

CLUB RADIO FREQUENCY 143.850Hz

# Skywords

Fly like an eagle

Let my spirit carry me.

Steve Millar

We're ready, O mighty Zephyrus.

Well here we are, it's officially spring. On March 20th we passed the vernal equinox—the sun crossed the equator heading north. This celestial occurrence has for millennia been associated with all sorts of religious ceremonies and celebrations, from filicide to fertility rites.

On March 9th I was lucky enough to be in a group of pilots who got a great 1hr flight in strong conditions at Windbank. Suddenly that warm feeling of having flown recently was back, satiation after the long winter break. By the 20th of course that feeling had been replaced by even stronger yearning for more flying. Add in that we've had the repack, a really enjoyable day with Bill Morris from the BHPA. Oh, and I have a crispy new wing on order, which will be arriving very soon. I'm prepped and ready! However, I have discovered that simply staring at RASP several times a day and praying doesn't actually make it any more likely that I will be able to fly. We need better levers. Now, I'm not one for advocating a sacrificial offering of your eldest child to the Gods, but I'm willing to try anything to put the odds of flying more in our favour. Having done some research I have found a target for our earnest prayers. Fancy an hour on a nice evening after work? How about a long Easter week end of brilliant flying weather. Clearly we deserve these things, and I have now found the appropriate lever. Step forward Zephyrus, the Greek god of light westerly winds. Perhaps rather than simply praying to him, we could adopt him as the club mascot, get his image emblazoned on our wings / flying suits, or we could go modern and have his image tattooed about our persons? Any alternative suggestions, in the shout box please!

Please enjoy this newsletter which has not 1, but 2 great articles from Ed, and another classy piece of prose from Kevin, who it seems was more appreciative of Trevor than of his wife on Valentine's day.

Hope to see you on the hill in April. Tam



## Club Night Thursday 3rd April 7.30 for 8pm

The Horse & Farrier, 7 Bridge St, Otley, West Yorkshire LS21 1BQ

### Prize Giving and Photo Competition Results!

*The last club night of the winter—spring is officially here after this, so come along, collect your prizes, see some nice photos and videos, and PLAN YOUR YEAR'S FLYING!*



#### Inside this month's issue:

- Club Night
- Chairman's Chat
- "Valentine's Day"
- Ed's Coaching Column
- DHPC FSC response
- Safety First
- Committee Profile: MB
- Competitions Update



## Chairman's Chat - April 2014

It's been a strange month.

The jet stream finally had a change of heart, and high pressure took over. I drove down to the BHPA AGM looking up at a glorious sky. It was the same the following day and I had to console myself with the fact that I was too hung over to fly (long story). Several club members had flights before the farmers' dinner on the same day.

I'm very grateful to Kev Gay who has written a couple of excellent articles for Skywords: it seems that the hangies led the way into the new season with some spectacular flights from Tailbridge. But disaster struck a few days later when the same enthusiastic hangies were driving along the A66 heading for Tailbridge once more. The roof rack came off the car at speed depositing all 3 gliders onto the central reservation. Fortunately no one was hurt, but one glider was a write-off, and the other 2 needed repair.

Having just upgraded my ageing Sigma 7 for Ed's one year old Volt, I had my own share of misfortune. Ed very kindly delivered the glider to the club repack in Menston. Having repacked my (detached) reserve, I thought I'd stow it in the empty helmet compartment of the new glider bag. I got home to find... er, no reserve! I can only conclude that, unfamiliar with the kit, I put it in someone else's red and black bag by mistake. Doh!

Sara Spillett reassured me that I'm not the only one. She has left her instruments at Wether Fell twice, and Pete once left his helmet there for 2 weeks!

Despite some frantic emailing around the participants, one week on, it still hasn't surfaced. So, due to my own muppetry, I've missed some of the best flying weather so far this year. But it gets worse than that because I'm off to Hotel California in just over a week; and that rather focuses the mind. Yesterday I ordered a new reserve, which arrived in the post this morning, so now I'm just sweating on a new handle, which is part of the harness not the reserve.

On the plus side my old reserve was 9 years old so I would have replaced it next year anyway. The repack helped me to decide which new reserve I wanted, and technology has moved on so the new one is nearly a kg lighter. But if anyone does find my yellow Gin One-G 38 in a red bag (S/N 0408-Q0817) I'd quite like the handle back as a spare please.

Fly safely,

Martin Baxter

Chairman

# Noticeboard



## Club Nights

Please note that Club Nights are now the

**FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH,**

**at the Horse and Farrier, Otley.**

April 3rd - Club awards, and photo comp results

Has your skill finally been recognised within the club, either flying, or with a camera / videocam? Come along and find out at the final club night of the winter. After this meeting we will all be too busy flying on Thursday nights to spend any time in the pub merely talking about flying. There's some new trophies to be seen too.

6.30 to eat, meeting starts at 8.00pm



## Photo / Video Competition

Don't forget to enter your favourite photos/videos into the Dales competition. The standard was high last year, let's make it even better this year!

Detail here: [DHPC Photo/Video Comp](#)

Major prizes available!!

## Committee Profiles

This month sees the start of a new feature! Each of the committee is writing a pen portrait so you can get to know them a bit better. These will feature occasionally in Sky-words. This month:

Martin Baxter, Chairman



## Trevor Birkbeck—Club Secretary

### Farmer's Dinner at the Craven Arms, Appletreewick

This year we moved the Farmer's Dinner from the Devonshire Arms to the Craven Arms at Appletreewick upon a recommendation from a few folk including Tony Pickering.

