics, offered me water, and after a call to the Colonel in Bir asked if there was anything they could do to help.



inch at around 3400m

Short of making the sun come out (it was still thick altostratus) I couldn't see how they could assist me so in despair I packed my gear and wandered off up the hill. I needed a walk to cool off and a small waterfall ten minutes in was a good opportunity for a rinse off. I climbed up past a village, ignoring the whistles and insistent cries of “hello!” (they could well have been trying to tell

me that I could save a lot of time on a better walking path!), and found a hollow tree to shelter under for the night as the afternoon thunderstorms got established.

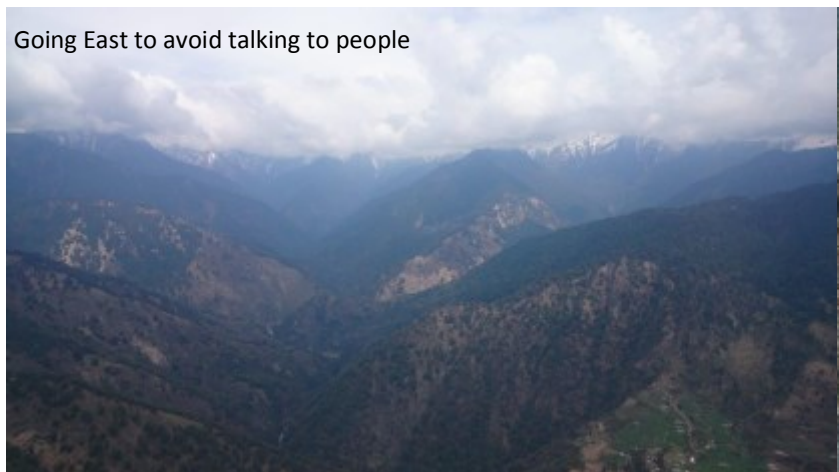
Day 5

In the morning I received a text from Kat in Bir passing on a message from the Colonel, "The police of Uttarakhand contacted me and asked if they have permission to fly. Tell them they will get in trouble if they fly." This was really disturbing. Facing a long walk out, the last thing I wanted to do was deal with these guys again, although I entertained thoughts of being questioned in Delhi when trying to leave the country and became quite worried. Still, I continued walking to the steep grassy clearing I'd spotted further up the ridge and decided to stay discreet. I would ignore the message and even considered deleting it or making it look like I hadn't received it.

Arriving early (around 8am) I put my backpack in the shadows and did some quick gardening, removing twigs and sticks from the steep grassy launch. I then hid away again and waited, despite obvious thermal gusts on the launch I really wanted to avoid landing in the same valley. Besides, cloud base was around 3000 metres, touching the hill I wanted to fly past and obscuring the previous day's launch where I had considered flying back to, waiting at the dhaba for good weather was an option to consider.

Finally I launched and flew up into the wisps, maximizing my height for the valley crossing to continue on Bryan's route of the previous day. I arrived high but it wasn't working on the shady face and I didn't want to push too far around in the same valley so I dropped back to the sunny spur behind and scratched up from down low. With a significant southeasterly blowing I took a deep route away from the towns, waiting on a spur to get enough height to cross a col. I only made it over by a few metres, literally flying around trees.

On the other side I tracked back up the valley,



definitely an inefficient V shape back to the course line but I was enjoying the flying. I crossed to a shady spur and slowly worked it, trying to get enough height to cross the next pass as the towering clouds rose higher and cast their shadows. I was close but didn't manage it, so on my second attempt I made a rather desperate landing in a small clearing surrounded by high trees. A couple of bemused shepherds watched and helped me pack up and as soon as I started walking up the hill the rain started, followed shortly by lightning and thunder.

There were plenty of campsites on the grassy knolls but they were all sopping wet and I didn't like my prospects. I continued climbing past a small monastery and a locked mountain hut, eventually finding some thatched grass roof shepherd huts, one of which had an elevated straw bed. Although I'd heard voices and music in the distance earlier there was now no-one around. I tried my first fancy dehydrated meal (fancy since it was about twenty times the price of a fully prepared local dish, and ironically, Indian flavor too) with a lump of solid fuel to heat up the water. I added a normal pack of noodles and bolstered the whole thing up with generous spoonfuls of



Aftermath of the storm



Happy to avoid the bivvy bag!

ghee (high energy butter fat). Cloud swirled around with no thoughts of flying to be entertained in the dying phase of the storm.

Day 6

Peering through the gaps in the stone wall of the hut I saw white. Indeed cloud was still swirling around and this was certainly a disappointing start to the day. I continued back to the knoll where I could launch and started to wait – cloud base was still well below me. Finally I launched soon after 10am to avoid being trapped in white out. Orienting myself once I was beneath the clouds I looked for a pass that I could cross. I tried for several hours to climb up the shady spurs but the passes were only sometimes visible through gaps in the cloud.

Pushing up valley I worked my way to a last probable crossing. After a very slow period of scratching I reached cloud base and flew into the wisps as far as I dared, but still it was a very doubtful glide to make it over the pass (about 2900 metres). In the end I needed to be about fifty metres higher, or not even. I could have landed in a small patch of grass close to the pass but with trees along the entire sky-

line I could not be sure I'd be so lucky as to find a spot on the other side. I retreated intending to climb up again for a second attempt but sunk lower and eventually crossed the valley aiming for a sunny face.

Low here I saw it was time to call it a day and landed in the valley. To lose the last 100 metres I threw big wingovers as it was starting to rain. On the ground I bunched up immediately and walked straight to a conveniently located corrugated iron and concrete structure for shelter, while the rain started to pour. Half an hour later I was walking into the town while an impressive display of lightning thundered close around the surrounding peaks.

