

# SKYWORDS

April 2021

## Chairman's Chat

The day after my last Chairman's Chat the Government amended the Coronavirus legislation, re-introducing the phrase 'visiting a public outdoor place for the purposes of open-air recreation' as a legal reason for leaving home. Although the Government's guidance remained 'Stay at Home', the advice from the BHPA suggested that from 8 Mar flying would be legal. Some clubs advised their members to stay local; although 'local' was never defined. We decided that adding to the plethora of existing rules and guidance wasn't helpful, and that individual members were best placed to make their own judgement. Some decided not to fly, some flew 'locally', and some just flew.

The restrictions will be eased again on 29 Mar, when the 'Stay at Home' message is dropped. My personal circumstances dictate that I won't be able to get out for a while: I'll be starting 10 days of isolation on 27 Mar, so I was keen to regain my currency before then. I've had 2 great days – one at [Model Ridge](#) getting to Hasty Bank and back; and another at [Tailbridge](#), flying onto Mallerstang for another spectacular ridge run. Getting back into the swing of things wasn't as difficult as I anticipated ('it's like riding a bike') and the experience was every bit as wonderful as I remembered.

Back in the virtual world the committee had another meeting on Zoom. We set a new club record for the shortest meeting, mostly because there was no Farmers' Dinner to debrief. Notes of thanks from the farmers, for their vouchers, are on the forum [here](#). One sentence updates follow. Club members can get £10 off a First Aid Kit [here](#). The [weather station](#) is up and running, in a temporary location. Five club members and 3 pilots from neighbouring clubs completed a virtual coaching course. Personal contact information for coaches has been moved to the members only forum. The Safety Officer is considering the possibility of a [reserve repack](#) once restrictions allow. Membership numbers are looking healthy, with only 22 members not renewing thus far.

I think you'll all agree that Rosie Ireland did a cracking job of keeping us going during lockdown, with some entertaining and educational virtual club nights. Sadly, since she and Ben are moving to Bristol, she has had to step down as Social Secretary. We thank Rosie for everything she has done for the club over the last 2 years and wish them both well in their new abode. We haven't exactly been bowled over by volunteers offering to stand for the vacant post! Whilst there is no immediate hurry, since we don't hold club nights over the summer month, it would be nice to get somebody in post so that we can introduce them to the committee and get a programme in place prior to our first get together, in the pub (remember those?) in September.

It's a simple equation. No volunteer = no club nights. Your call. If you think that you might be able to help out and give something back to the club, or if you just want to find out more without making any commitment then please drop me a line. [chairman@dhpc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@dhpc.org.uk)

Fly safely,

**Martin Baxter**  
**Chairman**

## In other news...

Northern Challenge Series (Main and Hike & Fly) now available at (for when we can fly...)

<http://www.xcmap.net/index.php?c=Northern%20Challenge%20Trophy>

- A new Stags task
- A changed Murton task
- A new, later start date 1st March due to Covid. ALL BHPA or Club directives over-ride this.
- A new EN C and below award. Glider rating required when you enter a flight and displayed.
- Scoring algorithm and rules remain the same. ALL individual club rules apply to all sites on which a task is based.

**Many thanks to Ed for organising**

Interesting discussion about entering waypoints into instruments, including XCTrack at

<https://www.dhpc.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=21&p=10273#p10273>

### Articles

Articles (or ideas of articles you would like to see) all gratefully received to  
[newsletter@dhpc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@dhpc.org.uk)

**Carl Maughan (Editor)**



# Your Club Needs You



## **We are looking for a new club social secretary.**

(The main role of which is organising and running the winter series of club nights)

This last year these have been virtual, but in previous years they have been in person in a meeting room of a pub where we can enjoy a beer, chatting and listen to an interesting speaker.

Club nights run from September to April and (currently) usually fall on the first Thursday of the month.

It's a really enjoyable and fulfilling role, which gives you the opportunity to choose speakers and influence the meeting to your tastes.

The social sec role is also member of the committee. Beyond the club nights, joining the committee is a great opportunity to get involved in the club AND influence decision making (Which has been vital in 2020)! Drop me, Tam or Martin a message if you want to find out more!