We were to eat in the Cruck Barn situated just behind the Inn. This very period looking building was actually built in 2006 using totally traditional methods and it formed a fabulous place to welcome and thank the farmers for their perpetual help in providing us with hills to fly from.



There were nine farming couples there, though numbers from our membership side with a little down due to circumstances. Martin Baxter had to be at the BHPA AGM as he is on Exec, Dave Coulthard had another engagement and Kate Rawlinson was unwell, meaning we were at least 6 down in numbers. We ended up 36 in total, though Dean Crosby, Toby and a couple of other pilots

came in for the social side later.

The food was absolutely excellent, as predicted, so let's hope that a few more members will come next year, as I'm sure we will return to the same venue.

Pete Johnson carried out his sterling effort of collecting Farmers from the Hawes area, a long old job but very important. Dave Brown completed the Sites officer set as well.

Kate Lindsay, my partner, organised the purchase of the raffle prizes and Kate and Melise (there with Richard Boyle) did a grand job selling raffle tickets – always popular with all and the prizes were good, as I didn't select them!

As Chairman Martin couldn't be there, folk had to put up with me rabbiting on, thanking the Farmers, organising the raffle tickets, declaring the best site for XC distance in 2013 (which was not Wether Fell last year but Grove Head on Dodd Fell by a long way).

Ed came with Karen but sat next to me, trying to give me a hard time for getting "lost" in the Scottish BOS (although I knew where I was) and Tony and Zena (background dosh organisers), were lending support with all the usual balloon weaponry.

Myself, Kate, Kev and Magda Gay made a weekend of it, staying at the New Inn which was just 90 m away – great area for walking though it did rain a bit.

All in all, it was a great evening and a worthy appreciation of our gratitude to the Farmers. Rock on for next year at the Craven Arms.

Trevor Birkbeck



## Ed Cleasby - Chief Coach

Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

Response to FSC doc on proposed changes to training syllabus

### Timeline:

- 5/2/14 - circulated to all club coaches with response deadline 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. (65% returns achieved)
- 22/2/14 - opened up to full club membership via DHPC website. Six additional comments received.
- 1/3/14 - synopsis of comments. *(Note: names removed from inserted quotes by EC)*

**General:** Within the timeframe, which was adequate, comments were gathered in writing (as above) with additional comments being received by telephone, forum and assorted conversations. Opinions were mixed, but generally positive; it was seen as understandable that top/slope landings could prolong training, could be hampered by the weather and some training locations. As a club we have had problems where non club/non CP pilots were eager to be joining us, but had not been signed off at CP due solely to not having done the SL/TL requirement.

The comments/bullet points below relate only to the proposed SL/TL changes. I/we don't feel qualified to comment on Towing or Senior Instructor licences.

- If SL/TL is removed from the training syllabus I don't see any special mystique in covering this skill within normal coaching. There seems no reason, that at least the theory aspects couldn't have been at least discussed/covered during training however. Opinions on this differ amongst respondees some of whom are coaches and have misgivings.
- Some schools will no doubt still cover this in practice if the conditions allow.

*As a 'victim' of the top landing requirement I feel my progress has been hampered by this rule in common with many students who have trained abroad. I completed all the tasks in July 2012, yet didn't gain my CP till 15 months later despite having done top landings - though not observed by an instructor. Because of this I was unable to join the safety net of the club coaching system, became discouraged and regressed rather than progressed. (DHPC low airtime member)*

- At present, even though practical SL/TL may be done during training this does not mean it is really more than experienced on a school site and in no way can be considered a skill learnt. In other words we tend to do it anyhow.  
*It transfers a lot of responsibility from paid instructors to unpaid coaches, and I fear that the period between doing the theory (with an instructor) and the practical (with a coach) will become longer. But I think this it's the lesser of two evils; dis-illusioned, rogue, unqualified, and uninsured pilots are probably worse. (DHPC coach)*
- Many new club pilots have had big gaps in their training or are lapsed since training. Some may be better going back to the school (we have advised that in some cases) since they have regressed to such an extent they are back at first day training level.

## Ed Cleasby (Cont)

### DHPC Response to FSC consultation on changes to the training syllabus

*My concern is slope/side landings. For a lot of pilots a side landing is the plan B, sometimes in the absence of a plan C. If a pilot comes into the club with neither a side, nor a top landing and the coach is trying to teach a top landing, there is always the possibility of the wind dropping. A side landing becomes more likely. (DHPC coach)*

- The experience/skill level of coaches varies a lot. The less experienced ones are not comfortable with dealing with SL/TL. However, they don't have to and could pass that on to a more experienced coach. It may be worth considering probationary or junior coach status during the first 12 months after becoming a coach.

*As far as the possible changes to the training syllabus, I don't feel qualified to comment although they seem reasonable. The bottom line is I would do my best to support the coaching of CPs in mastering top landings and to help them progress in our sport. (DHPC coach)*

- Many coaches are uncomfortable because they are unclear about their insurance cover, liabilities and their exact role. The terms instructor and coach confuses some, especially the modum operandi of each. It would be very useful to have a single BHPA doc that clearly outlines their role and reassures on insurance cover. Many coaches need a better understanding of their role and its limitations.

*Are the club coaches expected to do this and if so aren't we being opened up to liability? The comment has been made about how much faster paragliders are these days and this reinforces my opinion that these skills should be taught in schools. (DHPC coach)*

- Comments from non-coaches (and low hours pilots) was mostly favourable as they felt the SL/TL requirement had prolonged their training which they found frustrating. Some admitted to have 'latched onto' club groups and coaching days as non-club members. It left us in a difficult position at times.

