



The Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club
CLUB RADIO FREQUENCY 143.850MHz

Skyywords

www.dhpc.org.uk

Issue:119 April 2017



G'day Pete

Ay 'up

'struth, you've changed your tune mate

Well he's moved to God's own county hasn't he?

If you can't beat em , join 'em

Where's Rosie anyway?

She's about, I saw her earlier

Yeah, she's about 120K North of us

Inside this month

This month's cover shot is by Pete Darwood - A blue day at Mt Borah, Oz. Read the account of Pete and Rosie's recent return to Oz inside!



Regular Features

Chairman's Chat Lies, damned lies, and statistics.

Club News Uphill and Down Dale

Weather Prospects for April

Club Night Report - RCD - The Good the Bad and the Ugly

Safety - Repack Report / Spring Thermals / Power Lines

Instant Weather Forecasting - Altostratus

Skywords Archive - The Bewaldeth Buzzard

Sites news - The Countryside Code

Cloud Eye Candy Asperatus Cloud, Scotland,



Special Features

Paragliding - A game of chance - Jake Herbert.

XC Camp 2017 - Australia - Rosie and Pete Darwood

Magnificent March - Some snaps

Lost moments from the history of free flying, part 1

Many thanks for all contributions.
skywords@dhpc.org.uk



If you enjoy reading this, please contribute your own news and articles when you get the chance.



Martin Baxter

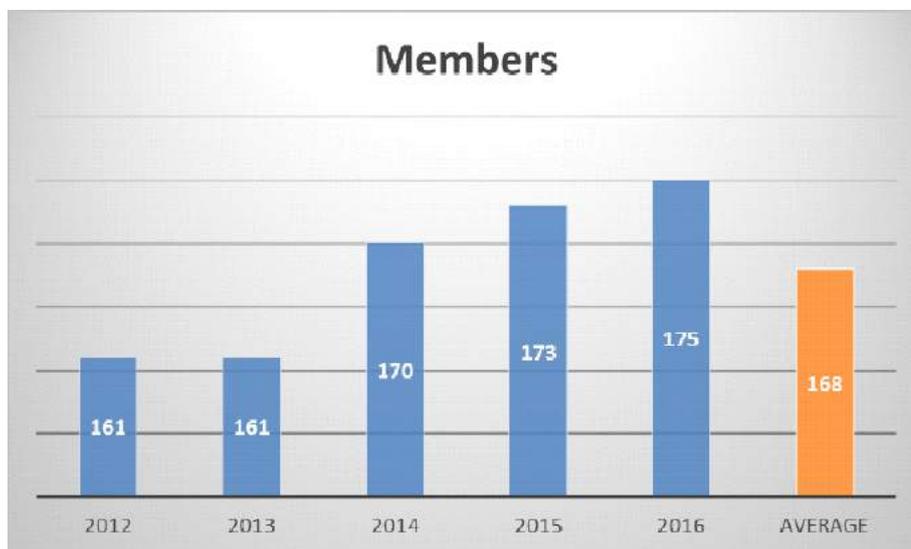
Chairman's Chat - April 2017

Lies, damned lies, and statistics.

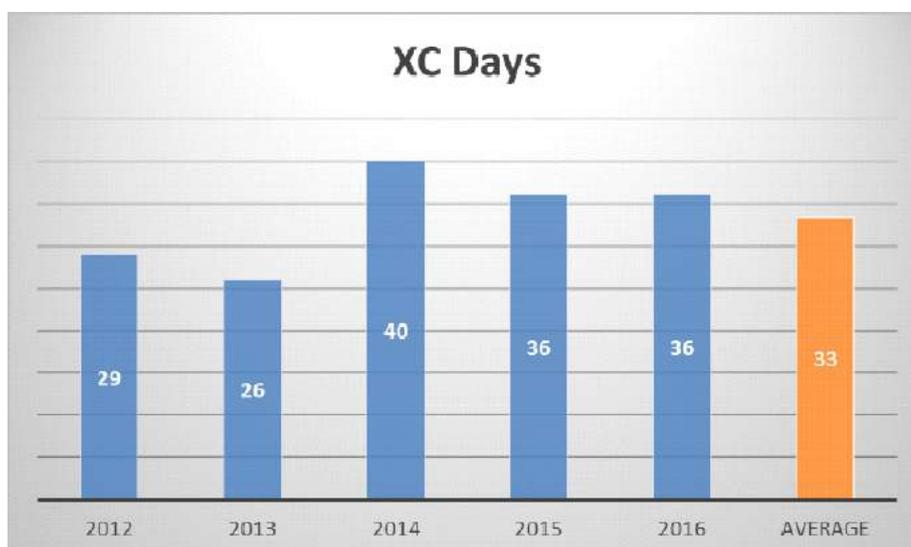
It's a tough job being Chairman. Not only do I have to think of something to write here every month, but as though that's not enough, once a year at the Farmers' Dinner, I have to think of something to say in my speech. The simple question that the farmers normally ask is, 'Did you have a good year?' Whilst that might be quite easy to answer from a personal perspective, it's not quite so easy to answer from a club perspective.

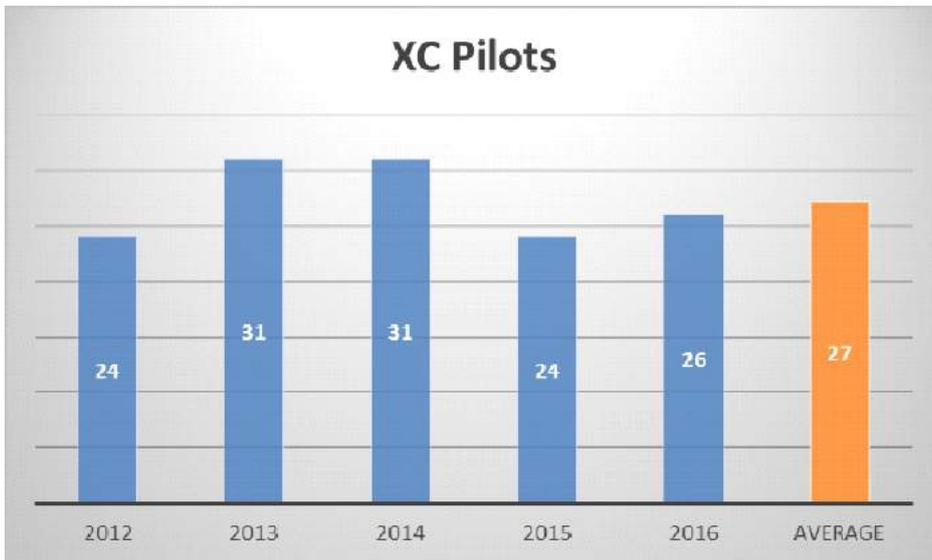
I suppose that the answer lies in statistics, but they don't exactly make for an interesting speech! However, I know how much you like pictures so I've managed to convert them into some graphs to keep you entertained. So how do we answer the farmers' simple question?

Well the Membership Secretary and Treasurer might argue that it doesn't matter about flying as long as we have enough members, and therefore income. As you can see from the graph below, we're ticking over quite nicely.

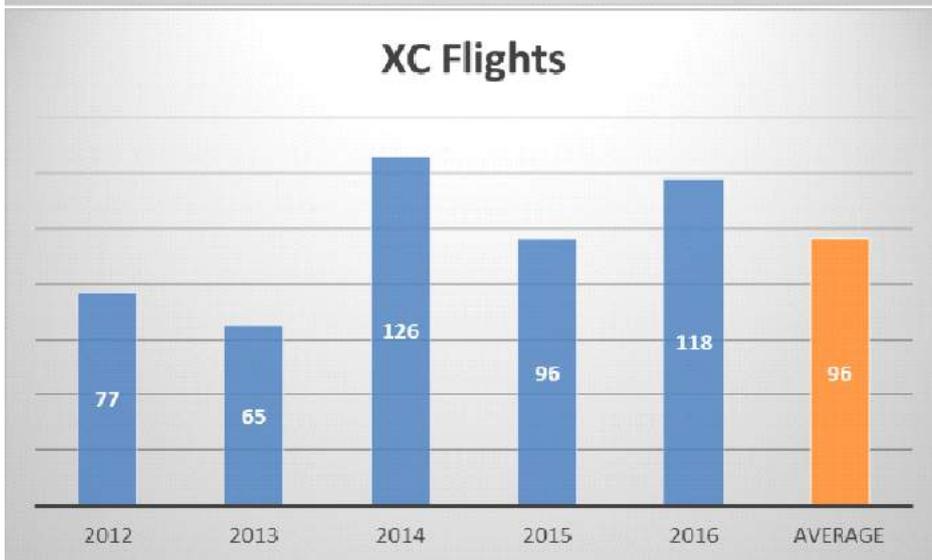


But I think that most of us would agree that it's more about flying. Obviously success isn't all about flying XC, but it's what I used as a basis for what follows. The farmers can relate to weather so on how many days did members fly XC?

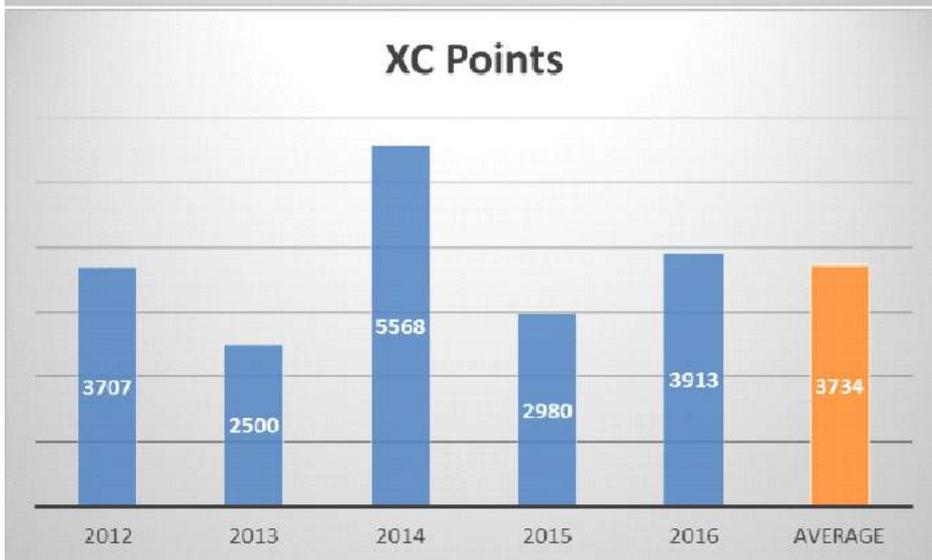




How many pilots entered flights in the Dales XC League?



How many flights did they enter?