**Rosie (Social Sec.)**

**(Editors Note: to Rosie - we thank you greatly for your contribution to the club over the last few years, and wish you well in your new future down south)**

# April's Breaking News...

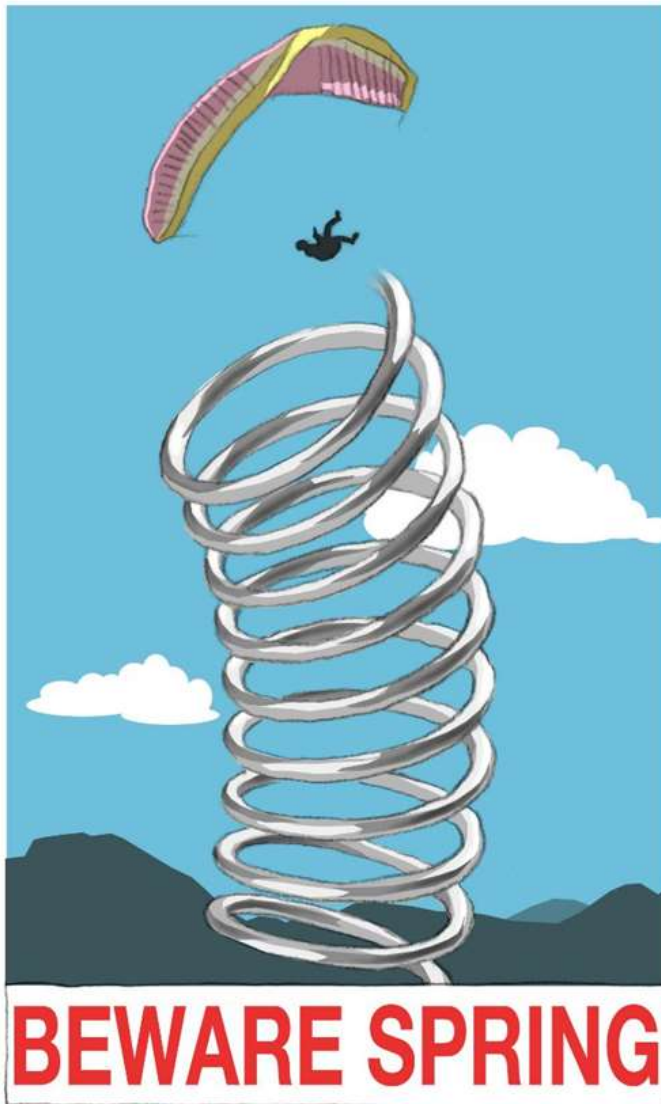
New equipment setting just found and available for Cross Country flights....

Make sure you dial it in

**Pete Logan**



# Take care everyone



Spring is almost upon us again and at this time of year the air mass is still relatively cold but the sun is already strong.

As a result, as thermals lift off the temperature difference between inside and outside can be quite high so they will rise quickly with a very defined edge.

This can translate to quite a rough flying experience and will certainly put demands on your active flying skills.

I guess it's no surprise that Spring time sees the more incidents and accidents than other times of the year. Especially so this year with the extended lay off due to the further COVID-19 lockdown.

So, whether you are a low air timer about to experience Spring conditions for the first time, or an experienced pilot that has not flown for many months, let's all be extra careful for a while until we have a little more currency.

**When we are back in a position when we can fly** - pick a suitable time, according to your experience level, apply more attention at launch,

extra distance from the ground when scratching and keep your speed up when landing, with a good flare.

Here's a good article on the subject from the TVHGC: <https://www.tvhgc.co.uk/post/spring-thermals>

Have fun, be safe

**David May**  
**DHPC Safety Officer**

# Coaching - XC Buddies

I think the weather's being kind to us and preventing any chance of Cross Country (XC) before we get the next freeing up of lock down. Conveniently, there's what look like three flying days right after the 29th March. Bring it on! So, time to put down a few thoughts I had on buddying up for XC. As a coach, this kind of thing is "icing on the cake" compared to the bread and butter of safely getting new pilots enjoying their flying and progressing their skills. Given XC is an ambition for many pilots, applying coaching to it is still very relevant.

XC is a craft and like any skill development, which takes learning, time and practice. (Almost like an apprenticeship or time served). Consider what components this skill and mind set consists of:

- Confidence to break from the hill
- Airlaw
- Navigation
- Instrument knowledge
- Willingness to fail and often fly fewer hours than back on the hill.
- Thermalling
- Choosing what speed to fly
- Knowing when you really need to hang on to every scrap of lift
- Assessing lift sources
- Observation of birds, wind sign
- Team flying
- Reading the terrain
- Reading the sky
- Planning ahead
- Building that first climb away from the hill and knowing you can go with it



There will be some things I've missed but what I have listed is a lot to take in and it doesn't happen in one flight or even a season of XC. All the pilots I know have served their time and gained their experience, often by choosing not to do the wrong things they know they did last time. It can be a slow way to learn when we only have those precious few hours in the air. UK conditions don't help, in that we don't have alpine cloud bases and house thermals. A great day in the UK will give you 5000ft of glide height or, at most, twenty minutes of time to find your next lift and make your next move. That's best case though. Your first flights in the hills of the Dales with a lower base often means you have half that time to find your next lift.