*I have read the BHPA proposals on removing top landing from the CP qualification and think it's not a bad idea if done for the right reasons ie. it's holding up folk that are competent flyers getting passed out because they haven't got 4 top landings in ( DHPC low airtime CP)*

- Personal view – As DHPC Chief Coach. I am quite happy that we can safely and competently deal with SL/TL at club level ..... I base that on the fact that we already do it without any problem and the club have a large number of experienced coaches to call on. However, not all clubs may be in such a fortunate position.

*Perhaps an underlying assumption of the BHPA is that the coaches are happy with additional workload and responsibility and that they will happily undertake coach training regularly to meet these demands. It is a form of unpaid professionalisation. (DHPC coach)*

- One concern (and a larger one) that kept cropping up was the very poor groundhandling skills of pilots fresh out of school. They seemed to only have a single launch technique that was often unsuitable for stronger winds with little idea of how to de power the wing (essential on breezy top landings). In other words SL/TL was a lower concern. In the DHPC we register CP's for coaching and gather information on them and their experience – GH comes up all the time as an area flagged up as a major weakness. And they are right in my view!

## Ed Cleasby (Cont 2)

### DHPC Response to FSC consultation on changes to the training syllabus

*Speaking from my own experience I wouldn't have thought it possible to obtain your CP qualification without having good ground handling skills but maybe this is more down to the conditions you train in to obtain a CP as opposed to the conditions you sometimes fly in post CP ie. stronger winds. (DHPC - CP)*

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*I thought the ideas seem good, with all bases covered.  
Any encouragement to help the transition from school to club should be welcomed. (DHPC Senior Coach)*

The above comments conclude the DHPC FSC consultation return.

**Concluding:** The DHPC would on balance have no objection to the proposed changes as they relate to SL/TL.

Other:

- It would have helped to include the club contact/chairperson in the original mailing list.
- A simple guidance sheet detailing the role of the club coach and insurance cover to all coaches (this could go out via the CC/Chairperson).
- A future suggestion would be some (any) sort of seminar for ALL chief coaches with a view to sharing ideas, good practice and input into the training syllabus. Maybe bi-annually.

Ed Cleasby

DHPC Chief Coach

March 2014



## Kevin Gay - Valentine's Day

(or: more evidence on why you should always carry a \*\*\*\*\* camera)

Being nice obviously pays off, the bouquet of roses delivered with breakfast in bed on the Friday and off flying on the Sunday.

The usual trip to Wether Fell, the track blocked to all but the hardest 4x4 driver, meant a pessimistic view of conditions followed and we were off again to Tailbridge.

De ja vu? On arrival Bob Delahay was there making 4 Hanggliders; Trev Birkbeck, Me, and Steve Mann, 2 very optimistic Paraglider pilots made up the flying crew for the day. Wind was averaging 20mph with the odd stronger gust but the direction was good and rigging began. I was keen to get up and have some fun and may have been a little hasty in rigging - the tension didn't pull back as easy as usual, but it was almost there so a bit more ignorance and the tension was on and I was keen to get off the hill. Quick check around inside the sail and clip in, hang check etc and: wait, the right wing seemed to want to fly more, but with a bit of assistance a reasonable take off but immediately followed by a heavy right correction. It didn't feel right so I landed checked it all over, including the cross tube junction and launched again. This time the vg jammed so I landed again, to find the rope wrapped around the cross tube junction holding the cross booms more to the right side, and jamming the vg. That was three checks before I found the fault, fortunately not a bad fault, but I am glad I could top land.

By the time I had done phaffing around Steve Mann was on the Mallerstang and in Wave with only his solero back up vario. I had a quick go on Bob's Combat L and was very glad to get back on My T2C 144. I was quickly off and with the glider feeling like it should. Below, the 2 optimistic paragliders were using the time to get some ground handling and short hops in at the bottom of the hill. A much better approach than the parawaiting. I set off for the Mallerstang, this month's crossing seemed less of a bottle job than the last. The hill looked much friendlier but still kept me on my toes as I crossed much lower down where there is not a lot of slope. I got over with about 20 foot ground clearance and below take off height. The climb up was smooth as I hugged the hill as close as I dare seeking out steeper bits to maximise lift.

Clearing the top the view down Swaledale was again fantastic, I looked around for Steve but couldn't see him. The climb became smooth and peaceful, WAVE AGAIN! I cruised along the range and watched as cloud base approached, grey wisps disappearing and a blue hole from Mallerstang to the Howgills. Heading under the last of the clouds looking for a Sunny Side lift I passed cloud base and took stock. I had a big blue hole. I could see the ground but left and right looked completely clogged in. Cloud was forming over the top of the Mallerstang, and there was my old friendly spectre. I pulled in and wondered if I might get shut out from the ground, I calculated that there was 500ft or more of clearance between the cloud and hill so I could always descend through it. But this blue hole is massive. No worries, back to the climb. As I went past 5000 ft my worries seemed trivial as there were holes in the clouds everywhere. The sun reflected off the sea in Morecambe Bay and I realised I was looking at it through the clouds and at the same time could see the North Yorks Moors and Teesside.