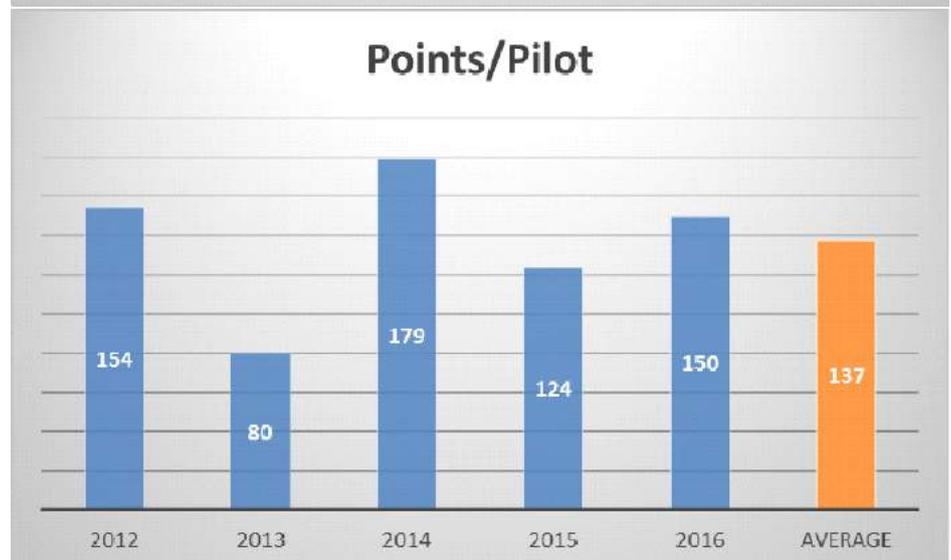
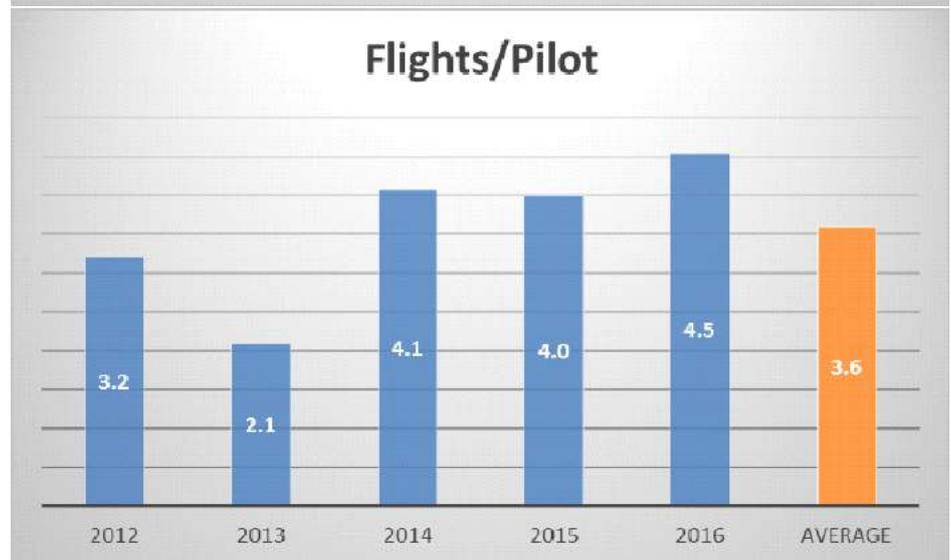
But perhaps most importantly, what was the total distance (read points) achieved

And that probably gives us the answer to the farmers' question, 'Not the best year we've ever had (that was 2014) but better than average'. 'Fair to middling' to a Yorkshireman! From there we can have a bit of fun.

First you can see the average distance (points) per XC flight...



... and if you are at all competitive (which you must be if you're entering flights in a league) how you compare with the average.



As Jocky is often quoted, 'The best pilot is the one having the most fun'. Most of us aspire to fly XC, but sometimes boating about on the ridge or playing around the clouds can be great fun – especially when you can land next to your car, have a beer and be home before the witching hour. But even on the ridge try to maximise your distance. With take-off, 3 turn points and landing you only have to fly 1km on each leg before you can upload your flight. Not only will it improve the club's statistics for next year, but when you do go over the back you'll be pleased to have a few extra kilometres in the bag.

Fly safely,
Martin Baxter, Chairman

LOST MOMENTS FROM THE HISTORY OF FREE FLYING. PART 1

with aplogies to Mr John Constable and the National Gallery, London (neither of whom gave their permission)





Bloody hell, look at that! I think he's going to land his paraglider in our field!

Do you think I was born yesterday? April fool yourself!



New Members

We welcome 2 new members to the club this month. Welcome John Wilson and Chris Kay. We hope that your flying with us is everything you hope for, safe, and that you brought some decent weather. We may not look it, but we are an approachable lot and look forward to seeing you on the hill and socialising after the flying is over.

Nova Festival 10 - 11 June 2017

Active Edge are hosting a Nova Festival in the Peak District 10 - 11 June 2017. The team including test pilot Toni Bender and a van full of gliders for pilots to try out, will meet at the Derbyshire & Lancashire Gliding Club at 0930 each day or out on the hill (check Active Edge Paragliding Facebook site for actual destination on the day). Toni will also be doing a Q & A session at the gliding club on the Saturday evening. Camping and food are available at the gliding club, everyone will be welcome.

Lost moments from the history of free flying

Prizes of free beer for better suggestions for captions than your editor's effort. skywords@dhpc.org.uk.
Suggestions for classic paintings to plagiarise in the future also welcome.

Cass' Coast to Coast

Keep your eyes peeled in the next couple of months for Glyn Cassidy (Cass), who is doing a Coast to Coast Hike and Fly for charity, and will be passing through the Dales. He recently had a Quadruple Heart Bypass - clearly a 200 mile Hike and Fly will be on the standard post op plan for more people in future. You can find out more and follow his progress on faceache:

<https://www.facebook.com/coasttocoasthikeandfly/>

Annecy Airspace

If you are going to Annecy, make sure you are aware of any changes to airspace.

http://federation.ffvl.fr/sites/ffvl.fr/files/alerts/INFO_TMA_CHAMBERY_DEC2016.pdf

April Club Night

XC FLYING – TIPS AND TRICKS

This month we have a local speaker and accomplished xc pilot, Pete Logan, with a talk designed to get you ready and raring to go for the Dales 2017 season (its started already!). Detailed analysis of flights both in and outside the Dales to give you tips on xc flying and strategy and also the tools to analyse your own flights. Whether you're dreaming of your first xc or aiming for that 50 or 100km, or just want to explore a bit more, this session's for you. The aim is for an interactive session and discussion so we'd really appreciate the wisdom of other xc hounds too please, to make the most of the evening.

Usual time: 7.30 for 8pm

Usual place: Horse and Farrier, Otley

Thursday 6th April.

This will be the last club night for the summer, see you on the hill! We are hoping to run one midsummer social, details to follow.

A Perfect debrief location





March Club Night Report Ruth Churchill Dower - Competition Flying - the Good the Bad and the Ugly

Ruth Churchill Dower is clearly a force to be reckoned with. A pilot with 20 years' experience, PWC competitor, mother of two children, successful businesswomen and company director, wife to Pat Dower...and that's before taking into account her remarkable recovery following her accident in Bir in 2015. But more of that later.

She started the evening by explaining how and why she got into flying. Pat was a pilot when she met him and she realised if she didn't fly "I knew I'd never see him". Since having children flying together has been more challenging and they have had to take turns; at the mercy of the weather. Enough to test a relationship I would say! Pete and I only managed to share a wing for about 6 months before deciding alternate flying was no



longer working. One of the things Ruth enjoys about flying is the people she meets and competitions provide her with an intense environment where she can make the most of the precious time available to fly.

On one of the days "taking turns" with Pat, they each managed to fly almost to Mont Blanc. It was

a few days after the amazing mass landings on Mont Blanc in 2012 and Ruth showed some beautiful pictures demonstrating how awe-inspiring, spectacular and intimidating that landscape can be. In the end she decided discretion was the better course and flew back, but it was an amazing mountain flight.

Most of Ruth's talk was about competition flying, at whatever level we choose to take that on. She likened this to the three ages of the comp pilot.

Close to Mont Blanc summit



Prior to going through the 3 ages of the competition pilot, Ruth outlined the early phases of a pilot's career: From fledgling - just starting out..... ..to developing skills, practising



to refining your technique, doing things right. After this:

Practising Competitor



The first age is the “practising competitor”. In other words, taking part in competitions, trying the task, but not with the expectation of making goal or winning. For each “age” she emphasised the important areas to focus on, from physical, mental and psychological point of view. Many of these seem applicable to pilot progression in general. So for the physical side at the practising competitor level in included ensuring you are fit, well hydrated and comfortable with your equipment. The mental preparation at this stage involves learning about gaggle etiquette, familiarising yourself with sites and tasks. And psychologically gaining a little confidence and overcoming fear. She recommended entering competitions when you are consistently managing 50km routes, but I am sure there are fun competitions you can do even before this.

Progressing Pilot

Next up was the “progressing pilot”. These pilots are aiming to get to goal, become more comfortable and confident with competition flying. Whilst the skills for the practising pilot still apply, Ruth also mentioned the



importance of training and being really comfortable on your wing and the value of an SIV course. Mental preparation involves more detailed assessment of the geography and working out different route options and in-flight “interpreting the gaggle”. Now was the time to try and learn to fly faster. Pete and I caught the end of a comp in Corryong and were amazed at how low the pilots were flying, they didn’t go higher than they needed to. Ruth also talked about developing strategies to manage stress on launch.

Winning Pilot

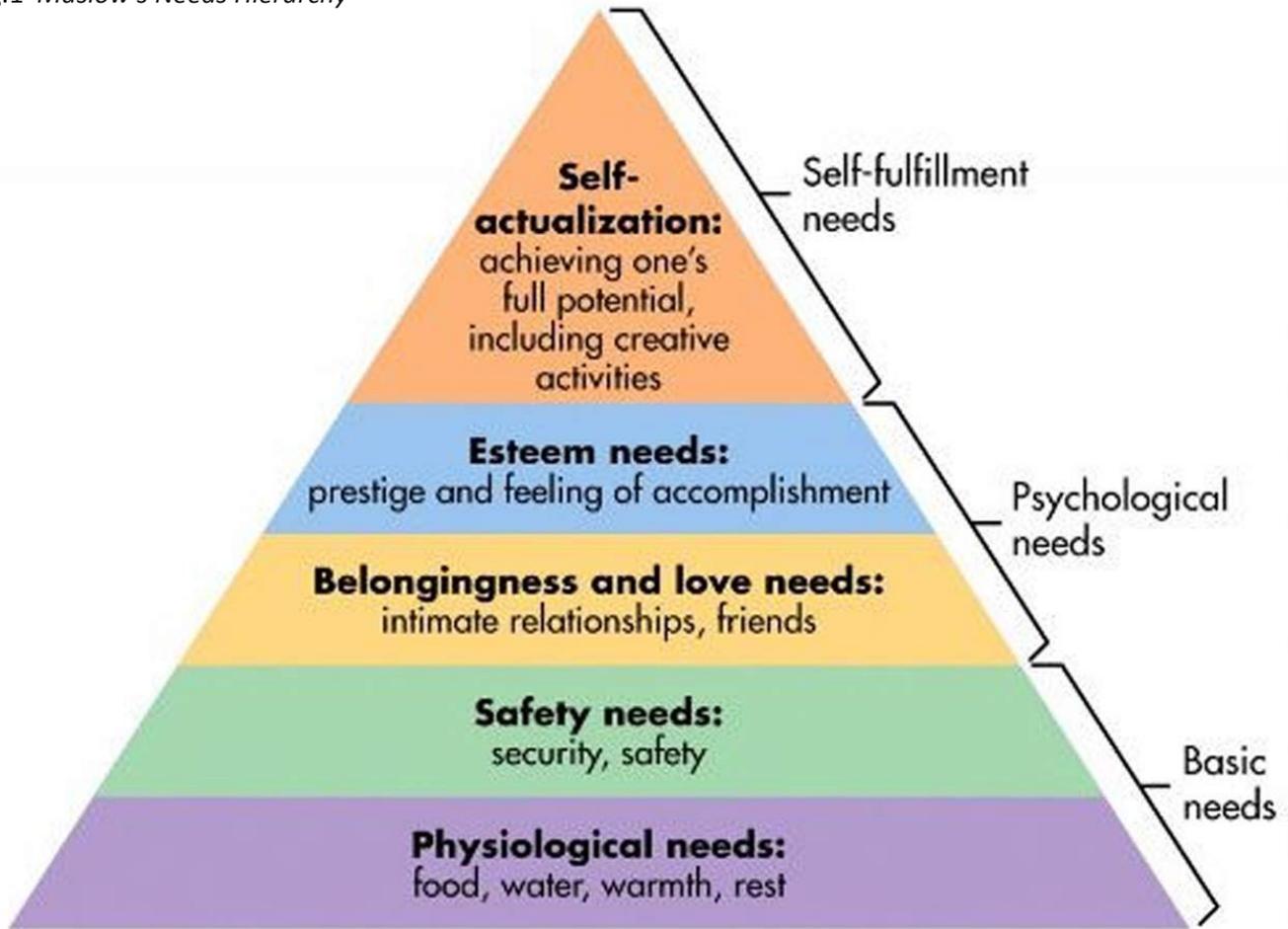


The final “age” of the comp pilot is the “winning pilots”. At this stage there is little to add to their equipment but Ruth suggested they would be doing regular SIV and acro training. From a mental point of view they would be doing detailed analysis of their flights and picking “lifty lines”. From a psychological point of view, winners have plenty of self-belief and are meticulous at eradicating mistakes. She said they would go out flying all the time, even the days that look “off”. The psychological discipline in-flight is also important, so that you move on from setbacks and mistakes rather than dwell on them.