So, knowing you're sometimes only ever ten minutes away from landing, packing up and trying to find your way back, means there's a lot riding on improving your XC and having a flight you can look back on and be proud of. The gist of what I'm writing here is how you can get the most benefit from the time you spend on XC, how you can learn quickly whilst serving your apprenticeship.



This is where buddies or squads come in. We're in a club. A group of (occasionally) like minded people. **Make the most of those other people.** Small groups / friends / partners or squads can accomplish things that a set of individuals cannot. Here are some of the advantages of deliberately choosing people who are of similar ability / hours as you and forming squads or buddying up.....

This first advantage is key: **Observe what you did on a flight that worked or didn't work compared to the other people in the same air or same situation.** Alone, you will never know whether choosing this or that cloud would have worked out. If you have other data points you can see what you need to do to improve next time.

Whereas if you fly alone you would need to wait until the next flight to be in the same situation to make a different decision. Being able to compare and talk over - debrief each other - on experience afterwards is key.

***As the day approaches a small group will communicate more quickly and find consensus about what hill to go to, what objective to set etc.*** This helps in sharing lifts (when that time returns) and even doing vaguely clever things like leaving a car strategically parked downwind of an intended XC and sharing cars up to the hill (A group of us have done this for years and it's been really helpful when it works).

***That first climb out a squad or gaggle will give you better sampling of the rising air.*** To be fair there's likely to be more people on the hill than just your squad helping with this aspect but the point stands. Comparing how people are climbing and also contributing yourself by feeling for that next bubble in the thermal is to the squad's benefit and gets you in a position to make a decision about going over the back.

***Talking about going over the back, those first few times can take a bit of confidence and a squad or buddy with you will mean you're in this together.*** You starting thinking "let's get on with this, what's the worst that can happen" compared to "Should I go, am I high enough, those moors over the back look pretty bleak". A little healthy competition between group members never hurt either. You'll strive to do well for your squad or mate but you also strive to do well in their eyes.



Tam flying Pendle, 17-3-21, taken by Rich Meek

***You can fly as a team, line abreast, when you go on glide.*** If there are two of you this instantly doubles the amount of air that you sweep with a decent separation. But what separation is good?



Here's a rule of thumb! - If a thermal core that we can use is around 50m to 100m across, you might pick up sign of that thermal from 200m away just by glider feel. As your thumb at arm's length is about 2.5° of arc. That roughly works out as 10m height from 200m away. A paraglider and pilot is about 10m high. **Therefore when you're the minimum separation you should be able to cover your squad member's glider with your outstretched thumb.** A hang glider will be much closer for the same arc, perhaps 50m, but by moving your head, you should be able to blank out a hang glider with the upright to give an estimation of distance.

**Don't take team flying to the nth degree though :-)** *It is not one land, all land.* If you have height or can press on to somewhere that looks like a usable source and trigger then do so. That airtime means more learning and new views to be seen for you. It can be a hard lesson for mates as they see another glider hang onto a low save and eak out further distance but it vitally means that there is something to compare against. I.e. there was a different set of actions possible from that situation that would have led to a better outcome.

On a practical note, being roughly the same ability, you might be doing the same order of XC as each other, say 25km, 30km and someone bombs out at 15km. That means retrieves are easier to organise than if you're spread across 50km or 100km. Indeed, a member of the squad may not have gotten away from the hill that day so you have someone who can come collect you after their flying is done.

Finally, **within a squad, people are going to have different talents, utilise each other's strengths.** One will be better with instruments and nav, perhaps setting goals for the group. Another reads the weather better and can confidently pick sites. Someone may be the jammy person who stumbles into lift all the time. A good one to have in a group is the person that is able to make decisions in flight, avoiding committee flying, who will leave weak lift for better.

Many of you will be doing this informally anyway, but feel free to be open about it and form these arrangements. XC is a discipline where both your own interests and that of the group are totally in alignment. You can fly far because the squad or your buddy can fly far.

**Pete Logan**  
**Chief Coach**

