

Skywords

Monthly Newsletter of the Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

[Www/dhpc.org.uk](http://www/dhpc.org.uk)

February 2009



From the Editor, Dennis Wray

In this issue, we have an interesting report from Neil about tandem flying. Sounds a good idea to learn to fly tandem, so that you can take your wife, partner or friend up in the air too on a flying holiday – is she wants that is!

Now is the time of year when the lucky ones among us are going on flying holidays, while the winter weather is poor for flying at home. I thought I would give Tenerife a try this year, at least it will be warmer! However, the last time I went there in winter it was very windy, so am hoping for the best. I notice from the very useful Speckout email group that some are going to Algodonales for flying hols – I must say I enjoyed it when I did my CP there a couple of years ago.

Happy flying, and thanks to Walter for the cartoons.

Please send your contributions directly to me - my email is d.wray@leeds.ac.uk

Club Nights

Our first club night at the Black Horse, Otley on 8 Jan was a great success! We have the upstairs room to ourselves in peace and quiet, except for the noise we make ourselves! Apart from meeting to chat among ourselves, Ogi organised a discussion about coaching and how the club will progress coaching further.

Future club nights are on the first Thursday in the month.

On 5 Feb, famous pilot, **Jocky Sanderson**, will be speaking about SIV and XC. This promises to be **another great evening!**

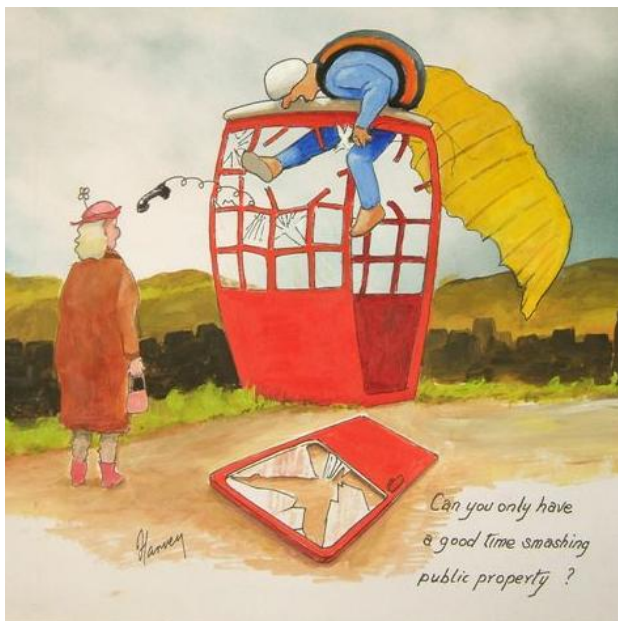


It hasn't been possible to arrange for John Silvester to speak at the meeting on 5 Mar, and we are trying to make alternative arrangements for that evening. A First Aid refresher hopefully will be arranged for 2 April.

Dales Club Party – Reminder!

Don't forget to send your dosh to Tony Pickering (even cheaper price than last year!) for the Dales Club Party on **Saturday, 28 February**, 7.30 for 8.00 pm. Please use the form attached to the last Newsletter to order your food and pay! Only £20 – very good value.

The party will be held once again at the **Herriott Hotel Skipton**. The great first prize for the raffle (included in your ticket) is a dual glider flight at Rufforth Gliding Club to 2000ft AGL. So don't miss this great party!



News from Peter Balmforth, Safety Officer:

Repack

The Dales Club Reserve Repack will be held on Saturday 21st February 2009 at the Otley Civic Centre from 9am till 1pm.

The repack will be supervised by Bill Morris this year. The cost per reserve is £15. To book your place, please get your cheques/cash to Peter Balmforth in advance. It will only be possible to reserve your place once payment has been received. Please let Peter know what make/model your reserve is at the same time. This will help structure the event a little (unless they are all different).

Please be prompt. We have booked the hall for 4 hours and will be starting straight away. Please also bring your manuals, especially if it is an obscure model. The venue address is: Otley Civic Centre, Cross Green, Otley, LS21 1HD

Please send your cheques (payable to "DHPC") to: Peter Balmforth, 8 Hathaway Walk, Leeds, LS14 2EE

If you would like acknowledgement of booking then include an email address.