Maslow

I was not familiar with Maslow's “hierarchy of needs” which she then described. But it certainly makes sense and struck a chord. Other people may have heard the acronym “HALT” = “Hungry Angry Late Tired” as to

Fig.1 Maslow's Needs Hierarchy



reasons why you don't perform, or even may be unsafe. Some of it is simple, making sure we are prepared to go flying, fresh, fed, watered, comfortable. And we will fly better if our minds are not preoccupied with other things.

reserve (hopefully at the repack last week.)?

Thankfully despite this Ruth survived and made a good recovery from her injuries and is back to flying and back to competition flying. That shows considerable physical and mental fortitude!

The Accident

Many people will have heard of Ruth's accident in the PWC in 2015. It was incredibly generous, brave and honest of Ruth to come and share this with us, blow-by-blow, and talk about what she has learnt from it. From the timings ("yes minutes Martin, not seconds") to the lengths of her brake lines (someone tell Trevor how long 16cm is please!) she described it in careful detail. Despite the subsequent problems identified with her brake lines the overall message from it was clear. She did not throw her reserve. It did not even occur to her to throw her reserve until it was far too late. How many of us would do the same thing? How often do we check our reserve handle? Do we actually put our hand into it? Would we be able to pull it wearing thick winter gloves (or mittens)? When something is not going to plan how far are we above the ground? Have we remembered to check the horizon? What is the minimum distance at which we would throw it? When did we last pack our

5 Questions

She left us with five questions to help us progress to achieve our flying (or other) potential:

- What do you know lots about?
- What are you good at doing?
- What do you need more support with?
- What do you want to learn more about or do more of?
- What do you dream of doing /becoming?

And finally congratulations to:

- Al Crompton - Most improved pilot
 - Tam – Baildon sod
 - Richard Meek – Pilots pilot (collected by Tam)
 - Richard Meek - 100km XC challenge (collected by Tam)
- who were presented with their prizes.

RD

Ruth's flight from Les Saisies towards M Blanc



Club Nights

Club Nights take place on the first Thursday of the month (with the exception of January, when we give your liver a rest, and it's on the second Thursday). These nights are great for meeting up with the rest of the club, getting to know your fellow pilots a bit better (while they are not wearing their helmets), finding out what's been going on, and making plans etc. Over the Winter months we organise talks, often by some of the leading lights of the sport.

The venue is the Horse and Farrier, Otley. 7.30 for 8pm.

Next meeting: April 6th 7.30 for 8pm.

Pete Logan - XC From the Dales

[See details elsewhere in the mag](#)



7 Bridge Street
Otley LS21 1BQ
Telephone : 01943 468400

Future Club Nights

The April club night will be the last "formal" club night until the autumn, by when we will all have had a fantastic flying season! We are hoping to run one midsummer social. More details to follow.



National Awards

Hots news! The eagle eyed amongst you may have spotted this in the February edition of our bigger and better older brother, the BHPA magazine *Skywings*. They included a round up of BHPA trophies and awards for 2016. The DHPC was well represented, details below.

Hang gliding XC League Champions, Wiinter 15-16
Dales (272.28Km)

National Paragliding Sports Class Champion: Dave Smart
National Paragliding Sports Class, 2nd Place: Jake Herbert

National Paragliding Reynolds Class (<95Kg): Jake Herbert

Well done to all involved, here's to another great year!
Just luck? See Jake's excellent article later in this edition.

Alan Watts

Instant Weather Forecasting

Altostratus ahead of a warm front (or occlusion)

So, what's it going to do?



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© Alan Watts, 2016, Instant Weather Forecasting, Adlard Coles (UK), an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Your sky looks like that above. Do you:

- Go out and fly now because it's going to be awful in a while;
- Contact all your mates and suggest a drive to Wales because it'll be brilliant further South in a few hours;
- Plan a day off and scoring brownie points for future use?

Actual Major Inference: If this sky follows last month's jet stream cirrus, with cirro stratus in between, expect major deterioration. In any event, expect deterioration

Clues: The flat featureless cloud will gradually lower and thicken, blocking out the sun, killing off the cumulus. Lineal features in the altostratus will show the direction of the wind up high.

The normal weather change after the appearance of the above sky would be the development of a 20 - 45 mph wind within 4-6 hours, with complete cloud cover and continuous rain, with temperatures and pressure falling.



We are grateful for the kind permission to use this material from Alan Watt's book, *Instant Weather Forecasting (5th Edition)*, which is available from the club library



April 2017 : Power Showers For April

Issued : March 25 2017

Forecast

April is expected to live up to its name this year with a month dominated by showers as the sun increases in strength through Spring.

An unsettled start to April as the Atlantic dominates the weather. Towards the middle of the month we expect low pressure to be a more dominant feature to the East of the UK which will introduce cooler Northerly winds across many areas and allow showers to develop widely. Hill snow possible in these showers across higher ground in Scotland and some rather cold overnight temperatures possible too.

Towards the end of the month and low pressure continues to dominate the weather with winds from the North/East a main feature of the weather which will result in a continuation of a showery weather regime for all parts of the UK.



April 2017
Forecast

www.paraglidespain.com

From £250 per person *

Included in price 7 nights accommodation with guiding and retrieves.
Free cross country and thermal coaching for novice and experienced pilots.
Flying and guiding in this area for over 20 years.

Stay in the mountain village of La Muela de Algodonales, Andalucía Spain, at the entrance to the flying sites.
Limited to small groups of 4 to 5
included in price mountain bike guiding and bird watching days
***Based on group of 4**

Contact: Chris Williams
UK: 07973222713
Spain: 0034608598083
E-mail: chris@paraglidespain.com
www.paraglidespain.com

Chris and Lynn Williams of "High Sierras" are offering guided paragliding, mountain biking, bird watching and trekking holidays. Staying in the quiet mountain village of La Muela de Algodonales at the foot of Sierra de Lijar in Southern Spain. Come along for a paragliding holiday and if you wish take part in the other activities. We offer for these free if

you are on a guided week. We specialise in small groups of around 4 to 5 for a higher quality of service, XC guiding and retrieve, coaching including task setting, waypoints for circuit flights entering your flights into the UK league and all you need to set you up for the UK XC season. Discount for group bookings offer of £250 per person based on a minimum 4. With 15% off individual full price for club members only.

Club Sites

As we approach the flying season, below is a timely reminder to treat the land we use with respect

The Dales Club enjoys access to much privately owned land, for launch and landing sites. Please remember that it belongs to someone. A farmer is probably trying to make a living from it, and we are highly visible guests, relying on their generosity for the space to pursue our sport. In addition to the obvious, (no litter, shut gates, don't climb walls or fences), you must read the site specific requirements detailed in the club handbook and on the website, (parking, access routes, numbers etc.). Remember they apply to you, other flyers you see on the hill, and any friends you take with you. If you are involved with a site problem, be prepared to deal with it yourself and make a point of contacting the Sites Officer to make them aware of the situation.

Livestock

Around April each year is lambing season in the Dales. Members must take extra care on the roads. If you are driving along and see a ewe on one side of the road and a lamb on the other, you can expect the latter to make a sudden dash to its Mum, just as you are upon it in your car. Pregnant sheep are very susceptible to miscarriages if alarmed, so pilots must be seen to show extreme consideration. Sites usually affected directly by

lambing through closure or other restrictions are Windbank, Semer Water and Addingham Moorside. The details of such restrictions are posted in the appropriate issue of the Club magazine and on the website. Horses can also be easily startled and should be given a wide berth whenever possible.

Meadowing

Many farmers grow long grass for winter feed. Once a small area has been flattened, the wind can get a foothold and cause further damage. Grass laid flat can't be cut and is wasted. Try to avoid fields in meadow. The situation is most acute one thermal downwind of our most popular sites.

Shooting

Grouse rearing and shooting provides a significant income to many landowners and probably represents the greatest threat to our flying sites. Pen Hill and Great Whernside have already been denied to us because of grouse; and Stags Fell, Nappa Scar, Windbank and Ilkley could very easily go the same way. Always respect the relevant rules and never fly over an active shoot: don't be the one who causes us to lose a site.

DHPC Site Officers

Dennis Marston



Simon Tomlinson



Dennis
07968 380829
dennisandmargaretm
@yahoo.co.uk

Simon
07759 138971
sigma7man
@gmail.com

Northern Sites

Addleborough	Semer Water
Bishopdale	Stags Fell
Brant Side	Tailbridge
Dodd Fell & Grove Hd	Wether Fell
Nappa Scar	Whernside



Toby Briggs

tobybriggs@btopenworld.com
07582 156471

Southern Sites

Addingham	Hawswick
Baildon	Ilkley Moor
Cow Close Fell	Kettlewell
Cowling and Sutton	Kilnsey
Great Whernside	Windbank

Club Coaches

Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club - Coaches List (March 2017)

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	alex.colbeck@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
Richard Meek	PG	Hebden Bridge	7446445157	richard.meek64@gmail.com	Various
Jan Tempest	PG	Leeds/Harrogate	7724133453 7482298437	jantemp3@btinternet.com	Various
David May	PG	Ilkley	7928318219	dav.may@gmail.com	W/e & various
Chris Williams	PG	Spain/Preston	7973222713	stayhigh@btinternet.com	Occasional UK

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 2017

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

There are more details of coaching within the Club on the web site. Coaching days are announced in the shout box and on the home page.



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

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David May Safety - Reserve Repack

The 2017 repack was held on Sat Mar 4 in the large sports hall in St Mary's Secondary School, Menston. We have been using this facility for a number of years and it works very well – big and bright. The repack went well again this year – a total of 33 pilots attended with the usual mix of reserves and experience. One notable addition to the mix was a Beamer Steerable Reserve (see <http://www.highadventure.ch/en/beamer-3-en.html>) which I had not seen before.



Tony with his Beamer

Bill Morris was on hand again to provide expert advice and guidance. Bill is the BHPA Emergency Parachutes Advisor and puts enormous time and energy in developing and supporting the myriad BHPA repack sessions around the country. Just a quick google search will find him popping up all over the place at this time of year as each club prepares for the new flying season and what was a few hours on a Saturday in March for us was just another weekend away for Bill. If he is reading this I'd like to thank him again on behalf of the club.

The format of the sessions is the same every year. Bill provides a short presentation on the subject of reserves and deployment and demonstrates how to repack. As it is easier to repack with two we then pair off with other pilots who have the same reserve and help each other. This has the added advantage that you get to repack your own type reserve twice.

Most reserves have a common repack method with some variation towards the end but there are exceptions. The Beamer for example – as the owner said himself "The manual has 70 photos showing the steps in





the packing process ... and then it says do it all again on the other side". Needless to say it's quite an involved procedure and it's no surprise he was one of the first pilots to arrive and the last to leave.

This year I was a little more organised than last and brought a large bag of rubber bands and a roll of strimmer cord to help move things along smoothly. Bill hovers between the groups to provide support and advice and it all works well with everyone packed and ready for the new flying season before the 3pm cut-off.

So all in all, another successful repack session and I wish everyone a happy and safe flying season for 2017.