6000 ft and the climb seemed to be getting weaker. I thought I might try and go up wind but it was far too strong. As the lift slowly decreased I passed 7000 ft and decided to go looking for another wave bar, choices choices. Head North East. There were Lenticulars thousands of feet higher than me. Go down Wensleydale perhaps get onto Wether Fell? Go down Swaledale, I hadn't been that

way before. By now I was over the Buttertubs, thinking this would be great to watch Le Tour from up here but the hill looked a bit flat. I opted for Swaledale and cruised past Keld, and Gunnerside with its old mine workings that look almost new. Trying to remember the names of the villages along the valley I gradually lost height and although I still had 4000ft I started to take note of all the water logged fields. The second wave bar never appeared and after flying the length of Fremington Edge I started to pick a field. This time of year sheep are still in lamb, so its important not to make them run if you can avoid it. Picking a large green up sloping field, and remembering I had left my phone in the van. Oops. I made a text book landing only to find my feet disappearing into the sodden ground. Even the highest point in the field was wet and boggy resulting in a very dirty glider.

The saga of the retrieve began with me walking to a nearby farm and trying to ring my own number to get Trev to pick up, and after successfully doing that and giving my location I returned and waited and waited and waited. Trev didn't have the code for the vans sat nav and couldn't get reception on his phone to ring Steve, so the wait was a long one. I returned to the farm when it got dark, and borrowed the phone again, in the kitchen the rafters were full of rosettes from 13 years of winning shows with sheep and cows. I was treated to a lovely cup of tea and a biscuit. Interestingly the farm, Nuncote Nook Farm is on the Coast to Coast path and has camping if you ever fancy walking. Trev turned up, Steve was a little further on than me and had retreated to the pub. A long long day for a short cross country and only an hour or so of flying but what an hour. Two consecutive flights starting from Tailbridge both in wave with fantastic views. The North really has a lot to offer. And I really need a camera.



### Committee Profile:

Martin Baxter—Chairman



Some time ago it was decided that each of the committee ought to do a “pen portrait” for inclusion on the website. Martin as Chairman goes first, brave soul. This gives all other committee members something to aim at. I guess we may give Martin the option of redoing his after everyone else has had a go!

When his time as a serving helicopter pilot came to an end, Martin did a stint looking after Army Flight Safety. He learned to paraglide in 1995, initially with Northern (now SunSoar) Paragliding and then with the Army in Bavaria. He has flown in Bavaria, Spain, France, Greece, Slovenia, Mexico, Reunion and South Africa. Now semi-retired; he describes himself as a recreational pilot who might be persuaded to do the occasional friendly competition. He is an active coach and flies a white Air Design Volt with an open harness and a retro red flying suit. He lives in Wetherby and flies mostly during the week. He keeps threatening to get out on his motorcycles more, but never seems to get around to it. He is the Sites Officer for the BHPA.



# Ed's Coaching Column

## Milking, Sniffing and Scratching

.....the art of staying up

There is a real skill and considerable fascination in flying a ridgeline or interconnected hills. Sometimes conditions make it easy (hence the derogatory term 'boring soaring'). However, as things become more marginal, pre-honed ridge skills become increasingly important if you're to stay aloft. Some pilots are more successful than others as the lift weakens, and are better able to recognise and exploit the lulls and down-cycles. As they say, "When the going gets tough ....." etc

*Mallerstang south section in winter garb*

*(map to right)*



Whilst we all dream of circling to cloudbase in lovely, well-formed thermals, the fact is we spend more hours working our way back and forth along a ridge. We also do a lot of para-waiting and willing the wind to just blow a little stronger or come a little more on. It's under these conditions that the confident, the knowledgeable and the skilled make use of what's available.

To try to illustrate ridge based skills I've chosen Mallerstang. It's not well known to many and perhaps I could have used Windbank, Whernside or any other long ridge like the Cross Fell range or a prominent Lakeland ridge. I simply chose Mallerstang for ease, due to its orientation, length and features. I also know it fairly well too.

Flying a ridge, even one you've flown many times before is never boring and always holds new lessons. This is because:

- There are no two ridges the same. They differ in shape, features, length, and height. The only constant is the direction they face.



## Ed's Coaching Column—the art of staying up (Cont 1)

- Conditions are never quite the same. Weather patterns bring about subtle changes in wind direction and strength, amount of sun, thermal or wave activity and often it's a combination of all of these.
- Conditions vary according to the time of year, right down even to the time of day. Easterly ridges are better earlier in the day; westerlies later – and we all love southerlies. The answer is in the sun, especially in summer when it's a major driving force.
- Alongside all the previous factors we also have a cycling effect. In flying parlance you will often hear that the conditions have 'switched off' (better before you arrived) or hopefully just 'switched on' (lucky you). The only thing not to rely on is that it will stay the same. Patience is a virtue of the highest order in paragliding. Many times one can work a ridge (note the term - *work*) for an hour or more until, with what I tend to think of as a giant 'burp' it releases its pent up lift and you're up and away.

Back to Mallerstang to illustrate a few of these points.

Mallerstang is 4k long (5k if you add in the difficult jump across from Tailbridge). It faces due west and is of uniform height but has a variety of features that make it interesting. There are steep grassy banks, shallow sections, steep crags, small gullies and into and out of wind sections. All these features create areas of good, poor or no lift and under some conditions turbulence. The ground out front slopes away fairly gently with small scree patches and sub-ridges ..... some parts are more sheltered and heat up better whilst other features act as triggers. As the day progresses the encroaching, cross valley shadow from Wild Boar can act as a late trigger along the whole ridge length.

Fundamentally, understanding this or any ridge is all about **visualisation**. From your aerial armchair you have to develop a mental picture of how the wind (direction and strength) and the sun (if any) are playing out their act on the features of the ridge. Working the ridge is essentially about looking for the best parts, milking what you can and moving between them if necessary to not only find the best ridge lift, but align with potential thermal streams.