Neil Plant writes:

I got this from Kev Gay a while back but due to my broadband being down I forgot about it:

UK Hang Gliding Group

Here's something of interest for old, bold and possibly new Hang Glider pilots, <http://nxcl.collectivex.com/>

This is a new website set up to enable all hang glider pilots to communicate ideas and interests, the focus may be steered toward XC flying but any pilot will gain something from watching the conversations and maybe asking a few questions. Some of the best pilots in the country will be registered there and are only too happy to give advice on flying matters, check it out and sign up,
Kevin Gay

News from the committee

Sites

Great Whernside. Following our voluntary ban last year the tenant farmer of the land where we want to park and bottom land has agreed to negotiate. Martin discussed it with the landowner but they want £350+VAT per year in fees. Clearly this is a non-starter for us since it sets a precedent with other farmers. However they will accept 'work in kind'. A rough calculation suggests that if we could get 15 members to work for 4 hours one day per year we could get access. The matter is still under discussion with the farmer.

Website

A shoutbox has been added to the front page of the club's website. Check it out and send topical messages to your flying pals! Like "just about to leave home for Wether Fell, conditions good" (!). Will be very useful for coaching / weather information etc.

Sites guide

Preparation of the new sites guide is still in progress.

Coaching

Following discussion introduced by Ogi at the club meeting on 8 Jan, the following activities will be arranged. There will be a coaching course in Spring. Also there will be low experience and site introduction days, as well as Pilot training theory sessions and signing off practical tasks. Information will be posted on the website.

Safety

Arrangements are still being made for a First Aid refresher at a Club Night in early spring. The reserve repack has been organised for 21 Feb 2009, in Otley.

Dales club party

Full details and the booking form are in January's Newsletter.

Membership

Arrangements for the electronic payments for subs still under investigation.

Trophies

The hang gliding XC shield is full. Old shields are to be put on the back to make room. John Stevenson to be contacted to find out if we've paid for XC league!

XC Club

Jake Herbert and others are keen to get the XC Club up and running again. The XC club should have its own forum member listing, pointing to the mailing list, with dialogue managed via the forum. Radio frequency etc, (143.95MHz) will also be published there.

Neil Plant writes:

It Takes Two to Tandem

Once out of training and having racked up a good few hours in a variety of conditions you might find yourself wondering where to take your flying next. Your next challenge could involve increasing your cross country distances, flying comps, acro, becoming an instructor, gaining tow or hill ratings or learning to fly tandem. I went through exactly this process three years ago and decided on trying to get my tandem rating for the following reasons.

Cross country opportunities in the UK would always be controlled by the fickle nature of the weather. Not only do we wait for a good, flyable day but of those good, flyable days only a few would ever have XC potential for a mere mortal.

I didn't feel ready to fly comps. I've never been keen on flying in gaggles and the sight of 50+ paragliders over some of the Dales larger sites looked a bit dodgy to me (I have since been proved wrong on this as most pilots flying comps are pretty competent and are as keen on avoiding mid-air as me! So don't let me put you off – I now fly comps quite happily).

Acro has limited opportunity in the UK. It always seemed a waste of good height to me!

Becoming an instructor – a worthy calling but I wouldn't have been able to handle being on the ground on good days while other people were flying.

Tow/hill ratings. I still have a desire to get a tow rating but with the nearest tow operation being down in Derbyshire it was never going to be a priority.

That left me with learning to fly tandem. I reasoned that, having a non-flying partner who is happy to go on flying holidays on the basis that if no other non-flying partners are on the same holiday then I should spend up to 50% of the time doing 'stuff' with her rather than flying, this could be the perfect solution. I get to fly all flyable days when on holiday, we get to do it together and I get to avoid the dreaded 'stuff' while others are skying out above.



Once this was decided, I made a commitment to get my tandem rating before the end of the year. I wanted to do it under instruction and I soon discovered that there were very few places willing and able to do tandem instruction. After trying local schools I contacted Jocky Sanderson, who was happy to take me through the rating on a day rate basis. I set aside three days annual leave for the possibility that I might be flying mid-week and let my employer know that I might be taking these days at short notice. I purchased

a used tandem from a well known pilot in Cumbria and waited for the weather.

