

Skywords

Email katerawlinson@hotmail.co.uk if you wish to submit anything for next month's mag.

Kate X



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

There are about 160 members of our club and we have an elected committee that meets on a monthly basis to manage the affairs of

the club, on behalf of the members. We maintain the sites, organise coaching, safety events and competitions, maintain a library and put together a varied social programme.

But how do we find out what the members want and, perhaps more importantly, tell you what is going on? Communication is the key, and in this day and age we would be foolish not to embrace electronic communication.

The newsletter is sent electronically to everyone in the membership database, and we sometime use this distribution list to notify members of other, often short notice, events. We also have a club Googlegroup that anyone can join, and there is Speckout which covers a larger area.

But the most effective weapon in our armoury has to be the club website (www.dhpc.org.uk). Unfortunately it is rather under-utilised at the moment; but, as Martin Luther King famously said in 1963, "I have a dream"...

Imagine a website that is fully up to date with all the information that you need to go flying.

It has an up to date interactive electronic sites' guide that you can use to decide where to go, and where you can see any restrictions in place. It has weather links and a shoutbox to tell you where other people are heading, as well as a calendar to tell you what events are planned. Once you have decided you can download the individual site guide to take with you, especially if you are a visiting pilot. There is a list of coaches contact details, and maybe even a Wendy Windblows display. It also has an active forum where you can boast about your flying adventures or read about someone else's. The forum has reached 'critical mass' and is active with 'banter' about relevant issues: questions, suggestions and answers.

Until now the website has been run as a favour on a non-payment basis. Although very cheap, the problem is that when we inevitably get pushed to the bottom of the pile, the website quickly becomes out of date and falls into dis-use.

We have recently decided that this is unrealistic and unfair on all parties involved and we are taking steps to run the website on a commercial basis. Watch this space.

Fly safely,

Martin Baxter



Reminder Dales Reserve Repack

We are running the annual re-pack at 10.00 am on 13 March 2010. Members and non members are equally welcome to come along to St Mary's School, Menston (on the A65 between Leeds and Ilkley). The BHPA's Bill Morris and his team of packers will provide a briefing, supervision and advice.

The cost is £15, on a first come first serve basis. Please e-mail johnklawson@googlemail.com <<mailto:johnklawson@googlemail.com>> or phone 07747 081975 for more details

Great flying at Wether on January 30th and 31st



No-one in the air at the end of this really good day on Sunday, the 31st of January but Pete Roberts (always last to arrive on site) is rigging and will be up shortly.

Saturday

Richard Welbourne, Dave Hulme and Ally Johnston were out – conditions definitely too windy for PGs but these guys had a nice 1.5 hours of flight with thermals popping before surrendering to the cold. Also Pete Roberts came later for a flight – I think he must be a bit of a nocturnal geezer as he always ends up derigging in the dark.

Sunday

Another good day with a little less wind than on Saturday with Kev Gay, Steve Mann and myself out on hang gliders.

Sufficiently light for PGs and Martin Bunford and Graham Laycock had a nice time trying to get as high as the HGs.

Good light thermals were enabling us to get several hundred feet above the hill – the good weather is not far away!

Trevor Birkbeck

Next club night – March 3rd

We have a Power Point presentation of an amazing trip made by Steve Dean and others with Beyond Extreme led by famous climber Simon Yates up to the top of the highest mountain in the Andes, Aconcagua, and then flying down in their paragliders!!!

Melise Harland who went on the climb but didn't fly down with the others, gave a talk last year on May 7th on this trip and we enjoyed it so much that we have asked her to repeat the experience. She is actually a Dales Club paraglider pilot now, living in Leeds and flying Dales sites regularly - I'm really looking forward to seeing the show again.

Melise will be taking a beer break half way through the show so we are going to use this juncture to present the DHPC trophies for 2009 to the worthy winners. Prizes donated by Northern Paragliding will also be presented at this time.

Don't miss this great club night."

I hope that you will be able to come to the club night – the talk is a really interesting one, not to be missed.

Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club Club Coach Contacts

Hang Gliding Coaches

Name	Availability	Location	Contact Number
Trevor Birkbeck	Various	Ripon	01765 658486
Alistair Irving	Various	Huddersfield	01484 844898
Steve Mann	Weekends	Kirkby Moorside	01751 433130

Paragliding Coaches

Name	Availability	Location	Contact Number
Sean Hodgson (chief coach)Ogi	various	Haworth	07999606084
Rob Burtenshaw (senior coach)	Sun+various	Oxenhope	01535 643872
John Lawson (Saftey)	Various	Leeds/Horsforth	077470819678
Peter Balmforth	Weekends	Leeds	07714213339
John Ellison	Various	York	07791 887693
Noel Whittall	Various	Leeds	01132 502043
Alex Colbeck	Various	Harrogate	07717707632
Steve Mann	Weekends	Kirkby Moorside	01751 433130
Pete Logan	Various	Shipley	07720 425146
Peter & Sara Spillett	Weekends	Skipton	01756 760229
Tony Pickering & Zena Stevens	Various	Otley	01943 466632
Kevin McLoughlin	Weekends	Lancaster	07767 652233
Martin Baxter	Weekdays	Skipton	01282 841060
Ronald Green	Weekends	Hartlepool	01429 864229
Fred Winstanley	Various	Higher Bentham	0777041958
Richard Shirt	Weekends	York	07786707424
James Watson	Weekends	Leeds	01132 825827
Kate Rawlinson	Weekends	Colne	07976510272
Andy Bryon	Weekends	Keighley	07796 421890
Dave Couthard	Weekends	Leeds	07845025853