The biggest factor is the wind in terms of its strength and direction in relation to the hill. In general the less wind, the less lift (there are a few exceptions to this) ..... so you need to work harder by flying more efficiently and by spotting the sweet spots on the hill. Should the direction start to swing off the hill (a forecast may have foretold this so you can be prepared) then the lift will become isolated and in parts it could become dangerously turbulent. If the ridge is fairly straight then beyond 30 degree it will probably stop providing lift and soon be at the point where it is being bent along the hill; on a more featured hill it could now be extremely rotory!

Again, with reference to Mallerstang. In a straight westerly it's a very straightforward ridge to fly, just north of west is OK and makes getting from Tailbridge easier. At the north end (usual take off) it's quite shallow in places, the wind gets bent around towards the end of the ridge and a push forward to bigger cliffs is needed. It can take several attempts or with height you cut the prow and bypass the crags. You learn to read the ridge against the conditions you have. The point is that the more you fly and apply visualisation, using every slope, bump and slight turn of angle then the better you will get and the higher

## Ed's Coaching Column—the art of staying up (Cont 2)

you will be (a top of the stacker) – or at least avoid going down. A slight aside, but pilots who fly sea cliffs and especially coastal dunes a lot tend to be very good at reading wind and slope and knowing the slow speed characteristics of their gliders.

One area where these skills can be applied is on xc's that fly through mountains or hilly areas. When the next thermal fails you, then a handy hill or ridge can be a saviour. In the Scottish Highlands a lot of xc time can be spent at or below summit height so arriving at an unknown hill or ridge means you quickly

*Working the remote Sgurr Mor to Gairich ridge on a flight through the*



have to assess the wind speed/direction for both safety and lift. An quick example. I recently (having left Wether Fell at cloudbase) found myself heading towards the west-facing edge of Bishopdale and getting lower. I've never flown Bishopdale, although it does still figure in the DHPC siteguide. In the time it took to approach the ridge line I tried to work out the best place to arrive; both in terms of the ridge itself and the clouds above it. It's always a percentages game.

I chose the south end, it being steeper and bigger and slightly upwind of the north end – which left the north end as an option as opposed to a harder battle upwind later. About four beats after arriving I had a pretty good idea how well it was working and the sweet spots. I believe you can learn a lot of these skills by practising and getting the habit on your home ridge.

To summarise. No airtime should be wasted time or ever boring. Even the ridge you feel you know well still has things to teach you. When conditions become less reliable or scratchy hone your skills at reading the ridge and learning more about your wing and yourself as opposed to endless parawaiting for better conditions. When the hill is working well and you think you've become a good 'milker' of the lift (regularly top of the stack) then feel free to progress on to becoming a 'sniffer' (sorry, just the terminology I have in my mind - a weird place). These are the pilot's you see pushing well out front and on the flanks of the hill; who want to explore beyond the confines of the ridge and into deeper waters.

I'll finish with a few tips:

- Turning can be inefficient and lose you precious height Try to make your turns in lift,
- Keep turns as flat as possible. Know your glider's slow speed behaviour.
- Position yourself slightly forward of the ridge prior to turning and 'slide' back with any lift.
- In the slight surge of any lift bring your track into wind to maximise it or see what it may herald.
- Scan and watch other gliders/birds etc within range for both safety but also as indicators of conditions along the ridge
- When one end of a ridge is especially working well (thermal triggered), often the other end pays the price (reduced lift or sinky)
- Chasing after lift (thermal passing through ridge) often means you arrive too late and at the wrong time.
- 360 turns on the ridge in very weak lift generally gain you little other than to place you further back.

## Safety First - Crowding

This is the third of Nigel Page's safety articles from his website <http://www.50k-or-bust.com>. Nigel is a senior paragliding coach, and has been a member of the national team. We are indebted for his permission to reproduce his articles in Skywords. They originally appeared in the Derbyshire Soaring Club Magazine.

Nigel prefaces his articles as follows:

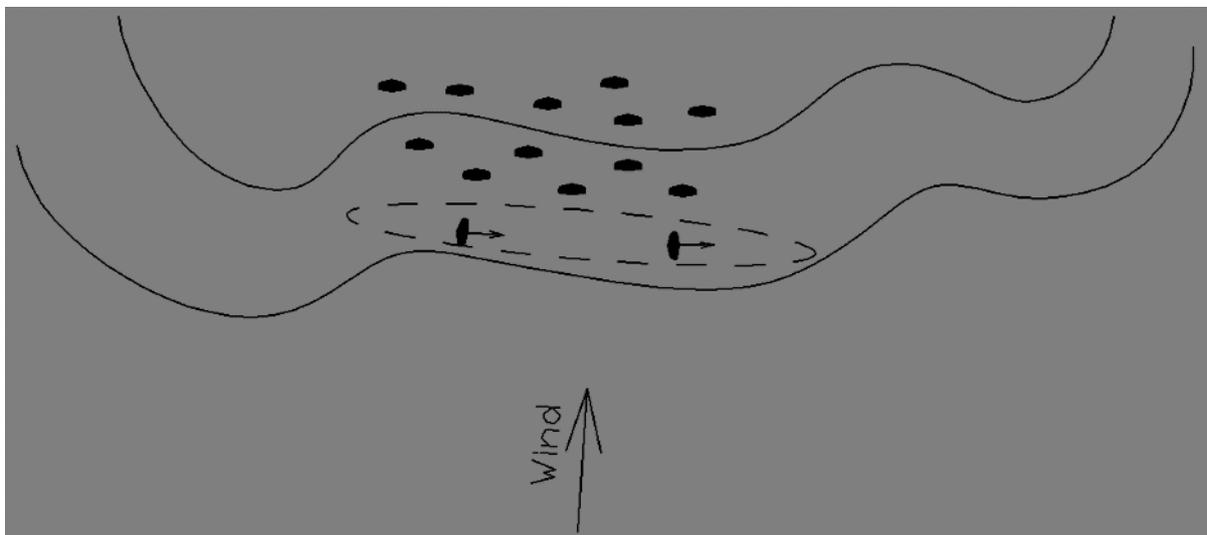
These articles are my best shot at covering some of the safety issues which seem to be poorly understood by some pilots. Most were written in response to serious accidents or incidents. I am conscious that they are only my own view of issues I have been able to identify. They do not constitute a comprehensive safety manual.