The town was in the middle of a festival and I got some local food before catching the ride on top of a jeep down valley, and another lift to Ghansali, where I booked into a hotel. Bryan was going through the last of his food and having similar experiences. The last day of flying had reminded me of overcast Canungra and you could have been anywhere – the vegetation and wildlife, villages and terraces were pretty but we'd come to fly in big mountains not flirt with clouds in the valley before they dropped rain all afternoon. Finding launches was the other issue, which had apparently delayed Toby for days until he finally had to withdraw after a hard landing.

Day 7

I'd resolved to decide whether to continue the trip in the morning. Stepping out onto the balcony it was clear enough – blue with wisps of high cirrus – to doubt myself – although there was some crud up the valley which looked like it might develop. But I had to have a look – so I took a shared taxi up the valley. Half way up I saw cumulus with a low base and already rising in plumes into the upper atmosphere so I promptly disembarked and waited for a jeep from the other direction, making it back into town just in time for the last 11am bus to Rishikesh. While in the bus the views of high cumulonimbus developing early affirmed my decision and it was pouring well and truly by the time we arrived. Bryan and Kat would join me the next morning.

We'd had a good time but my favourite memories of strong thermals and snowy Himalayan peaks were short lived before returning to the humid gloom we'd already experienced in Bir. I had a heavy load and warm clothing expecting to be flying up over 5000 metres so it was not conducive to trudging through valleys and being nimble on tricky launches. It has been unseasonably wet (April is normally the second driest month) so these conditions were not to be expected. Our main goals are to fly amongst amazing terrain so we made plans to head for Manali to be positioned ready for the next good weather window. We'd also specifically planned our trip to avoid border areas so it was highly disappointing to (apparently) run into trouble with the authorities in Uttarakhand – I longed for the lack of bureaucracy and grassy hills of Kyrgyzstan! But on the right day the flying is incredible – so we are looking forward to seeing what we can do in our remaining time here.

Many thanks to Red Bull X Alps pilot Nick Neynens for his permission to reproduce this article. His blog is available here:

<https://sharemyjoys.wordpress.com/>

“we'd come to fly in big mountains not flirt with clouds in the valley before they dropped rain all afternoon”



The last valley, my landing visible



CLUB NIGHTS 2015-6



Well the summer is drawing to a close. We hope you all got all the flying you wanted (Fat chance!) With the nights now drawing in, you wont be going out on the those balmy summers evening for a nice little boat about. You will be coming along to the club nights in Otley, every 1st Thursday in the month.

Lots of the events are already planned, so get yourself along to the

Horse and Farrier in Otley

7.30 for prompt 8pm start

We start with **Pat Dower**, always a popular speaker, who may let you into the secrets of flying 200k!

Following Pat, the nights will run the 1st Thursday of the month. Nights organised thus far are as follows:

03 Oct 2015 - Steve Nash - Red Bull X Alps competitor!

01 Nov 2015 - What has the BHPA ever done for us?

03 Dec 2015 - Free Beer!

07 Jan 2016—GASCo Safety Evening

Further details on the website. This list will be updated as future nights are added.



For many years we have been used to postage stamps being used to advertise various aspects of a country's culture, prestige and leisure potential, through the issue of stamps. Some of these have even featured hang gliding and paragliding in recent years, as shown above.

The forward thinking Swiss have now stolen a lead, and have featured paragliding on their new 50 Franc note. Presumably this is a world first, unless of course you know differently? Any evidence of countries promoting themselves via hang gliding/paragliding gratefully received!





CLUB DIARY 2015



February		
5	DHPC February Club Night	Otley
28	DHPC Reserve Repack	Menston
28	DHPC Farmers' Dinner	Cracoe
March		
1-13	World Hang Gliding Champs	Valle de Bravo, Mexico
5	DHPC March Club Night	Otley
7	BHPA AGM	Nottingham
April		
	XC League Opens	
2	DHPC April Club Night	Otley
11-18	PWC Brazil	Baixo Guandu
May		
1-4	British Paragliding Cup Round 1 (Pennines)	Chipping
2-6	British Open Series Round 1	SE Wales
15-18	North South Cup	? Poss Peak District/Shropshire
23	BOS Round 2	Yorkshire Dales
29—31	Lakes Charity Classic	Buttermere
30—3rd May	British Paramotor Open	West Mersea, Essex
June		
4-7	Super Paragliding Festival	Kossen, Austria
26-3 Jul	Ozone Chabre Open	Laragne, France
July		
4-11	Gin Wide Open	Tolmin, Slovenia
11-18	PWC Portugal	Montalegre, Portugal
20 - 27	British Championship 1	Krushevo, Macedonia
25-29	BOS Round 3	Mid Wales
	Red Bull X Alps	Salzburg—Monaco
31—9 Aug	British Paragliding Cup Round 2	Derbyshire & Lancs Gliding club
August		
8-15	PWC Switzerland	Disentis, Switzerland
22-29	British Championship 2	St Andre, France
30—6 Sept	PWC Spain	Ager
September		
3	DHPC Club Night	Otley
	Pennine Parafest?	Chipping, Lancs
17—20 (Estimated Dates!)	Coupe Icare	St Hilaire, France
October		
1	DHPC Club Night	Otley
24-31	PWC India	Bir, India
	XC League Closes	
November		
5	DHPC Club Night	Otley
December		
2-12	PWC Superfinal	Valle de Bravo, M.
3	DHPC Club Night (AGM)	Otley

Want something adding to this?
Just let me know! Tam