Visit to RAF Leeming ATC

Friday the 5th of February brought somewhat less than ideal conditions for a visit to RAF Leeming ATC: the clag was well and truly down and it had been drizzling steadily all morning. It would, by all accounts, be a slow day in terms of airborne activity. The cream of The Dales Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club are made of sterner stuff, however, and not to be put off by the adverse meteorological conditions. We gradually assembled at the Coppice Gate entrance to RAF Leeming, there were about a dozen hardcore members altogether. We collected our passes and were shown onto a small bus that was to ferry us round for the day. As we entered the base we were told we would have to have our cameras vetted and authorised at an intermediate security point; why mobile phones, which boast comparable performance, were excluded is a little unclear. After some hasty deleting a few members wandered off to another security point and were asked a few questions about their cameras and what they intended to do with the photographs (I've tried selling

mine to The News of The World but they're not interested). Cameras duly vetted we set off on our tour. First stop was air traffic control where we were shown into a lounge area and told to help ourselves to tea, Trevor very kindly did the honours.



We were then hurriedly informed that owing to the bad weather there were only two planes going to land, and that that would be it for the next two hours. The planes were preparing for final approach so we made our way to the tower and the control room. We were split into two groups, one of which would go upstairs to the tower and watch the planes (Hawks in this case) land. The other would go into the control room where the radar equipment was. The radar room was quite small and the equipment was very modern, no eerily glowing green radar screens with amorphous blobs flashing periodically. Instead, the radar information is overlaid onto a representation of the surrounding airspace and the whole lot displayed on a computer screen. You can just about see the Fylingdales limit of interference on the far right screen.



Above that screen can be seen the weather station data readout, there are also radios further along. The bad weather did have one positive benefit that day: the two incoming planes would require a 'talkdown' service because the visibility was too low for VFR. Talkdown involves two other screens (more basic than the others) with a sloping elevation line displayed above a runway alignment line; again the radar data is superimposed over the top.

The controller simply passes instructions to the pilot (up a bit, down a bit, etc) in order to keep him aligned with the runway and on a suitable descent path. If the pilot still has no visual as he nears the airfield he must abort and fly to an alternate landing field, how low he can make this decision depends on the pilot's individual rating. Predictably, everything went like clockwork. The controller in the picture above, talked to us for a while about some of the issues that crop up regularly for this section of airspace. On a good day Sutton Bank can put



dozens of gliders in the air, if this should happen to be on a clear Friday afternoon then pandemonium rapidly ensues and priority must go to MOD operations.

The two groups then swapped over and my group went up to the tower. The tower uses an extremely simple system of plastic markers placed on large board in order to control traffic on the ground. If the runway is in use you just put a big marker over it to show it is closed, and so on for planes taxiing round between hangers etc. It looks like one of the controllers has heard that I was down stairs in the other group.



You can also see the weather data display in the photo below.



Luckily, another Hawk took off as we were being shown round and we got a fascinating insight into the amount of planning that goes into every single flight. Basically, the tower must call London ATC and get an inbound flight plan, they must then pass this to Leeming ATC, downstairs, and get an outbound flight plan from them, once they've got all that they pass the whole lot to the pilot who is then cleared for take off.

After a quick question and answer session in the briefing room we headed off again to visit 100 Squadron and get a close up look at some Hawks on the ground. I think we might have caught them on the hop as they sent down an American on a three year exchange program, that said, it seems tours are a pretty informal affair, you just turn up and some pilots come down and show you around. According to his name badge he was known as 'Worm' by his colleagues, he seemed a little unsure of where to start but Trevor quickly put him at his ease by shouting 'Oh my God, an American!'. Worm showed us through into the hanger where 100 Squadron's Hawks are kept.





The Hawk itself is a pretty basic (i.e. all analogue) but extremely reliable workhorse of the RAF. The cockpit looks like something out of a museum, but apparently, out of umpteen years in service there have only ever been two engine failures, an enviable safety record.



Notice the slot between the wing and the flap, this, we were told, is to improve performance close to the stall in tight manoeuvres. Two more pilots came downstairs and talked to us about 100 Squadron's usual operations; these generally involve either pilot training, or providing targets for Typhoons during aggressor training. The distinctive skull and crossbones logo is 100 Squadron's highly coveted motif.

After some more informal chat it was time to go home, Worm posed with us for a final group photo before we boarded the bus. All in all a very interesting and informative visit, okay, so the tours are not an all out PR offensive like Sellafield, but who in their right mind visits Sellafield. At Leeming what you see is what you get, real people doing their job (or having tea and biscuits when it's foggy), and off duty pilots hanging about.

Matt Pullen