Some pilots fiercely condemn any attitude which appears at all negative. However, by their nature, safety articles tend to take this form and I make no apologies in this respect. Some also say such articles are just stating the obvious. This may be so, but pilots keep crashing. Perhaps the obvious needs to be stated.

### CROWDING

In a recent discussion someone asked "How do we know when a ridge is getting crowded?" The simple answer is "When you, yourself, think it is getting crowded." Different pilots have different ideas of what crowding is. Crowding may happen gradually over a large area or suddenly become a problem in a limited area. Let's have a look at a typical crowding situation.

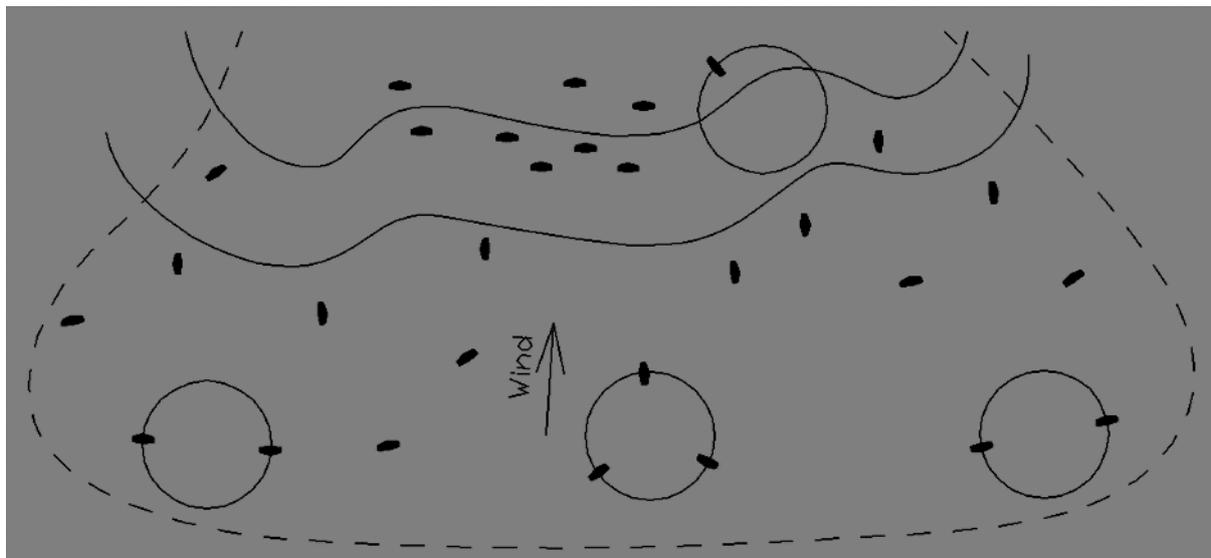
We have a light wind on a hill with a promise of thermals. A lot of gliders are rigged and waiting to take off. One or two people are scratching about in a limited patch of lift close to the hill in the area area shown by the dotted line.



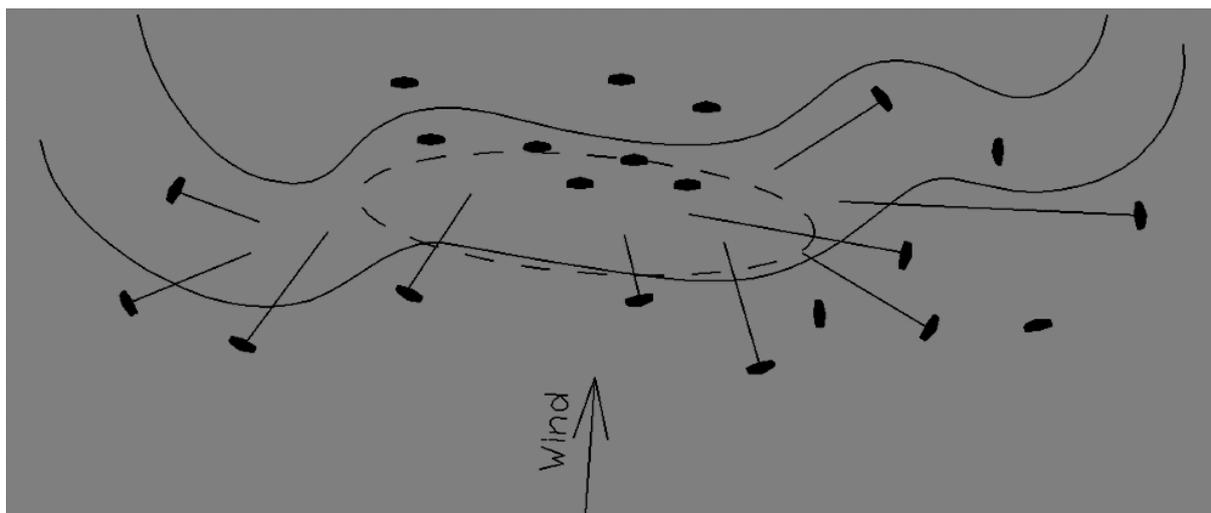
Most pilots are simply waiting for better lift and the few pilots who are flying might land from time to time and take turns to fly in the limited area of lift.