David May

DHPC Safety Officer



Magnificent March

Spring is in the air - Photo: Dave Eva



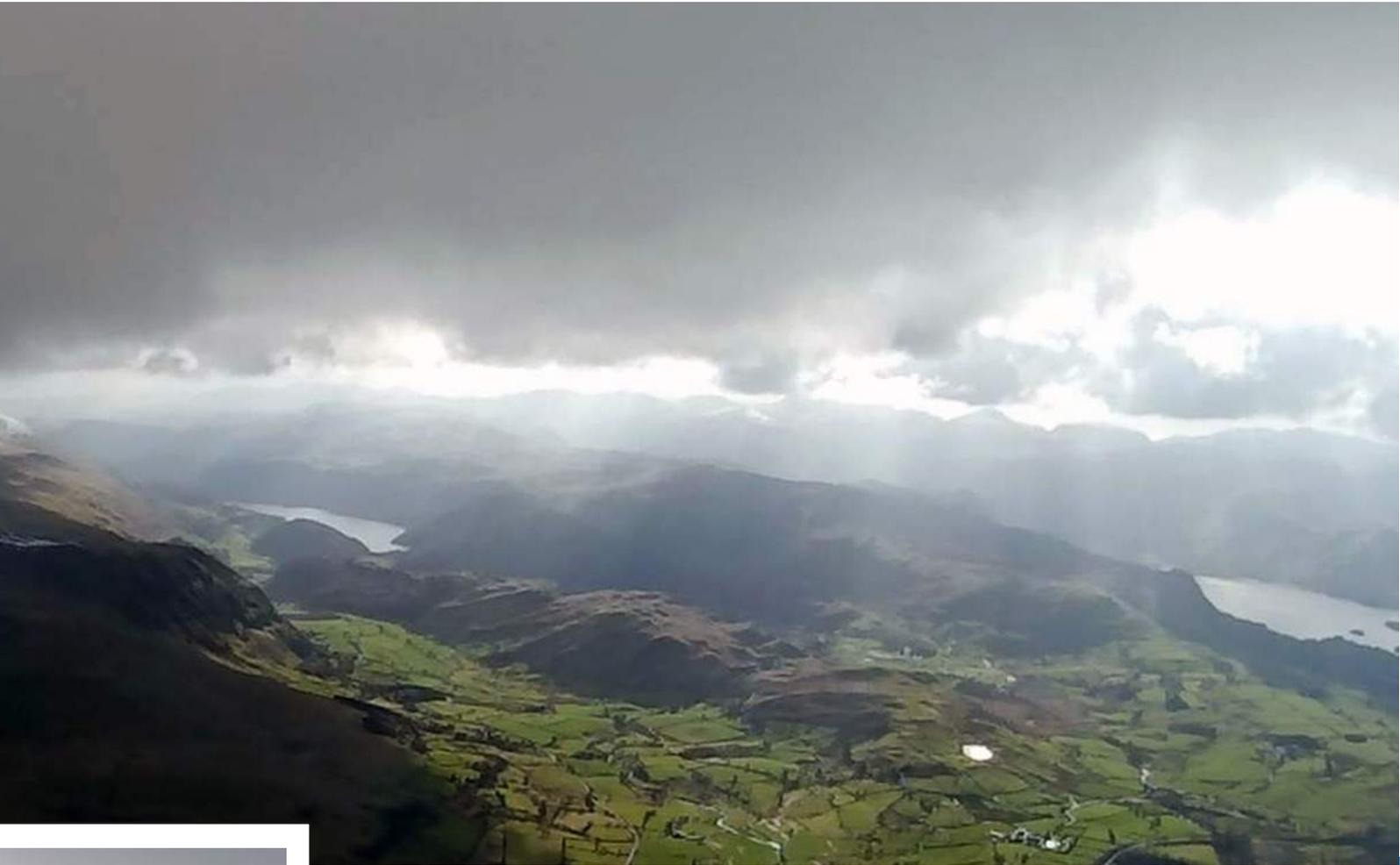
March 4th



Photo: Dave Eva

So how was your March?

If you picked your day, there was flying to be had, and what flying! Personally, I spent several hours on top of very windy hills, mainly alone, and sometimes wet. For those that picked better days and places than me, there were some dramatic flights as the few photos here show. This is why we do it. Hopefully this presages a brilliant year!



March 9th

Crossing Whitehaven Harbour. Photo: Dave Eva





Robin Hartley at Windbank. March 11

Mam Tor. March 25th



Photo: Tam

Mick Bostock at Brid - March 5



Photo: Geoff Moses



Inspired by the X-Alps? This may get your vario beeping!

For those who like Fly & Hike

In the wake of Red Bull X-Alps flourishes the semi-official European Championship Fly and Hike. The so-called Bordairrace exists since 2008. Three or four times a year this race will be organized in the Alps: in Germany, Austria, Italy or Slovenia.

This competition for paragliders is a challenge for those who like both cross country flying and alpine hiking. Travelling only by foot and flying, each participant decides for him/herself (according to wind, conditions and mood) which route to take from the common starting point. The idea is to choose your personal turning point as far out as possible, and to make it back to the starting point within 33 hours. Depending on the weather, tactical decisions can be quite challenging.

Participants typically are well trained competition pilots from all over Europe, proficient in landing and taking off at tiny spots and experienced in mountaineering. Every pilot determines where and when to take-off and land, no wonder that some meteorological knowledge is of great help.

Well known Bordairrace competitors from the past are Red Bull X-Alps pilots Paul Guschlbauer, Thomas Hofbauer, Sebastian Huber, the late Steve Nash und World Champion and X-Alps winner Chrigel Maurer.

The track will be documented via GPS. In order to be evaluated, the turning point must be at least 15 km away from the starting point. Furthermore, at least 20 % of the total distance must be covered flying!

The pilot who at the finish hands over the GPS-logger with the furthest turning point will be the overall winner. But every pilot who makes it back in time after covering at least 15 kilometres out and return is a winner. **“Turning point at your personal limit” is the motto.**

Many pilots find it motivating to meet fellow pilots with

the same frame of mind.

Apart from “everlasting glory” each pilot has chances of winning prices in this comp. And of course this competition offers ample possibilities to reflect upon your own tactics and improve your skills.

Bordairrace competitions are relatively safe. Route and take off time will be decided by the pilots themselves, there is no such thing as group think or even group pressure. On the other hand: each pilot has to make his or her decisions and that isn’t always easy for less-experienced competitors. A ground crew, consisting of one or two supporters, is allowed but not obligatory.

Registration for just one out of three comps is allowed but it is more fun to participate more often. The registration fee amounts to € 47,-- and includes retrieval service for those who don’t make it back to goal.

Expensive, superlight gear is not requested. Those who participate regularly can simply replace old gear when it wears out or gets obsolete by lightweight equipment.

Briefings and announcements before, during and after the competition will be made in German, and also in English.

First comp in 2017: Aschau (Chiemsee, Germany), between Kufstein and Salzburg, 5th-7th May.

Then:

22nd-24th June Ramsau/Dachstein (A)

1st-3rd September Kössen (A).

More information by internet: www.bordairrace.com

or by telephone (in English) Clemens van Soest: 0031 71 5122096.

See also: <https://www.facebook.com/Bordairrace> .

The application/registration form will be available at the Bordairrace website as from April 4th.



Pete Darwood

XC Camp 2017

With a winter paragliding holiday now firmly established as the favourite, snow sports having not got a look in for several years, it was back to Australia for 2017. A chance to see our friends, bask in the warmer climate, get some XC hours under our belts and hopefully not reminisce too much about what could have been...

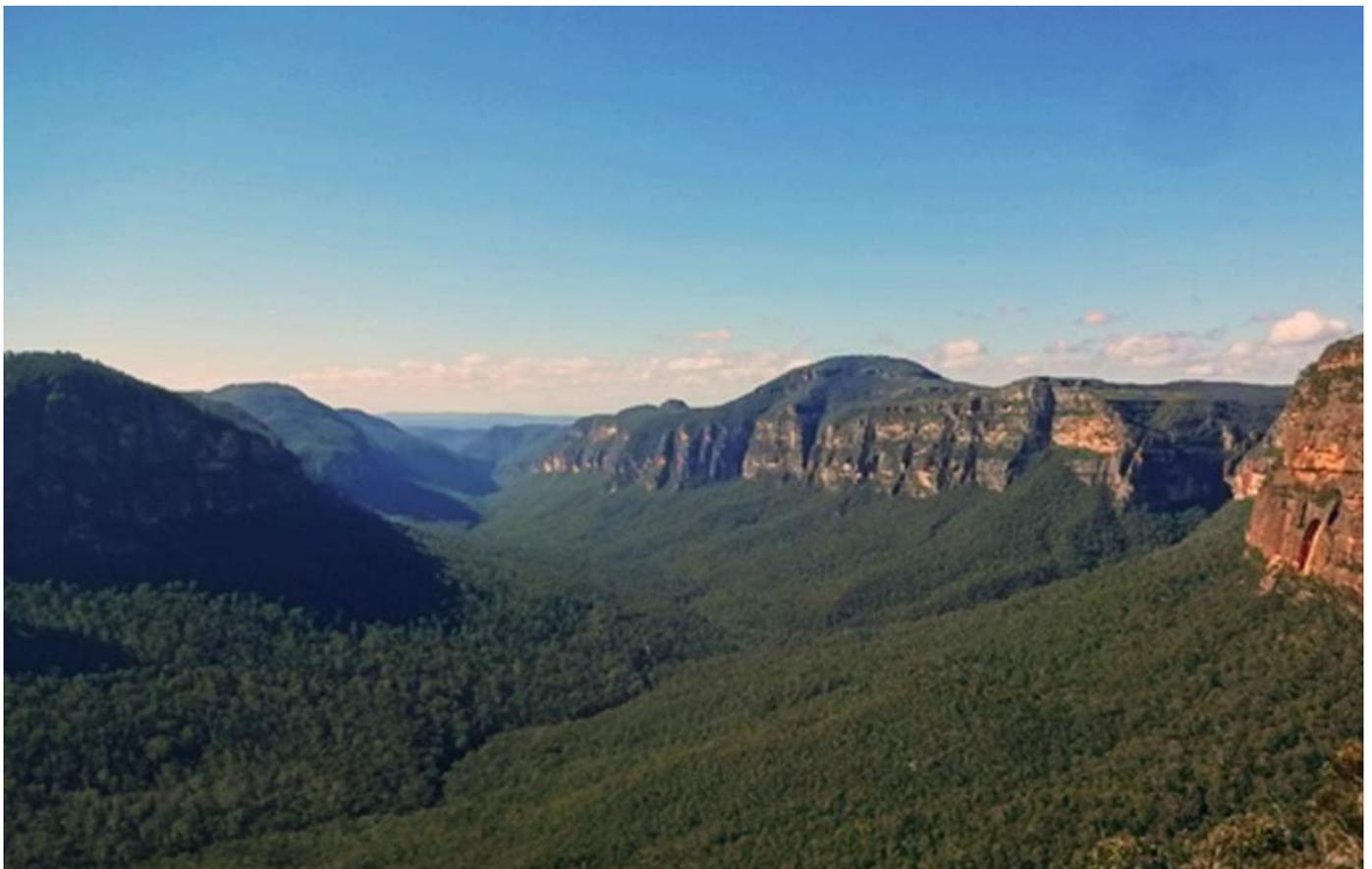
We awoke on Monday 23rd January on the beautiful North Shore of Sydney's harbour and spent the morning running the stunning Spit to Manly (and back) bush track, in what felt like ridiculous temperatures, before swimming in the harbour for an age to cool back down again.

The following days saw us back in our old stomping ground of the Blue Mountains, firstly with a walk along the stunning cliff tops of the Grose Valley, and then off to the Kanangra Boyd wilderness for a couple of days remote bush walking in amazing surroundings with only Australia's finest flora and fauna for company.

The subsequent plan was to follow the weather and

then spend the last week in Manilla for the annual XC camp, and so it was to this end that we spent Friday morning driving 6 ½ hours south to the little town of Corryong, which is where the tail end of the Australian competition scene was taking place. Having not been there before it is fair to say that we were a little nervous heading up the steep dirt track to the top of Mount Elliott in a two-wheel drive hire car. This was heightened whilst we waited for the remaining competitors to launch in the thermic and somewhat switching conditions, wondering how we were going to retrieve the car at the end of the day.

Corryong sits to the west of the Great Dividing Range on the mighty Murray river in the north of Victoria. It comprises a series of very wide valleys with eucalypt forested hills surrounding and in the distance to the East much larger and more serious looking hills. In Australian terms, it would be reasonable to describe it as sitting between the mountain-like flying of Bright and the flatland flying of Manilla.



Grose Valley

Once having taken off we had a stark reminder of the differences in conditions between our last flights, in my case a 5 minute sleddie from Whernside at the start of December, and our current predicament with 5 m/s rough edged climbs and the remnants of inversions at various altitudes. Did we really do this sport for enjoyment, had we previously been able to cope with such conditions, was it just a rough day? It seemed like a baptism of fire, but we survived and even started to cope wondering then where we should be heading. After gaining some altitude I was amazed at the fact

**..a stark reminder
of the differences in
conditions..**



Mt. Elliott, Corryong - launch is the tiny clear cut in the left cloud shadow

**..did we really do
this sport for
enjoyment..**

that the competition pilots were flying up and down the ridges at just above tree height, barely stopping for climbs and heading out to valley turnpoints at what seemed to me to be final glide sorts of heights! After a little valley tour, and what felt like enough airtime after the long drive, I headed to the competition goal, whilst Rosie, taking the punishment for an early bombout, hid her wing and hiked up the front of the mountain in the blistering heat to get the car.