The first day with Jocky involved me flying as passenger while he demonstrated some of the peculiarities of tandem paragliders, followed by me ground handling the tandem and getting used to the reverse launch technique. After a few short hops, reminiscent of my first few days paraglider training, I was impressed with how well the tandem behaved. Apparently manufacturers deliberately spend more time ensuring tandems have good handling characteristics. It makes sense I suppose if you are to be flying with complete novices as most commercial tandem pilots do on a daily basis.

The next day had Jocky helping me out with launching the tandem in stronger conditions. There was one rather disconcerting technique of Jocky standing six feet in front of me hanging on to the brakes to keep the wing on the ground while I set up for a forward launch with Jocky's (nervous) T.I . as passenger. When there was a lull I called to Jocky to release the brakes and I went into a forward launch. We left Catbells like a rocket. Great technique but I've not used it since!

The third day saw us flying at Bewaldeth, a relatively small hill that works well in a south-westerly. Being small it was perfect for repeated launch, land, walk back up, with Jocky as passenger.

The final day happened to fall at the weekend and I persuaded a good friend of mine to join me and we would swap pilot/passenger roles through the day under Jocky's instruction. It turned out to be the perfect tandem day at Bewaldeth. We got around half a dozen flights each as pilot (although we did get on each other's nerves with our "front-seat driver" comments – "watch out for that fence", "we're going to land in that gorse", "did you mean to do that?" etc) and we helped Jocky out with launches of a couple of commercial tandems he was doing that day. It got to the stage where the solos were grounded and we were able to fly the stronger conditions on the tandem (although we were fairly heavily laden).

Once I had the required number of flights there was then the theory test to take. When we hadn't been flying Jocky had been placing as much emphasis on having the correct attitude to fly tandem as on actually flying one. His reasoning was that as a Pilot rated pilot with

over 100 hours he could rely on the fact that I had reasonable flying skills. What he could be less sure of was that I appreciated the different responsibilities of flying tandem. Over the four days he had taken me through assessing conditions for tandem flying, assessing passengers' suitability, briefing passengers, and left me in no doubt that my main concern as a tandem pilot should be the safety of my passenger. We went for a cup of tea and I sat the test. A couple of hours later I had the magic signature. I went home and booked our first tandem holiday.



I've racked up about 30 hours on the tandem (not a lot in 3 years but I wasn't helped by an unplanned pilot/ground interface whilst on the solo that left me grounded for 18 months!) and have loved every minute. It really is different enough to flying the solo to keep me interested but similar enough for me to feel that flying one benefits my flying of the other. We have cruised for hours over Verbier, struggled with RLF ("Run Like F***!!!") launches in nil wind in Austria and thermalled with vultures in Algodonales.

For anyone considering taking up tandem flying I would make the following suggestions. Team up with another pilot who also wants their tandem rating. You can swap pilot/passenger roles during your training leaving your instructor to monitor you from the ground. Doing this it would be possible to get the required number of flights in a couple of days. It also makes it cheaper as the instructor can be instructing others at the same time rather than being stuck in your passenger harness for the duration.

Buy a used tandem for your first tandem and/or buy one under shared ownership. You can always buy a shiny new wing once you know you will be doing enough dual flying to justify it.

Consider doing training with an instructor who regularly flies tandem such as Jocky. Under the current requirements for a tandem rating it is not strictly necessary, but you will learn more even if it costs more. It took me a while to find someone – things have changed since then and I have heard that my favourite fly/guiding people in Verbier have taken people through their tandem rating. So if you are feeling flush, check out somewhere like Verbier, if not, give Jocky a call. You won't regret it.

For information, the current BHPA requirements for achieving a tandem rating are: Pilot rating, minimum 100 hours, minimum 12 flights on tandem (2 as passenger, 10 as pilot), completion and pass of theory test, and sign-off by CFI/Chief Coach that you have the correct attitude to fly tandem.