## Nigel Page—Crowding (cont)

The lift begins to pick up and soon lots of people are airborne. Staying up is not too difficult over a large area just by flying back and forth. Some pilots have found thermal cores and are circling.



However, the good lift does not continue. It is "cycling" and after ten minutes or so it starts dropping off. Pilots do not want to bottom land so they head for the area they know was working before the cycle began with a view to top landing if necessary.



Suddenly it's crowded in front of the launch area. To make matters worse some of the pilots who messed up their launches when the lift was increasing have not twigged that the lift is dropping off and are still trying to launch (yes I have done this!). It's a real mess.

Can we avoid this? The first thing is to be aware that in light thermal conditions lift is likely to come and go. When the lift drops off all the airborne pilots have to go somewhere and most will want to top land or scratch about near the launch area. If we seem to be flying towards a busy area we must turn away and be prepared to bottom land if necessary. It can be surprising how quickly crowding can occur. If we are heading for a very small area of lift we may suddenly find out that there is definitely a crowd.

## Nigel Page—Crowding (cont)

If we are having difficulty launching we must keep a check on the general situation even while we are struggling with our misbehaving glider. We must make sure we do not inflate as someone is coming by. If it is busy we must not launch.

Another key element is lookout. On roads we become very good at keeping an eye on the relatively limited areas we need to observe for our safety. When flying we need look all around and up and down very frequently. We must also keep refreshing our mental image of the wider scene as well as gliders nearby. Intentionally looking around also helps to avoid “target fixation” when we forget to look around because our focus is on a hazard in one direction. Yes, I sometimes find myself doing this too.

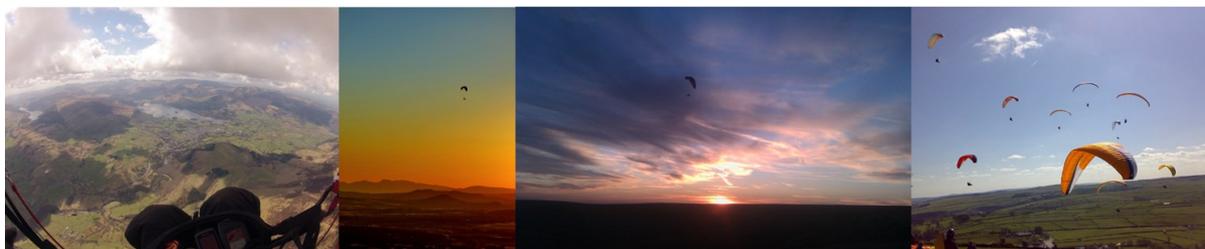
If it is too crowded it is too crowded. If we are on the ground we must not launch. We might consider balling up our glider up to make more space for those wishing to land. If we are in the air we must keep away from crowded areas even if it means bottom landing. Air to air collisions are often lethal. We all have to be a bit more careful and alert.

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Please note:

Nigel has sent us helpful advice about Mam Tor—a site that Dales pilots do fly on occasions. The advice has been posted to the “Sites Issues” page on the forum, [here](#)

### DHPC Photo and Video Competition



Got photos as good or better than those above?

There's still time, just, to get your entry into the photos or videos into the competition.

Full details on the website at:

<http://www.dhpc.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=21&t=1065>

Prizes will be awarded at the April club night, Thursday April 3rd at the Horse and Farrier, Otley



## Simon Goodman - Competitions

The 2014 XC season is now open! The National XC league started accepting winter flights back in early March, and there is still a short window to submit any qualifying flights made 1<sup>st</sup> November-31<sup>st</sup> March. It is well worth entering your winter flights if you haven't done so already, as these can still count towards your summer total if you have fewer than 6 flights of greater distance April-October. The summer league begins from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, and from then all flights must be submitted within 2 weeks of being made.

As you've probably noticed it's been a fairly dismal winter-spring so far, but the light evenings and spring thermals are now upon us, so hopefully the flying opportunities will soon increase. Barney Woodhead and Phil Colbert of the Pennine Club knocked out the first 100km of the season on their own first XC flights of 2014 flying from Corndon this week, so there is sport to be had.

Finally, all flights by Dales pilots are automatically entered in to the inter-county competition between the Dales & N. Yorks, Derbyshire, Pennine and Cumbria clubs. The nice thing about this comp is that the scoring is based on the EN class of wing flown (A, B, C, D), which means that even modest flights by regular pilots on EN A and B gliders, contribute a great deal, rather than the result just being determined the Sky Gods on hotships. The Dales actually came second in this comp last year thanks to the contributions of pilots on 'normal' wings.... so even if you make a short 10k hop over the back, be sure to submit to the XC league as it all counts!

You can sign up to the XC league here: <http://www.xcleague.com/xc/>. It's free to submit flights for the club league, and £6.00 to have you flights counted in the National League. It's very straight forwards to enter flights – you just need to upload an igc tracklog. Most GPS enabled variors will create one of these for each flight automatically. Feel free to contact me on [dhpc-comps@talktalk.net](mailto:dhpc-comps@talktalk.net) if you need advice on how to register and upload flights.