The next day was forecast to be windy and so given the heatwave that Australia was experiencing, we decided to





spend most of it swimming in the Murray. However, more productively we also went for a drive around scoping out the area, working out where to fly, where not to (no mobile reception) and which major bridge over the Murray was closed and just how long the detour was. This knowledge proved very handy the following day when Rosie broke the tricky inversion and into orbit before heading north past said bridge. This being a public holiday Sunday (Australia day), there was no traffic on the roads and it was clear that hitching

back to Corryong was going to be problematic. With Rosie gone I decided to try and head back south of the Murray to close the flight and provide a transport solution. Fighting a head wind all the way I seemed to luckily hit several thermals in a row that eventually got me back to a vertical landing near the pub and car; problem solved.

With the competition ended, the remaining pilots drifted away and with the forecast for increasing winds again we spent the next day on an eleven-hour drive to



Manilla, not a lot going for it ... unless you are a free flier

Manilla. Driving past Forbes under amazing skies it was not difficult to imagine why the annual hang glider tow event is so well known. These were flatland skies at their best.

Manilla, not to be confused with its single "l" northern hemisphere equivalent, is a small country town in northern New South Wales with, if one were to be brutally honest, not a lot going for it. That is of course unless you are a free-flier. Location of the current Australian foot-launch record (365km), venue for the



Sky above Mt Borah



2007 paragliding world championships and where we learnt to fly over three years ago, Mt. Borah 12km North of Manilla is probably as famous as it comes in Australian paragliding terms. Every year at the start of February is the XC camp, an informal event aimed at getting pilots of all levels together to help each other fly big distances. No turnpoints, no start cylinders or gates, no complicated rules, simply takeoff and fly as far as you can.

We arrived a few days early to re-acquaint ourselves, book a space in the communal fridges and cupboards, and to get some air-time under our belts prior to the competition start. We both had goals for the time in Manilla, Rosie's to improve her consistency whilst mine to get a 100km. Despite the heat, close to 40 degrees, it was a good atmosphere at the camp. Many of our Blue Mountains paragliding friends were there, including this year's Aussie X-alps entrant Che and his supporter Oli, as well as some pilots more local to the Dales (Ben Keyes and Nick Pain). The setup in the summer is great, if its flyable there will always be other pilots around and regular transport to take-off is

provided in the form of the "basher". Most pilots either hitch back, coordinate retrieves or during competitions hire local drivers to chase them throughout the area.

The few days before the start of the camp provided some great flying weather and I set off with desire, clocking a 75km personal best flying over some stunning terrain to the east of Manilla past Bendemeer and

landing on the plateau at a higher altitude than take-off, followed the next day by a long but rewarding 40km triangle. All this prior to competition start was tantalising and whilst Rosie was by comparison having a slower warmup things were looking promising.

The competition started properly on the Sunday, and whilst Rosie was still warming up, after a promising run south past Lake Keepit I eventually bombed out at 45km. The fun class was won on the day by our friend Kyla from team Kiwi whilst the overall maximum for the day was 125km. The next day was blue and tricky but in the same direction. Whilst I struggled and eventually landed near Keepit, Rosie's slow start was now paying dividends and she flew a

..pilots..hire local drivers to chase them throughout the area..





personal best with 50km open distance. The winner of the day was Kari Ellis on her Peak 4 with 143km.

A change of conditions with a couple of troughs, less stability and a southerly flow meant that on the Tuesday we headed north. Many pilots chose to land early as they were not convinced about the over-developments all around, however our maverick friend from the Blue Mountains clocked up the day win with 217km on his Gradient XC5. Rosie, building upon the success of her previous day, was one of many choosing to land, but not until another 50km had been clocked up, whilst on the second attempt I foolishly followed another pilot all the way to the deck at 47km. It was at this point that I realised lack of sleep and exercise was starting to affect my decision making, time for a run in the morning!

Wednesday was the epic, post-frontal day forecast, if one chose to launch early enough before conditions blew out that was. Indecision, not being 100% happy with the conditions and other launch incidents meant many of the lower airtime pilots, Rosie and I included, chose not to launch, whilst the sky gods cracked 300km with Che the best on 313km. It was interesting to find out the next day that he was disappointed with his performance, saying the conditions were at least 350km if not more, but poor group flying and line choices

decked all the top guns somewhere past 250km. Rosie and I were left wondering what could have been?

Thursday, day two post-frontal, again forecast good conditions but with lighter winds. This meant no records were on for the sky gods but that all the field had a chance to launch. With the wind initially easterly and then forecast to turn southerly, the wise money was to head west of the Kaputar massive to Narrabri and then north towards Moree. In the air however, many variations were taken in what started out a pretty rough day. An hour and half in and 25km west of launch Rosie and I both had low saves at what proved to be one of the pivotal points in the day. Whilst I continued to try and chase the now diminishing group of faster pilots and wings crosswind, eventually decking it at 62km, Rosie chose to use the wind and take a very different course. Another low save later and she had managed to connect circuitously with the Upper Horton valley, one of the more conventional routes if heading north from Mt. Borah. Once here the clouds aligned and she did not get low again until being chased away from the higher ground by an agitated Wedged-Tailed eagle at the end of her flight. This was a stunning 120km straight line distance from launch, more than double her personal best from the previous two days, and after more than six





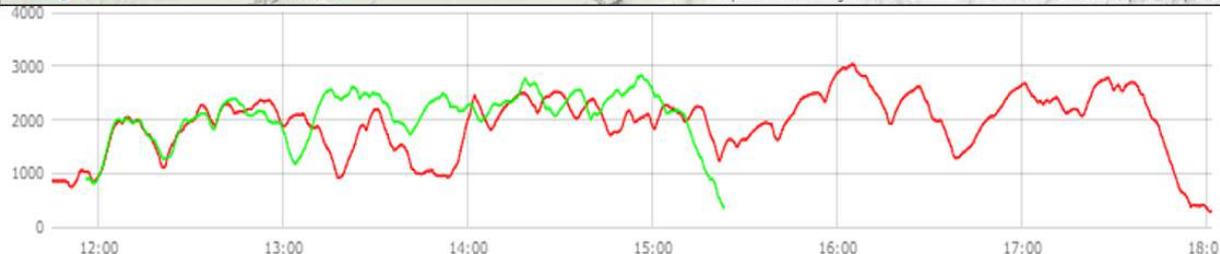
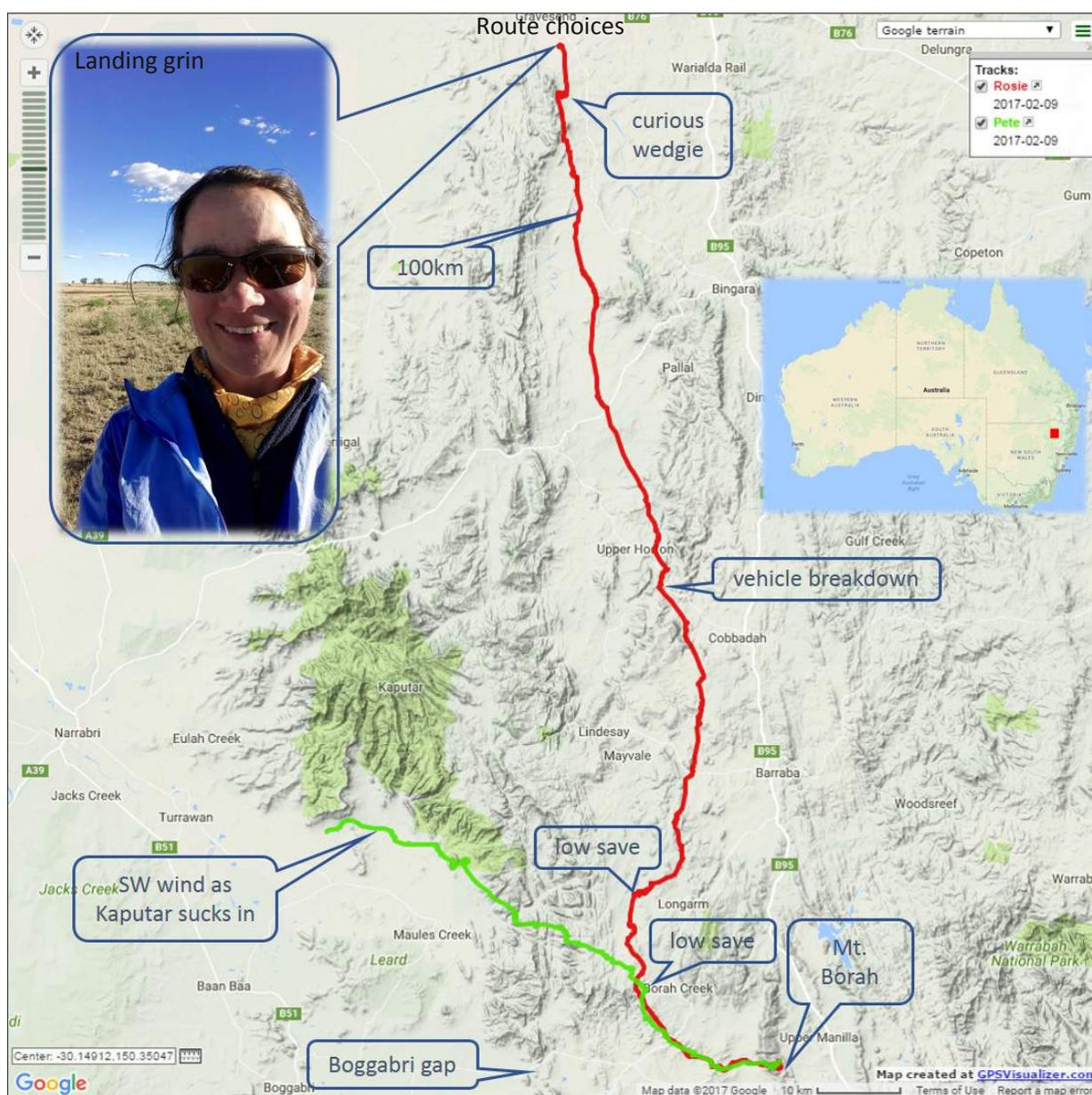
hours in the air. To say she was elated when we eventually turned up at the very local pub in the middle of nowhere was an understatement but she thoroughly deserved the massive grin she was wearing.

Friday was our last day as we would have to miss Saturday's flying in order to drive the five hours south to the airport. However, general tiredness was starting to take its toll and we both bombed in the 20s. Realising that was going to be it for a while we then headed back up for a late afternoon soar, and whilst Rosie attempted a closed circuit I practised drifting in the weak end-of-day climbs and surprised myself by ending up 40km north of launch. A relaxing night and subsequent

morning, a long hot drive (47 at its peak), a lovely swim in the sea, fish and chips, shower in the airport and that was that for our 2017 XC camp. However, we found out once we had got back to the UK that the fun class was won by our good friend Julian from the Blue Mountains club and that despite missing the last day and not flying one other Rosie had come second. Overall competition winner Kari Ellis flew 1006km over six days.

In all a very successful trip although it would be fair to say that somehow we seemed to have achieved each other's objectives! That of course means we'll have to head back at some stage within the next few years!

PD



Rosie Darwood

What an amazing sport this is - The day it all came together



The day before had been an “epic” day. Epic that is for those who got off the hill early in fairly strong wind conditions. An incident on launch wound up with my lines in a tree, me a little shaken with a bruised leg and in no rush to get in the air. As I was launching in thermic windy conditions another pilot brought his wing up directly in front of me – effectively a “mid-air” on launch. My wing was already up and feet off the deck but clearly there was a lot to learn for both of us. I’m just glad I wasn’t hurt. Whether I could have steered away and carried on flying I don’t know, emergency landing seemed the best option. His instructor was apologetic and produced a huge saw from his harness to cut down the branch where my lines were attached. The sky looked amazing, studded with little white fluffy clouds and the leaders made over 300km that day.