Dales PG league to March 30th

Rank	Pilot	Club	Total	Flight 1	Flight 2
1	Mike Cavanagh	Cumbria	31.1	31.1	
2	Ed Cleasby	Cumbria	27.9	27.9	
3	Simon Tomlinson	Dales	18	9.6	8.4
4	Kevin McLoughlin	Dales	14.9	14.9	
5	Simon Goodman	Dales	6.1	6.1	



### This month's cover photo: Wether Fell





## Library News- Melise Harland

The library catalogue and back issues of Skywords are on the DHPC website. To Access them go to the homepage and you'll see the library listed in white lettering on the blue band at the top of the page. If you click on "Library" it will take you to the catalogue so you can have a look, see what we have and have a wish list ready for the next club night.

If you would like to pre-order any item from the catalogue feel free to send me an e-mail ([Melise\\_Harland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Melise_Harland@yahoo.co.uk)) and I will reserve it for you. If you have any suggestions for things you would like to see here let me know.

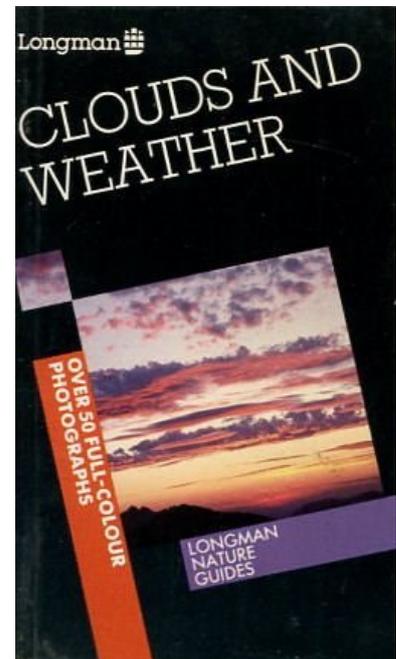
## Book Review

### Clouds and Weather

by: Longman Nature Guides

Reviewed by Melise Harland

This is a handy pocket sized book that contains a lot of information for its diminutive size. The book has 76 pages split into 15 sections. I read it all the way through to review it which I don't think is the best way to approach it. It would be best kept in your pocket when you're outdoors so you can dip into it to understand what you are seeing in front of you. It has a plastic cover and glossy pages so can withstand being out in a certain degree of inclement weather.



As someone who has a mental block when trying to remember the names of clouds, this book gives some really good quality photographs so you can look them up when you see them and remind yourself what they are called. Each photograph has a piece of text giving a description of the clouds and how they may vary or unique features of them. There are also a few clear and simple figures that help you understand different processes going on in weather systems. I liked the simple H for high pressure system and L for low pressure system next to the photographs so you know where you are in the overall weather system.

The only thing against this handy little book is that some of the text is a little confusing and rather dry, not to mention small. That may just be a consequence of trying to read it all from cover to cover late at night though so I wouldn't let it put you off. That said I would like to get a copy for myself to carry around with me and try to finally get to grips with cloud names!

All in all this is a good introduction to clouds and weather for the beginner.

**Club Coaches.** This is an up to date list of Club Coaches.

## Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club – February 2014

### Hang Gliding Coaches

Name	Availability	Location	Email	Contact Telephone Number
Trevor Birkbeck	Various	Ripon	trev.birkbeck@gmail.com	01765 658486
Steve Mann	Weekends	Kirkby Malzeard,	steve.andbex@btinternet.com	01765 650374
Kevin Gay	Various	Ripon	kgay@talktalk.net	07794950856

### Paragliding Coaches

Name	Availability	Location	Email	Contact Telephone Number
Ed Cleasby Chief Coach	Various	Ingleton	xflight@gmail.com	07808394895
Rob Burtenshaw (senior coach)	Sun+various	Oxenhope	burtenshaw@fsmail.net	07747721116
Peter Balmforth	Weekends	Leeds	peter.balmforth@ntlworld.com	07714213339
Steve Mann	Weekends	Kirkby Malzeard	steve.andbex@btinternet.com	01765 650374
David Brown	Various	Ingleton	d.brown208@btinternet.com	07757333480
Alex Colbeck	Weekends	Harrogate	alex.colbeck@hotmail.com	07717707632
Kate Rawlinson	W/e schols	Colne	katerawlinson@hotmail.co.uk	07976510272
Tony Pickering & Zena Stevens	Various	Otley	anthonypaulpickering@hotmail.com	01943 466632
Kevin McLoughlin	Weekends	Lancaster	kevin-mcloughlin@hotmail.com	07767 652233
Martin Baxter	Weekdays	Wetherby	mrbaxter@hotmail.co.uk	07775785479
Toby Briggs	Various	Pateley Bridge	tobybriggs@btopenworld.com	07582156471
Fred Winstanley	Various	Higher Bentham	fredwinstanley@sky.com	07770741958
Richard Shirt	Weekends	York	rshirt@advaoptical.com	07786707424
Simon Goodman	Various	Leeds	simon.goodman @talktalk.net	07720061200
Andy Bryom	Weekends	Keighley	andy.active@unicombox.co.uk	07796 421890
Dave Couthard	Weekends	Leeds	d.coulthard2@ntlworld.com	07595895149
Sean Hodgson	Various	Haworth	sean@ogi.me.uk	07999606084

*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 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 need to undertake some coaching each year to retain their rating.*

*They are there to help you – please use them.*

[Ed Cleasby](#)

[Chief Coach/Senior Coach](#)  
[February 2014](#)