The next day looked much more my type of conditions and after a couple of good flights earlier in the week and effectively a “day off” I felt focussed and ready for it. The winds were forecast as lighter and southeast to

It definitely helped to know who some of the other pilots were

southerly, with people planning routes out to the west via the Boggabri Gap. We assembled again on the southeast launch but to a much more blue looking day. After a slightly nervous launch from the same spot as yesterday I climbed up above Mount Borah gradually gaining height. I saw a few gaggles leaving and losing a lot of height initially, but once I had 2000m decided to brave it. The rationale being it was going to be easier to fly with others on a blue day and there were plenty of other pilots out there.

Sure enough I hit considerable sink leaving the hill and was fairly low before getting a climb over the low ridges to the northwest of launch. Other gliders helped locate the climb which had a pretty rough section at about 1700m, I think due to an inversion layer. Pilots ahead were heading Northwest along a ridge, too far North I thought to make the Boggabri Gap. However, those who

were heading South of this were losing a lot of height - including a very experienced pilot on an Enzo. It definitely helped by this stage in the week to know who some of the other pilots in the air were.

Initially I drifted downwind northwest along the low ridge, following the other pilots. I could hear friends on the radio talking about crossing another gap in the hills the West, north of the Boggabri Gap. Julian, a fellow pilot from Blackheath on a Buzz was clearly unsure. Whilst listening I was unable to contribute. Getting ready on launch I had realised I didn’t have my radio. Anxious not to miss the launch window I had taken the spare radio instead but was unable to transmit on it. In fact it turned out later my own radio was a few metres away in the car (not back at base as I had assumed) so I could have easily collected it. So I remained silent, listening to the conversation. Eventually Julian headed for the gap. He had a couple of hundred metres more height than me at that stage and I couldn’t see whether there were landing options in the gap. I wasn’t keen. I’d been wondering for a while about just heading north (staying to the east of the main range) – the wind was southerly now and going north was over landable terrain. The disadvantages being there were few thermal markers (clouds or pilots) in that direction and earlier I’d seen a couple of pilots low. I also knew mobile reception was poor there (coupled with few roads and a malfunctioning radio!).

A few beeps...there was definitely something there

In the end, rather belatedly, I made my decision and headed North, which turned out to be a good one. The others had a difficult time later on the far side of the gap, flying crosswind to the west of the Kaputar Range. I flew over Pete, scratching low on the ridge below, willing him up. Then I also hit sink and had to fly along searching for ground sources. My last attempt was some buildings beside a field with a low ridge to the

north. A few beeps...there was definitely something there. I spent what felt like forever, gaining then losing height, but staying in the air. In retrospect I guess that was the key, staying in the air until the proper thermal came through, or I located it properly. I think it was the former as I felt as though I had covered every inch of that area!

After 50m, 100m the climb became easier. What a relief! I could relax a little as I thermalled up without concentrating on each single wing movement and beep and to stay airborne. I climbed up to 2500m. There were no other pilots or clouds near enough to be useful and I actually headed east a bit trying to reach some

Clouds appearing in front of me as I needed them

clouds. I had some real luck here, with clouds appearing in front of me as I needed them and didn't get low.

I crossed a small wooded col into the Horton valley, where the clouds were forming better. Again I got a little low here (I could see a broken down vehicle causing traffic problems on the road below) and was looking at some non-ideal landing options before finding a super thermal which took me back up. A couple of other pilots on BGDs were near and low, I never saw them again.

As I headed into the Horton I was very aware of my communications issues. The only sounds now on the radio were farmers discussing crop spraying, shifts and their drinking plans for the weekend. I made a conscious decision that I would need to land near a building – a long walk out in 40+ degree heat with no comms would not be fun. But after a lot of radio chatter earlier in the flight I was loving the silence. I did wonder if the others were worried about my lack of contact, and even briefly considered trying to get my mobile phone out before common-sense prevailed! I ate a muesli bar, looked around, took some photos and relaxed.

Kaputar looked impressive. I flew down the East side of the valley where the hillsides had been in the sun and where there were finally clouds. Beautiful consistent clouds that worked. Nice non-scary clouds, taking me up to 2500, 2700, 3000m. Clouds that appeared in front of me when I needed them. It really was amazing. And as I looked at xcsoar reading 80km I realised 100km was within my reach today. I crossed the 90km mark whilst thermalling up. As I crossed 100km I had a little smile but no desire to land. I'd had my longest duration and longest distance and highest flight ever. And it was still

going. I did need a wee though!

Ahead was Warialda Airspace. According to xcsoar I was pretty sure I could fly through this but didn't want to take any chances (there was after all a small possibility I might want to post this flight publicly online). So I headed NorthNorthWest. This also made sense as it crossed to and then followed high ground and I could see forests further ahead to the North/North East that I wanted to avoid. In addition the others were off somewhere to my west so it would make retrieve a little easier.

I could see a little village, Gravesend, ahead (in fact the first village I'd seen) and thought if I didn't get another thermal I might land there. I noticed an eagle up ahead but he wasn't doing anything useful, just flying around. In fact he was following me. Hmm. We'd had a talk about eagles, there have been more eagle attacks in Australia this season than ever before. What were the warning signs again? Talons out. Hmm. Hard to tell from here. And with their eyesight they don't need to be close to launch an attack. I turned 180 degrees and flew away. Then the eagle flew off too. I cautiously headed back. But I'd lost key height and it was getting towards

...eagle attacks... what were the warning signs again?

the end of the day. Damn though, I didn't want to land HERE. It was still pretty hot now I was back down below 1000m, I wanted to be back up at that nice cool temperature at cloudbase. I had planned not to scratch at the end but still, this wasn't my flight plan, I wanted to go a little further. I scratched over a farm before finally accepting defeat and landing safely in a field for a much needed pee! The village that looked so close from above turned out to be 4km away. But once out of the field and onto a track the friendly farmer picked me up and took me into the village pub for a celebratory beer.

Julian flew 170km that day, landing at Moree. A very different flight, crosswind with I think more turbulence too, but also with other pilots. After I headed north I was really on my own. And looking back at my tracklog I would have landed when I did with or without the eagle. Most other people landed about that time. Although by then it felt as though you should be able to go on forever! A fantastic day with plenty of luck and plenty to learn...what an amazing sport this is!

RD



David May Safety - Power Lines

This article first appeared as the Cumbria Soaring Club Safety Bulletin #11, and is reproduced with permission



Bulletin 10 ended on a promise of advice on how to reduce your electricity bills. Actually it's more about tips on how to reduce your expenditure replacing gliding equipment destroyed by electricity and perhaps avoid death.

Most members will be aware of the recent incident at Threlkeld involving a visiting pilot and high voltage power lines. We avoided open discussion on the club forum as a damage limitation exercise. We wished to avoid sensitive, possibly ill-considered information getting into the public domain in the light of possible insurance claims from businesses and individuals affected by the ensuing power outage. The club committee instigated a pre-emptive PR strike making contact with the Threlkeld Parish Council, attending a meeting and writing a brief article for inclusion in the parish newsletter. A potential PR disaster was turned into a successful marketing opportunity. But enough of that, let's talk about safety!

There are two aspects to the subject. First, how to avoid power lines and second, what to do if you fail at the first. We have two local case studies available, one dating from 2007 in the Lorton Valley and the recent incident at Threlkeld.

Incident 1.

From the "Spoilt for Choice" archives.

'Oops I shouldn't have done that.' October 2007.

By Sparky

It was a lovely clear summer's and I was standing on top of Kirk Fell looking forward to a pint in the Wheatsheaf Inn. As the wind had all but died to a gnat's fart it was just going to be a fly-down to a field next to the pub. The field was clear mown of crops and was visible from take off. A scan of the field revealed nothing alarming just a small bush in the centre but leaving plenty of room to land. The light was just starting to fade so time to get going. The flight was lovely and the approach was fairly low although I arrived at the field with height to spare. I'd been eyeballing the field on the way down so put in a few turns to lose height for my final approach. The final glide was fairly buoyant placing me further up the field than I'd originally planned but no matter the field was long enough and it did put me closer to the pub. A second later as I approached the ground I looked up and exclaimed "Arse!" or words to that effect. Straight above and in front of me were some interesting looking high voltage power lines. I tried in vain to full stall the glider but as I touched the ground it gently over flew me and flopped onto the lines. It was at this point the world

grew very bright and loud as the 11,000 volts and lots of amps did their thing. The outcome was that I managed to get out of my harness and away from the lines unhurt. Things appeared to quieten down and I thought of recovering my harness and wing from the power lines. Before I had a chance to make contact the glider burst into flame and molten wing dripped onto my harness igniting it and the enclosed reserve parachute resulting in a small patch of smelly black plastic. Ah well at least I've got my health. After taking out the power to the whole of the Lorton valley for an hour or so I later paid a visit to the main pubs to apologise and try to limit any bad feeling.

The first and main thought was how the hell didn't I see these power lines in the first place?? The mistake I made apart from the obvious of not checking the landing field from the ground was to accept that the field was safe based on my observations from takeoff. It's easy to come to a decision quickly based on the information at the time. It's vital to keep updating that information continuously. I didn't pay enough attention to the new information as I approached the field I just relaxed into an uneventful fly-down. As it turns out the power lines were backdropped against the houses and stone wall at the end of the field making them more difficult to see. There were lines and poles in the adjacent field but they sneakily changed direction, its no excuse just some observations. Power lines are one of the most difficult things to see as you glance about but they are probably the most dangerous so it pays to check and re-check. I took my eye off the ball and nearly got fried; I know I've learned a valuable lesson.



Incident 2.

BHPA accident summary report of the Blease/Threlkeld incident.

While on approach to landing the pilot decided to land in a field adjacent to the landing field because of the close proximity of other landing pilots. Pilot was aware of the power line running parallel to the field but did not see the line running across the field. Glider struck line which snapped and the pilot fell to the ground.

In necessary elaboration of the BHPA report the pilot has shared a video of his experience on PG Forum which



is available here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CC2dg3FYG6Y>

It is worth watching to the end for the cameo role as a human ammeter played by our own survivor, Ken.

There are similarities and differences in the two cases. In both incidents the pilots accept that the wire strikes resulted from a failure of observation. Interestingly, both pilots report being aware of power lines but were caught out by the change of direction. The Kirk Fell incident is largely explained by lack of familiarity with the landing area greatly exacerbated by poor light. In the Blease incident, the pilot was unfamiliar with the landing site but, as is made clear in the video, the power lines appear clearly visible in the good light conditions. It may be that the (relatively low airtime) pilot was so focused on landing in an unfamiliar area he missed the major hazard.



No new lessons emerge from these two incidents but they do serve to reinforce what should be normal practice.

- Do not fly into power lines.
- In searching for power lines, look for the poles. In bright conditions the shadows from the poles are often the best or only indicator. In overcast or poor light – look harder.
- Expect power lines to change direction or for a ‘tee off’ line at right angles to the main line. If a line of poles appears to stop it probably indicates a change of direction.
- Assume any isolated building is connected to an overhead power line. Don’t think ‘is there a power line’; think ‘where is the power line?’
- If you suddenly find yourself approaching powerlines take any action necessary to avoid contact.

Action in the event of a wire strike.

The key to a safe recovery from an overhead power line incident is understanding how the electricity grid works. The Kirk Fell incident illustrates what happens. After the initial fireworks Sparky managed to get out of his harness and walk away. After a period of electrical inactivity, he decided it was safe enough to recover his glider. As he was walking towards the suspended glider it burst into flames with molten glider running down the lines setting fire to his harness.

When power cables are shorted out the power supply is temporarily cut off. After a very short period the circuit is re-established. If the lines are still touching there will be more sparks and the circuit will be cut again. There will be another, longer, interlude of non-power followed by another attempt at reconnection. This will be repeated. This process is designed to counter the more normal power failures caused by tree branches blowing against lines in windy conditions or large birds flying into lines. You have to assume that the power lines are live. You should not approach a glider which is or could be in contact with power lines as you could be electrocuted or enveloped in burning debris. The correct action is to call the emergency services and get the power turned off.

The BHPA is in the process of reviewing its advice and training, a process that is being led by Gordy Oliver. North West Electricity website carries safety advice. <http://www.enwl.co.uk/safety-and-incident-reporting/public-safety-near-electrical-installations/aviation-safety-and-electricity> Of most relevance to us are:

What to do if contact is made with an overhead line:

- Phone NW Electricity with the accurate location of the incident so they can deploy engineers or remotely switch off the power. Telephone 0800 195 4141 or 999 in emergency.
- If you are in contact with, or close to a damaged overhead wire move away as fast as you can and stay away until the emergency service or an engineer arrives.
- Once a line is on the ground you don’t have to touch it to be killed. The current can travel through the ground or along a fence.
- Lines which have been damaged can stay live or become live again without warning by automatic operation of the system.
- Report any damage or contact to equipment no matter how minor it seems. Factors to be aware of:
 - Electricity systems carry voltages up to 400,000 volts.
 - Even the lowest voltage overhead lines can produce 10,000 times more current than is required to kill a person.
 - High Voltage electricity can jump gaps.
 - Touching electricity lines or objects or people in contact with the lines can be fatal.
 - Trees, string, ropes and water can conduct electricity.

In both the situations discussed above the pilots were in contact with the ground and were able to extricate themselves from their harnesses. Had they been dangling above the ground the situation becomes more complex. The general advice provided by NW Electricity is that if a machine (read paraglider/hanglider) is in contact with an overhead line and remain seated in the cab (harness) and warn others to keep clear until the electricity company confirms that conditions are safe. If it is essential to leave the machine (read harness) while it is in contact with the overhead line, jump clear - do not attempt to climb down and do not touch any part of the machine (Harness or glider) when on the ground. Paraglider lines are not insulators (and hanggliders even less so!) All materials will conduct electricity, more so if wet or damp. Electricity can jump over 2 metres; you do not necessarily have to come into direct contact.

There appears to be a great deal of ignorance surrounding electrical hazards particularly on the matter of the power being switched back on without warning. It is one of the instances where the rescuer is at equal or greater risk than the unfortunate pilot.

Once again we are grateful to both pilots for sharing their experiences. We can all benefit from their lucky escapes.

Chris Field. CSC Safety Officer



Jake Herbert

Paragliding - A game of chance

Just some musings from me on a wet Sunday, thinking about paragliding. And I told Tam I'd write something this year, so here goes.

We are generally rubbish at understanding the theory and real world consequence of chance.

So much of probability is counter intuitive, and I think we are hard wired to see cause and effects that aren't always real, rather than just understand the role chance plays.

Understanding how probability plays out in our sport will increase your performance.

This can come across as a bit dry and completely misses any mention of fun, excitement or drama. I'm not translating this amazing sport of ours into a set of numbers, it's just I think that seeing it for what it is (A game of chance, but not of equal chances), will help you get more out of it.

Understanding how probability plays out in our sport will increase your performance

Imagine a simple model of a 100km XC.

The point of a simple model is not that is accurate; more that it may show how certain variables can affect the model that may translate into the real world.

OK so in my model there are 100 pilots.

They are made up of 50 "expert" pilots and 50 "good" pilots.

Assumptions

The 100km flight is made of of 8 climbs and glides. The expert pilots find the next thermal 5 times out of 6. The good pilots 4 times out of 6.

With those odds the expert pilots have a 28% chance of making 100km, the good pilots only 6%.

So a small improvement in skill (Changing the likelihood of getting the next thermal from 4/6 to 5/6) leads to at almost 5 fold increase in likelihood of getting that 100km flight.

So what this suggests is that small improvements in your skill level can have dramatic improvements in your flight distances. We also have to accept that is paragliding we are rolling dice to some degree, and the consequence of that need to be understood.

Lesson 1

Expert pilots still bomb out.

At it's heart good decision making is weighing up the options and picking the line you think is most likely to result in another climb. However you can pick the most likely option, and still land.

Imagine this situation: At 5,000ft you leave on a glide. You are heading downwind to a small cumulus that's forming. You get half way and it disappears. No worries I'll just head over there to that sunny windward ridge with 2 gliders climbing. When you get there there's nothing and you land at 1pm.

Everyone else goes miles. Gahhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!

You picked the best option and it didn't work out. Fair enough to be disappointed but no need to beat yourself up on this one. **It's not your fault.** Enjoy the trip back, then go pick everyone up and be positive. Your turn next.

Lesson 2

You can mess up and do well!

Same situation At 5,000ft you leave on a glide. You are heading downwind to a small cumulus that's forming. You get half way and it disappears. Then you mess up, whilst your mate went left to that sunny ridge, you hadn't thought of that and carried on downwind. You realise when it's too late to make that ridge. Then in the blue you get a weak climb, which then gets good and a nice cloud appears. Before long you are at 5,000 ft, and make it to 100km hours later.

You picked the wrong option and it worked out. Thank the gods, but learn from it. Replay what you did wrong and don't do it again. Still you had a great flight so that's fantastic, but in your post match analysis remind yourself you were lucky here, and try not to do it again.

Another consequence of this is that those who go out more regularly on the good days will be rewarded too.

Well that should be obvious anyway.

Main Lesson

Small improvements make big differences.

The top guys and girls aren't really anything special. There are just a bit better in lots of areas. Being a bit better will translate into massive performance gains.

So, you just need to get a little bit better.....Great, how do I do that then.....

The best paraglider pilots have 2 key sets of skills.

The first is glider handling skills.

These take time to develop, some learn much quicker than others.. A great pilot has no drama landing, taking off or controlling the glider in thermals. This is a skill that chance really has no bearing on. So for now let's ignore it and I'll talk about that another day.

The 2nd set of skills are the decision making skills.

This is where it gets really difficult to pin down differences between pilots and within pilot development. I think as it's difficult it's been ignored to some degree and we don't really talk about it so much.

The best decision makers need to essentially be able to be good at 2 different things.

2 Decision Making Skills

First is to have a mental map of what's going on around them.

Second is to have a plan of action and to use that information to your best advantage.

You need both of those elements.

Let's talk about them separately.

1. Having a good mental map (Fig 1 below)

This takes time, experience and thought to build up. Some have "natural" advantage.

We are blind to thermals and wind, and so take our cues from other things, and use them to build up a model of how the day is working now, and how it's likely to develop through the day. It's complicated. Remember that in the land of the blind the one eyed man is King.

In the land of the blind, the one eyed man is King

So you stick all the data in your head (Whilst fighting the 3 m/s thermal you are climbing in, I know....) , have a think, and then have some fairly crap (compared to the real world) model of what's going on.

Remember a crap model is better than no model. I doubt any pilot has a particularly good model of the UK. I bet if we could actually see what is going on (And therefore not need a model) then we'd fly 200km most days it's good.

So you've got this model.....Next you need to use it.....

2. The plan of action

OK, great you've got this model, now to use it. So now you've got to think about your actions. You have choices where to go and what to do.

Things you might consider

Am I satisfied with this climb, is there better nearer? I'll glide over to my mate 500m away who is climbing better than me.

I'll go over to the high ground / I'll stay away from the high ground.

Some airspace downwind, maybe I'll crosswind early.

Hitting sink or headwind, I'll use bar.

Good thermal up ahead and I'm high, I'll use bar.

Cloud is sucking, I'll leave the climb early.

Need a pee / eat some food / have drink

Need to work out navigation.

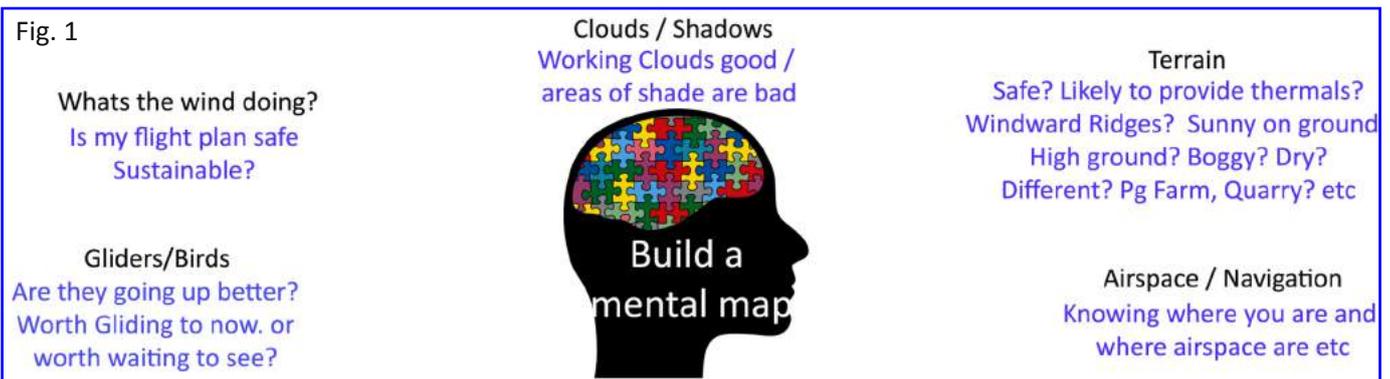
Gaggle in front / behind. Weigh up if I should join them.

Cirrus/ sea breeze coming in, need to get away from it.

But if I go that way the walk out will be hard. Don't think about that. Seriously.

Not all options have the same probability.

Fig. 1



Main Lesson - Continued

When the facts change, I change my mind.

What do you do?

This is the nub of it. You have the info, now make some good use of it. Have a flexible approach. It's OK to change your opinion on things as the data changes.

With every flight you'll have a chance to update your map and your decision making process. Remember you'll sometimes land early after doing everything right, and sometimes make mistakes and do well. That makes it tricky when to know what bits you need to change. It takes time and over-analysis is sometimes wrong.

Expert pilots are the ones that get the above right more times than wrong. And they can thermal well on demanding gliders and still have the capacity to think well. They also have fear under control in the tricky moments.

Lesson 3

Getting a new glider might help. But only a little.

Having a better glide will make it less likely you bomb out as you cover more ground. But that only works out to be true if you are flying that glider well. If you don't have the confidence on a glider it's possible you'll get less performance out of it.

What I've learned.

Well I started out with a simple model from my training and it's changed over the years.

First. You've got to be in it to win it.

5km becomes 10km, then 20 then 20, then 25, then 100. Be keen, try to go XC at every opportunity. Don't wait for others to show the way.

My initial model of XC was simply climb to base and then glide downwind to next cloud and climb. Actually that's a pretty good model. If you know just that you'll have success. On a good day it's all you need to know. But on the marginal days it won't work so well. I honestly did a 60km flight with 30 hours under my belt with that simple advice (Thanks Ian Curren, back in 1999).

Through experience I've upped the weighting in the Dales of how important high ground is, and how rubbish big valleys are for producing thermals. Potential long walk outs almost always stay as potential walk outs. The high ground works, especially remote high ground for some unknown reason. If it doesn't you'll get a nice walk so win win.

The clouds tell the truth. For example I don't always believe the mantra that it's hard to leave the Dales because of sinking air due to the air flowing downhill causing thermals difficulty in forming. It's hard to leave the Dales because first you have to cross the Dales, after that it's easier. When leaving the Dales just follow the clouds. The clouds don't lie about where the thermals are.

If you think about this you can theoretically say that as the high ground falls away then the air must be sinking. But that's only relevant if associated with a brisk breeze in line with the falling ground. At zero wind it has no impact. And then it's just one operating factor. Of course the falling ground is rising ground if you come the other way, so which is dominant? Also thermals seem to mostly be generated in the lee as it's sheltered. So loads of conflicting things as is often the case discussing ground sources. Be wary of thinking the rules are fixed. There is no spoon.

One of the main things I've changed in recent years is **how I fly with other pilots.**

I mostly went XC on my own, I have always been a independent pilot. In the Dales in the early days you either went XC on your own or not at all. I often got away with it. But I didn't really see the benefit of gaggle flying and therefore didn't utilise it. Then I saw how my arse was being kicked by those who did have a collaborative style so I changed my model and actions accordingly. That's a work in progress.

Correlation doesn't equal causation.

Please write this 100 times and understand what this means.

If it was true then in my experience the best way to find a thermal is to try and have a piss.

You'll learn most on the marginal days.

On the most epic days it's relatively easy and you will likely go far. You have to go out on these days, ditch everything for these. But it's on the marginal days you'll learn the skills to make you a rounded pilot.

Oh, don't forget to enjoy it.

One thing I learnt very quickly and never changed my attitude on is just how amazing XC paragliding is. There's nothing really like it. We are privileged to be able to experience this. So enjoy the good days, put up with the bad days. I mean what else are you going to do? Go shopping, DIY, Work. Fuck that I want to be in the sky having a blast. See you up there!

JH



David May Safety - Spring Thermals

Another year - time to re run early season warnings. This article appeared last year, but the message is still just as relevant. Take care in the early part of the year!

The time has come to warn newcomers that spring thermals can be rough, and that particular care is needed when flying near to the hill on cold, clear bright days. These days are when the condition of the air favours small, fast moving thermals that can tip your glider to angles that you may not have flown at before.

Avoiding the technicalities of thermal formation and behaviour you must be aware of the following:

When a bubble of air starts to rise, a circulation is set up in its outer "skin" by the combination of friction between the rising air and the air surrounding it and convection caused by the warm thermal being cooled by contact with the cooler air around it.

In addition, as the warm air rises, cooler air descends to replace it. Thus, loosely speaking, there are three areas to concern us.

A. In the middle where the air is rising

B. Around the edges of a thermal, where the air is turbulent and where the circulation causes the net upward flow to be much less than in the core

C. Where the airflow is downwards.

So, when you fly along a radius into a thermal that is 'out in space' you will usually feel sink first, followed by the turbulence with some lift then the really useful up flowing air in the middle.

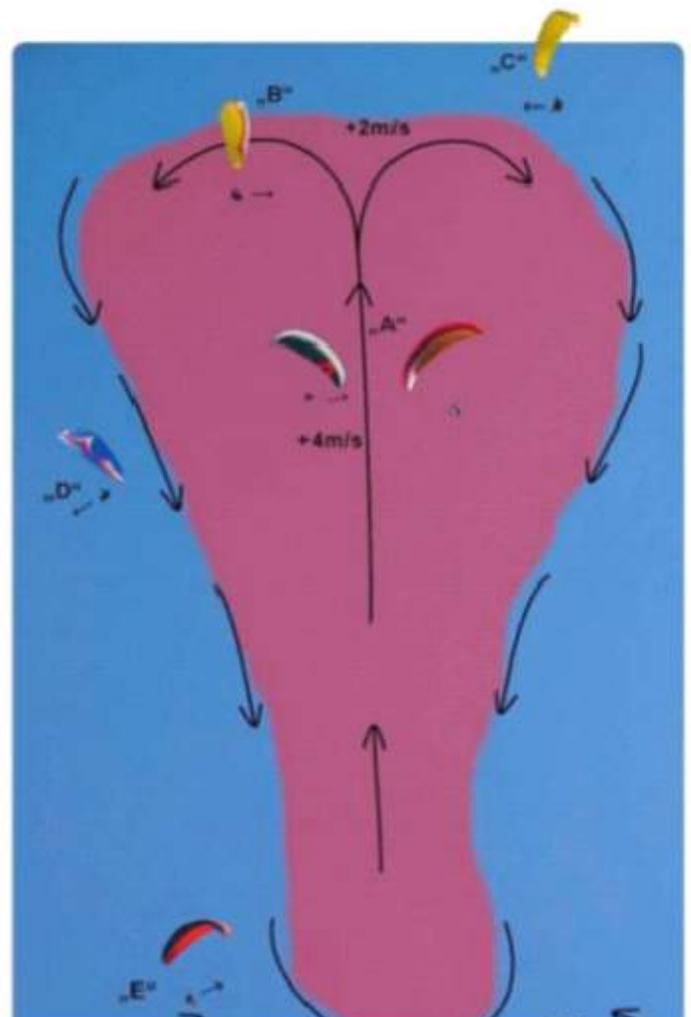
What happens when this thermal moves up the face of a hill. The shape will probably be distorted from that shown in the diagram and depending on the gradient of the hill, the thermal may break away from the face part way up.

In the occasional extreme case, we can have a situation where the circulation at the ridge side of the thermal may be augmented by downward flowing air being sucked into the bottom.

When the thermal is large, your glider may be wholly or mainly in one of the regions A, B or C with a fairly gentle transition from one to the other. When the thermals are small your glider may span all three of these regions.

If you are flying close to the ridge and you pass tangentially through a thermal, as shown above, your glider will be tipped violently towards the hill. Even if there is no down flow between the thermal and the hill, the first time you experience strong lift under one wing tipping you towards the ridge you will probably wish you had tried golf instead.

This information was shamelessly plagiarized from the Pennine Soaring Club site where it was in turn condensed from articles by John Klunder, Bill Walmsley and Jonathan Gill.



Club Contacts

Contacts details for the new committee are given here.



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The committee meets on alternate months, on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30 at the Horse and Farrier. Although minutes are not published, members are welcome to attend to observe proceedings (if you are that way inclined). Regular items cover each of the areas above.

If you want to draw anything to the attention of the committee, either collar one of them when you see them on the hill, or email them using the addresses above,

DIARY DATES 2017

Below are some significant dates for Dales pilots - either local , UK, or World Flying events, and some local events not flying related which may be of interest. If you want anything adding, simply collar me on the hill or at a club night, or email to: skywords@dhpc.org.uk

Date	Event	Website
Apr 6	DHPC Club Night	
Apr 28 - May 1	BP Cup, Pennine Round, Parlick	https://www.bpcup.co.uk/cms/
Apr 28 - 30	Tour De Yorkshire (Cycling)	letour.yorkshire.com
May 5 - 14	World Paragliding Accuracy Champs, Albania	www.fai.org/civl-events
May 6 - 8	North - South Cup, Location flexible	northsouthcup.wordpress.com
May 20 -27	Paragliding World Cup (PWC), Coeur de Savoie, France	www.pwca.org
May 26	BOS Dales Round	
Jun 2 - 3	Buttermere Bash, Cumbria	Faceache
Jun 10 -11	Nova Festival, Derbyshire and Lancs Gliding Club	Active Edge FB page
Jun 17-24	PWC, Nish, Serbia	www.pwca.org
Jun 30 - Jul 2	Parafest, Caerwys, Wales	www.parafest.co.uk
July 1 -7	Ozone Chabre Open	www.flylaragne.com
Jul 1 - 15	World Paragliding Champs, Pedavena, Italy	www.fai.org/civl-events
Jul 2	Red Bull X-Alps, Salzburg	www.redbullxalps.com
Jul 15 -16	Lakes Charity Classic, Grasmere	www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk
Jul 22 -29 (TBC)	British Open 1, Malvern? TBC	www.pgcomps.org.uk
Aug 5 - 12	PWC, Disentis, Switzerland	www.pwca.org
Aug 6 12	BP Cup, Derbyshire Round, Bradwell	https://www.bpcup.co.uk/cms/
Aug 6 - 12	Gin Wide Open, Macedonia	www.flywideopen.org
Aug 6- 19	Womens World Hang Gliding Champs, Brazil	www.fai.org/civl-events
Aug 6 - 19	World Hang Gliding Champs, Brazil	www.fai.org/civl-events
Sep 2 -9	British Open 2. St Andre, France	www.pgcomps.org.uk
Sept 2 - 9	PWC, Pico do Baviao, Brazil	www.pwca.org
Sept 22 - Oct 5th	Icarus Trophy, USA	www.icarustrophy.com
Sep 30-Oct1	DHV HG meeting, Buching, Germany	www.dhv.de
Oct 17-22	Oludeniz AirGames	
Oct 28 - Nov 4	PWC, Guayaquil, Ecuador	www.pwca.org
Nov 16 - 19	Kendal Mountain Festival	www.mountainfest.co.uk



The Past The Bewaldeth Buzzard

A further extract from an early Skywords, reproduced for its historical interest.
NOTE: ALWAYS READ THE CURRENT LOCAL RULES FOR SITES BEFORE FLYING.

Dear Club Contact,

Please have a look at the following regarding some issues affecting CSC sites. We would appreciate it if you could make your members aware of the issues below.

Firstly, as we all know, the 'Bewaldeth Buzzard' has been dive bombing wings both last year and this . Up until now we have all chosen to ignore it and keep flying. However, yesterday it made its first strike on a wing resulting in a number of rips on a leading edge. Whether Aerofix have trained it or not we will never know but, the fact is that, if you choose to fly at Bewaldeth then please be aware of the buzzard and take whatever avoiding action you feel is necessary . My advice would be to lay out on the long slope to the south of the normal take off area, soar that and then move out to onto Binsey thus keeping well away from the buzzard's nest which is in the tree in the gully between take off and hill used by the 'modellers'.

Secondly, some pilots (apparently visiting Dales pilots) chose yesterday to drive to the top of Bewaldeth without any consent from the land owner. Naturally, he was not too happy when he discovered this. Why these pilots carried out this crazy stunt we will probably never know.

It is through irresponsible actions like these that farmers become upset and sites are placed at risk. The CSC would like to appeal to the pilots responsible to take a nice bottle of something to Bewaldeth Farm and apologise and explain their actions. Hopefully this will smooth the situation out.

Thirdly, will pilots flying at Bewaldeth please try to give the school, and its clients, a lot more room both on the hill and in the air. Recently I had to remind a lot of pilots that the gliders flying have very low air time and inexperienced clients on board and due to the small lift band should be given far more room.

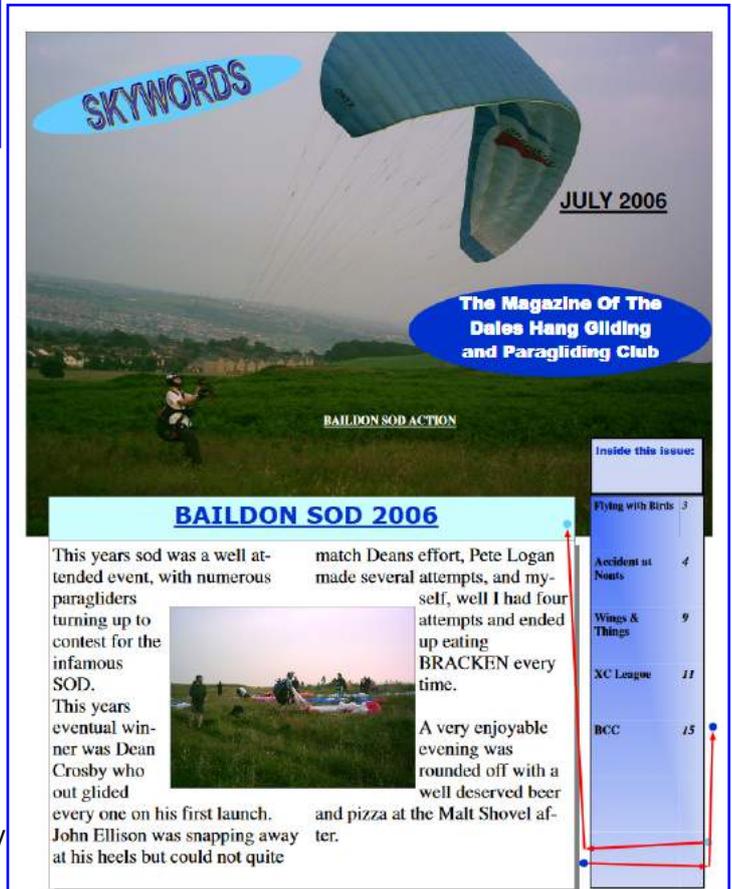
Finally, it looks like we may be in for a run of SE winds the next few days.

Please, if you choose to fly Souther, remember the restrictions: Six gliders max (ten at a real push but definitely no more!) -

No bottom landing without an agreed field (you must talk to the farmer at Low Becks Farm BEFORE YOU FLY) - then mark the agreed field with the CSC windsock. (Please look at the details in the CSC Sites Guide).

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Fly safe, fly sensibly and most of all please, please, please respect our 'Sites and Site Rules'.

Regards, Gordie Oliver Northern Sites Officer. Simon Raven CSC Club Contact



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EYECANDY FOR CLOUD LOVERS

Asperatus over Schiehallion, Perthshire, Scotland



Photo Credit: Ken Prior

<https://cloudappreciationsociety.org>

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Pubhtml5 screenshot

This button takes you to full screen mode

You can search the pubhtml5 website if you can't remember the exact address for Skywords - but remember that searches are case sensitive!

This button takes you back to Skywords homepage